

**04 August, 2023**

## **Australian Garden Council Partners in Japan 2023**

An acclaimed ancient Tokyo Garden, now home to the Australian Embassy, was the location for the historic signing of a unique Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian Garden Council and the 105-year-old Garden Society of Japan.

The AGC was represented by Chair, Graham Ross AM and Founding Director, John Mason, and the GSJ by Chairman Yasao Takahashi, Masao Sone, International Activity Committee Chair, and their entire board.

Surrounded by 400-year-old trees, they were welcomed by Australia's Ambassador to Japan, Mr Justin Hayhurst, who acknowledged the importance of gardening as a hobby and enterprise in both Japan and Australian societies. He agreed this union between two respected bodies would foster unique opportunities for their youth to experience the horticulture and cultures of both countries.

Many years in the formation, this agreement is based on fostering friendship and engagement between the two groups and their countries into the future and will, for the first time, establish an exchange training program for qualified young gardeners and horticulturists.

Vital with the MoU is an increase in communications between Japan and Australia through the ancient art of gardening in all its diverse forms. Sharing knowledge through the art of bonsai and landscape design and Australia's timeless management of the land and centuries of native plant breeding and improved gardening practices.

By expanding friendship and a transfer of gardening knowledge it will provide an enhanced mutual understanding and benefit gardening and the long term ornamental horticultural professions of Japan and Australia. Each exchange scholar will gain cultural and horticultural knowledge by exposure to a variety of enriching experiences at premier Japanese and Australian venues.

The landmark event was emceed by Wendy Holdenson, former Australian Consul General to Japan and current board member of the Australia Japan Foundation.

Graham Ross AM, Chair AGC, added, "The GSJ is a highly respected international organisation, and an honourable partner for the AGC, an Australian Not for Profit charity. Now gardening is further enhancing the long-held bonds of friendship between Japan and Australia.

"This MoU adds Japan to the existing destinations of UK and France, where the AGC has sourced gardening industry placements for Australian youth since 2015 in association with Global Footprints (fmr BBM). These international opportunities provide scholars with vast career prospects and exposure to new skills, experiences, and contacts, enabling them to return with a global perspective and advanced knowledge for a lifetime career in gardening and ornamental horticulture in Australia."

*NB: This Tokyo event was achieved without cost or sponsorship to the AGC.*



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For further information or access to our media kit please contact our communications coordinator, Lauren Danecek | [lauren.danecek@gardencouncil.org](mailto:lauren.danecek@gardencouncil.org)

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*The Australian Garden Council was formed with the priorities of:*

- *Improving and increasing gardening engagement and participation, for teenage Australians*
- *Promoting international garden tourism*
- *Supporting local communities to engage with gardening for the betterment of their health and welfare*
- *To act as an umbrella organisation connecting the many diverse groups in the gardening industry and community*