

FILM SCREENING / DIRECTOR Q&A

## Tell the Prime Minister

The story of post-3.11 activism in Japan



The Japan Foundation, Sydney, together with venue partner **University of Technology, Sydney (UTS)**, presents the [first-ever Australian screening of \*Tell the Prime Minister\*](#) (2015), a documentary about growing anti-nuclear activism in Japan following the triple disaster of March 11, 2011 (known in Japan as “3.11”). The screening will be held on **April 8, 6:30pm** at UTS and features a Q&A with **director Eiji Oguma**, who is also a Professor of Policy Management at **Keio University, Japan**.

Eiji Oguma is an academic who has worked extensively on the history of social movements in Japan. So when he saw protest culture awaken from decades of slumber after the disaster, he knew he was witnessing a historically significant event: Japan was seeing its **first large-scale protests since the 1970s**, and the movement clearly crossed the boundaries of age, gender, locality, politics and experience. *Tell the Prime Minister* is an intimate and powerful film that documents post-3.11 activism from a historian’s perspective, showing how and why this movement emerged.

The film first recaps how the triple disaster of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear plant explosion unfolded, and goes on to chart a steady groundswell of citizen action in response to the crisis. This began with small, isolated protests against nuclear power springing up across the capital. However, momentum gradually built and numbers grew, with the largest demonstration seeing **200,000 people** march before the Prime Minister’s office on June 29, 2012.

These events received little attention in Japanese mainstream media, so prior to this film's release the major records were informal—primarily, user-generated online content such as blog posts and videos. *Tell the Prime Minister* formalises a **chapter in Japan's social history that was in danger of remaining invisible**, not only to outside nations but also to many within Japan. The film combines actual protest footage with candid interviews with people at the heart of the movement. The protest footage was selected from the hundreds of hours of **user-generated content** uploaded to the web by protest participants, and has been reproduced with permission.

Director Eiji Oguma says, "The people who appear in this film are all individuals who cared enough to act. When they gathered in front of the Prime Minister's Office to protest it was such a rare, powerful, and beautiful moment. As a historian, my mission was to capture this event so it could be passed down to future generations."

The Q&A will be hosted by **Alexander Brown**, a researcher from the **University of Wollongong** who completed his PhD on Japan's post-3.11 activism. **The Japan Foundation, Sydney** is pleased to acknowledge the assistance of **UTS** as **venue partner** for this screening.

*This event is part of a program by The Japan Foundation, Sydney titled, [After 3.11: Have you met the new Japan?](#), running March 1 – April 15. It explores how Japan has changed since the earthquake and tsunami of March 11, 2011 through an exhibition, pottery demonstration, talks and film.*

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#### PROGRAM DETAILS

## **After 3.11: Have you met the new Japan?**

### **[EXHIBITION]**

**March 1 – April 15**      *Icons of Time* by Tomohiro Muda

#### **Gallery Hours**

Monday – Friday: 10am – 6pm

Selected Saturdays (March 19, April 9): 10am – 3pm

Closed Sundays & public holidays

Admission is free.

#### **Opening Reception & Artist Talk**

March 4, 6:30pm – 8:00pm

Admission free. RSVP essential.

**[DEMONSTRATION]**

**March 10**      **Obori Soma Ware: Rebuilding Kiln & Kin**  
Masanori Sue (Ceramicist) & Takeshi Matsunaga (Speaker)

6:30pm – 7:30pm (doors open 6pm) @ The Japan Foundation, Sydney.  
Admission is free. RSVP essential (via website).

**[TALKS]**

**March 18**      **AfterLandscapes: Designing in Uncertainty**  
Marieluisse Jonas (RMIT University)

**April 1**      **The New Wave of Activist Culture in Post-3.11 Japan**  
Akihiro Ogawa (Melbourne University)

**April 15**      **3.11 in Literature and Film**  
Tamaki Tokita (University of Sydney)

6:30pm – 7:30pm (doors open 6pm) @ The Japan Foundation, Sydney.  
Admission is free. RSVP essential (via website).

Free CHOYA tastings available at venue.

**[FILM]**

**April 8**      ***Tell the Prime Minister*** (2015; 109 mins; Japanese with English subtitles)  
Feat. Q&A with director Eiji Oguma

6:30pm (doors open 6pm) @ University of Technology Sydney (Bldg 2, Lecture theatre 3.02)  
Admission is free. RSVP essential (via website).

