

Remarks

Presented by Mr NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth, On the occasion of the Thank You Event for the 9th Perth Japan Festival April 28, 2023

Deputy Lord Mayor, City of Perth, Councilor Liam Gobbert

Sponsors and Partners of the Perth Japan Festival including Rio Tinto, Woodside, INPEX, KPMG, Mitsui Iron Ore Development, Minter Ellison, City of Perth, Office of Multicultural Interests in WA Government, Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Japanese Association in Western Australia and Lotterywest,

Japanese Business leaders and other members of Japanese community in WA

Mr Paul Shillington, Deputy President of Japan Festival Inc and other Board Members

Corporate Event Committee members

Matsuri Event Committee Executives including Ms Miyuki Taniguchi

Festival volunteers and coordinators

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure to celebrate and convey appreciation to sponsors for the monumental success of the Perth Japan Festival. More than 16,000 people attended the festival, the biggest ever turn out in the history of Perth Japan Festival.

We fortunately did not have any incidents and there were numerous comments from the public sharing the fun they had at the festival and thanking the organizers. For organizers, those sincere comments of praise and appreciation are your reward.

It was moving to see from the top of Yagura stage that Bon Odori dance each session draw in more and more participants from the crowd. The circle eventually tripled for the festival's finale and the essence of Japanese Matsuri, a sense of togetherness was shared. We could feel the circle of friendship among Australians and Japanese broadened by this event.

My wife saw all the photos of Japan Festival from Tokyo and advised me “You were enjoying yourself more than anybody, a little more than you should”.

Yes, it was fun and I thoroughly enjoyed myself. And I am happy to hear that people have already been asking how to register to join the Bon Odori for next year while in fact, registration is not necessary.

The passion for sharing fun is remarkable. Perth Ondo パース音頭, born at this Festival, will be passed down for decades to come. It was born out of passion, precisely composed by Setsuko Hayashi, choreographed by Chisato, played and sung by Sanshi & Noriko Tadano, drummed by Aya & Rie, and joined in by all those who participated in the dance. And I pay a special tribute to the late Otohiko Fuji, who in 1992 wrote the lyrics which are full of love for Perth. We were happy that his wife Mrs Fuji who are 92 years of age was present at the Festival to witness the Perth Ondo, written by her late husband and now.

Stage artists and booths participants were not only from WA but also from different parts of Australia. We are blessed with so many goodwill ambassadors and talented enthusiasts, practitioners and masters of Japanese culture and martial arts here in Perth. With their passion, we were able to share the beauty of Japanese culture ranging from traditional culture to modern pop culture.

To all sponsors, I would like to thank you deeply for your great contributions for the Perth Japan Festival. I am happy to report to you that your support rendered wonderful results this year.

To the organizing staff, you may not have been center stage but you all were the true stars of the event. Your perseverance and perspiration behind the scenes truly has brought Japan and Western Australia closer together.

At the ANZAC day, I had conversation with Premier Mark McGowan and Lord Mayor Basil Zempilas respectively and reported the monumental success of the Perth Japan Festival

and both were so happy with the success. Lord Mayor Zempilas and I are discussing to prepare the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Sister City Relation with Kagoshima City next year, which can bring extra hype to Perth Japan Festival.

Thus, I have no doubt that the milestone Tenth Perth Japan Festival next year will prone to be even more enjoyable and exciting than this year.

Thank you.

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