

Aussies cool down toward Japan

Staff report

Australian feelings toward Japan deteriorated slightly this year, but most people Down Under still believe relations are steady, according to a recent survey by an Australian policy think tank.

The Lowy Institute conducted the annual poll between March 6 and 21 on 1,001 Australian adults who rated their feelings toward other nations in terms of warmth, from zero degrees to 100.

The average score for Japan was 64 degrees, compared with 66 in 2009. New Zealand was the most attractive, at 84 degrees, followed by Canada at 82. The United States got a score of 68 degrees, while China came in at 54 degrees.

Asked about relations with Japan since Prime Minister Kevin Rudd came to power in 2007, 59 percent of the respondents said they are about the same, but 20 percent said ties have worsened. Only 16 percent said they have improved.

The respondents gave a failing grade of four out of a possible 10 for their government's actions on Japanese whaling.

Australia announced last week it will take Japan to the International Court of Justice in a major escalation of its campaign to prevent whaling in the Antarctic Ocean. The action was not reflected in the opinions in the survey.

The Japan Times: Tuesday, June 1, 2010
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