

Address by Mr NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth
On the occasion of the 81st Commemoration of the Broome Air Raid
March 3, 2023

Distinguished guests,
The families of those present here on the 3rd of March, 1942,
Ladies and Gentleman,
Good morning.

The Second World War was a conflict of unimaginable destruction, in which citizens of many nations suffered as the fires of conflict reached the homeland and wrought a tragic cost.

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I express my sincerest condolences for the countless lives lost within the maelstrom of war. Japan will never forget that it inflicted immeasurable damage and suffering on Broome and other parts of Australia.

Acknowledging that the peace we cherish today is a testament to the sacrifices of generations, Japan resolutely determined to never again repeat the tragedy of war, and it has walked along a path of a free, democratic and peace-loving nation, governed by the rule of law since the end of the Second World War.

Yet for over eight decades, former foes came together, determined to build a brighter future and to ensure that peace and prosperity would define their relationship.

Japan and Australia have developed mutually beneficial ties through trade and the extension of people-to-people ties.

The development of such a relationship is the result of the endeavours of our predecessors from post-World War II until today.

We are acutely aware that the Government of Australia took the decision to sign Japan Australia Commerce Agreement in 1957 at a time when difficult feelings towards Japan were still strong, as the War had ended just over ten years earlier.

On this occasion, we would like to express once again our gratitude for the generosity by Australia after the war and the efforts made by so many Australians towards deepening and expanding our relationship for the future. This was crucial for Japan's post war recovery and successful economic development thereafter and laid foundation of stable and mutually beneficial relationship.

Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio visited Perth October last year and strengthened the "Special Strategic Partnership" between Japan and Australia. Japan and Australia who share the value of rule based order; democracy and human rights, now stand at the forefront to defend these values.

Japan and Broome have a long special history, which dates back more than 130 years to when Japanese pearl divers arrived here. Since then, families and descendants have faced with challenging times including 1942 and became a bridge between the two nations. I am pleased the Broome endures multi-cultural tradition and keeps its Japanese connection.

The resilience of the pearl divers community and their love for the land and people of Australia became a solemn inspiration. Many of Japanese residents in Western Australia thereafter followed and contributed in forging friendship and trust with Australians through people-to-people bonds over the years.

We acknowledge our difficult past while reflecting our achievement we have built through a journey we walked together. Japan and Australia have extraordinary relationship that transcends time, distance and culture, united in resolve, admiration and in enduring friendship.

Thank you for your attention.

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