<b>Venues:</b>	<b>[FILM]</b> <b>University of Technology, Sydney (UTS)</b> Building 2, Lecture Theatre 3.02 (via UTS main entrance, Broadway)  <b>[EXHIBITION, DEMONSTRATION &amp; TALKS]</b> The Japan Foundation, Sydney Level 4, Central Park (access via lifts) 28 Broadway, Chippendale NSW 2008
<b>Admission:</b>	Admission is free. RSVP essential for talks, film and opening reception. RSVP via website.
<b>Enquiries:</b>	<a href="mailto:reception@jpf.org.au">reception@jpf.org.au</a> / 02 8239 0055
<b>Website/RSVP:</b>	<a href="http://www.jpf.org.au">www.jpf.org.au</a>

## ABOUT TELL THE PRIME MINISTER



109 mins // Documentary // Japanese w. English subtitles // Australian premiere // Unclassified (exempt), PG equivalent.

**Tell the Prime Minister** is the first film by director Eiji Oguma. The film uses interviews and protest footage to examine the social events which occurred over the 18-month period following The Great East Japan Earthquake, culminating in a meeting between a delegation of protesters and then-Prime-Minister Yoshihiko Noda on August 22, 2012. *Tell the Prime Minister* was voted Runner-up to [Kinema Junpo's Best 10 Documentary Feature Films of 2015](#) (Kinema Junpo is Japan's equivalent of the Oscars). The film was released in Japan in September 2015 and continues to screen there nationwide. In February and March, director Eiji Oguma is taking the film on a tour of Europe, with screenings in Germany, Slovenia, Austria, Switzerland and France. The April 8 screening at UTS will be the film's first screening in Australia.

## ABOUT EIJI OGUMA



Photo: Eiji Oguma

Eiji Oguma is Professor of Policy Management at Keio University, Japan. As a historical sociologist, his research covers national identity and nationalism, colonial policy, democracy, and modern Japanese thought and social movements. His work has won numerous prestigious academic awards in Japan. Oguma has published widely in Japanese and several examples of his work have been translated into English, including the monographs, *The Boundaries of "Japanese" vol. 1: Okinawa 1868-1972* (2014) and *A Genealogy of Japanese Self-Images* (2002). Eiji Oguma is the director of the documentary film, *Tell the Prime Minister*. This is his first film, completed with the cooperation of many activists, volunteers and donors of video footage.

## ABOUT ALEXANDER BROWN



Photo: Alexander Brown

Alexander Brown is a researcher, writer and translator based in Port Kembla, NSW. In 2015 he completed a doctoral dissertation at the University of Wollongong on the new wave of activism in Japan after 3.11. He has organised film screenings, conferences and other events on post-3.11 activism in Japan. He has also worked on Japanese film festivals including the International Animation Festival in Hiroshima and the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival. He recently translated a major essay by Eiji Oguma for *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, due for release in early 2016.

He is currently preparing a book based on his doctoral research.

## ABOUT 3.11

On March 11, 2011 a magnitude 9.0 quake struck Japan, causing the nation's biggest tsunami in over a millennium. The wave hit the northeastern Tōhoku region, destroying thousands of homes and sparking the explosion of a nuclear power plant in coastal Fukushima. This triple disaster of earthquake, tsunami and plant explosion is known in Japan as "3.11". Five years on, the effects still echo in the physical, civil and artistic landscape. The *After 3.11* program shines a spotlight on some of these changes.

## ABOUT THE JAPAN FOUNDATION, SYDNEY

The Japan Foundation, Sydney is the Australian arm of the Japan Foundation, which was established by the Japanese government to promote cultural and intellectual exchange between Japan and other nations. It runs a diverse range of programs and events, including exhibitions, talk events, grant programs and Japanese language courses for all levels from beginner to advanced. The Japan Foundation was established in 1972 with a global network of 22 offices in 21 countries. The Australian office was founded in 1977.



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For more information please see [www.jpf.org.au](http://www.jpf.org.au) or contact:

Elicia O'Reilly (02) 8239 0055 / [elicia\\_oreilly@jpf.org.au](mailto:elicia_oreilly@jpf.org.au) or

Jessica Chow (02) 8239 0055 / [jessica\\_chow@jpf.org.au](mailto:jessica_chow@jpf.org.au)

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