

**Speech by Ambassador OSAWA Makoto for
the 82nd Anniversary of the Featherston Incident**
Tuesday 25th February 2025

Ms Melissa Sadler-Futter, Acting Mayor of South Wairarapa District;

The Mana Whenua, Rangitane o Wairarapa and Kahungunu ki Wairarapa;

Honourable Kieran McAnulty, Member of Parliament;

Honourable Ron Mark, Mayor of Carterton District;

Colonel Stephen Piercy, Chief of Staff of Joint Defence Services;

Mrs Amy Guihot, Deputy High Commissioner of Australia;

Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to be here today to commemorate the 82nd anniversary of the Featherston Incident. I would like to take a moment to thank everyone who arranged this service, including the South Wairarapa District Council, the Featherston Memorial RSA, and other members of the community. I am humbled to meet you all today.

This tragic event occurred during wartime. 82 years have passed since that day. This year also marks 80 years since the end of World War II. We now stand together in peace, and as friends. We stand together here today in the Memorial Garden, a place that serves as a reminder of the progress towards mutual understanding and appreciation that we have made together.

On this commemorative day, we must remember those who were lost. At the same time, we must think deeply about how we could realise peace and a future without war.

This is also a time to reflect on what is now a long-standing friendship between Japan and New Zealand. Our cooperative partnership and shared common values, such as democracy, human rights, and rule of law, help maintain peace and stability in our region.

The close relationship our countries now share is made possible not only through government cooperation, but also through the understanding and support of both peoples. This includes the local communities of Featherston and South Wairarapa, who I sincerely thank for their kind support of Japanese residents and visitors over the years. Let us continue celebrating our friendship for years to come, while also paying tribute to those who have gone before.

In conclusion, I would like us all to reaffirm our commitment to deepen the bonds of friendship and cooperation between Japan and New Zealand. Let us never forget the past while we keep our sights set on the future. Thank you.