



## Sejiro Funayama

Country/Region: Australia (Sydney)

Age: 85

Current Position:

Jun Pacific Corporation Pty. Ltd., Corporate Adviser

### ○ Increasing the popularity of Japanese food in Australia

- Founded a Japanese food retail store TOKYO MART in Sydney, Australia in 1976.
- Increased the popularity of Japanese cuisine through the import, wholesale, and retail of Japanese food throughout Australia.
- Exerted effort to promote his hometown, Fukushima, Japan, to support its recovery from disaster.

Sejiro Funayama has contributed to increasing the popularity of Japanese cuisine as a pioneer in Japanese food sales in Australia for over 40 years, from a time when few Australians knew about Japanese food. After early Australian experiences representing a Japanese trading company, he opened Tokyo Mart, a Japanese food retail store, in Northbridge, located in the northern part of Sydney in 1976. He founded Jun Pacific, a food trading company, in 1990, and established a Japanese food supply chain that covers the import, wholesale and retail of Japanese food. Currently, Jun Pacific has its headquarters in Sydney, with branch offices and five retail stores in four major cities in Australia. It has about 300 employees.

With enthusiasm and knowledge accumulated through his experience in the Japanese food retail business, Sejiro Funayama has dealt with tough negotiations with the Australian quarantine authority, which has severe food import regulations, and exerted effort to increase the popularity of safe and trusted Japanese food. He acquired an import permit for Japanese seaweed, for which clearance had once been suspended by Customs. His story has been told throughout the Japanese food industry: "Without Funayama, we would never have seen this Japanese sushi boom."

In addition, his presence and contributions have been recognized with the Australian government's Ethnic Business Award in 2011 and 2013 (the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary), which highlights individuals who come to Australia and contribute greatly to the country's business and social landscape.

After the Great East Japan Earthquake, he has supported the sales of food and Sake produced in his hometown, Fukushima.