

Speech

Presented by Mr NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth

On the occasion of the New Year's Celebration Reception

Consul-General's Official Residence, Perth, Australia

January 19, 2023

The Hon Sue Ellery MLC, Minister for Finance; Commerce; Women's Interests; representing the Premier and Deputy Premier of Western Australia,
The Hon Michelle Roberts MLA, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly,
Mr Shane Love MLA, representing the Leader of the Opposition,
H.E Richard Court AC, Former Australian Ambassador to Japan, and Former Premier of Western Australia,
Mr Yaz Mubarakai MLA,
Ms Jessica Stojkovski MLA,
Mr Kevin Michel MLA,
Your Worship the Mayors and Councillors,
Mr Amarjeet Singh Takhi, Consul General of India and Fellow Consul-Generals, I am pleased to have Ms Tina Redshow newly arrived Consul General of the United Kingdom to Western Australia,
And the co-host of the event, Mr Yosuke Ueda, Chairman, Japan Chamber of Commerce & Industries in Perth & affiliated Business leaders,
Prof Gordon Flake, Perth USAsia Centre,
Fellow partners, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A Very Happy New Year!

Welcome to the New Year's Celebration of the Consulate General of Japan co-hosted with the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industries in Perth. It has been 3 years since we last had this celebration in 2020. Although Covid 19 is far from defeated, borders are now open and the risk is carefully being managed. We wish to pay tribute to the dedicated medical professionals who saved lives and thank the Government of Western Australia who very successfully managed the challenges.

I am NAITO Yasushi, the Consul-General of Japan since October last year. For 3 months, I have been introducing myself and I am happy to be able to greet so many important guests from different sectors at the beginning of the New Year.

The last year 2022 has become a milestone year for Japan and Western Australia. We have received Prime Minister KISHIDA on the 21-22 October who held the Leaders Meeting with Prime Minister Albanese here in Perth, and thereby uplifting the Special Strategic Partnership between Japan and Australia to an even higher level.

For this achievement, I wish once again to express my sincere appreciation to business leaders of both Japan and Western Australia, Japanese residents and partner organizations for their contribution.

While the world advances its fight against the once-in-a-century pandemic and the Russian aggression in Ukraine caused the new challenges including energy and food shortage, our common concern on the security environment and global issues such as climate change is deepening. At this critical juncture, and to tackle these challenges, realization of the importance of Japan Australian partnership has been re-cognized in a new light. Western Australia is the showcase of all the important elements of the increasingly important Japan Australia relations including energy and mineral resources and security cooperation. That is why Perth was the host of Prime Minister Kishida's visit.

Our next goal is to make firm advancements in following up Prime Minister KISHIDA's visit to Perth. In this connection, we are delighted to welcome Premier McGowan to Japan next week. This is his 2nd official visit as Premier, and I understand 8th visit in total to Japan and a series of high level meetings are scheduled with CEOs of Japanese companies, Government officials including Governors of Tokyo and Hyogo prefectures.

We are looking forward to discussing ongoing collaborations and further possible investments on LNG, mineral resources, energy transition including hydrogen,

ammonia and CCU as well as on biotec, space, defense, agriculture, critical minerals, and downstream processing. Discussions also include tourism and educational exchanges.

The Premier's visit to Japan coincided with the great news yesterday of All Nippon Airways who announced that Narita-Perth direct flight will resume later this year. Although resumption is not immediate and full scale, a firm decision was made to start with three return flights per week as from the season commencing 29th of Oct. We expect volumes of business and cultural interactions will further expand with the resumption of the direct flight.

These developments, including success of the visit of Prime Minister Kishida to Perth was possible thanks to the deep mutual understanding between Japan and Australia and is the culmination of the enduring efforts of our two nations. We are fortunate so many unofficial ambassadors making bridges between Japan and Western Australia. The Consulate General of Japan will seek to be an effective moderator to assist activities of the goodwill ambassadors as much as possible.

In this year of 2023, we will have more opportunities for enhancing relations. Australia is the next chair and host of the Quad Summit, Japan is non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, and the host of the G7 Hiroshima Summit. G20 in India is another opportunity.

(And in WA we have Perth Japan Festival in March.)

Later, please enjoy "Kagamiwari", the Sake barrel breaking open ceremony, a traditional Japanese way to wish good health, happiness and harmony at the start of New Year (or at any new beginning).

We hope 2023 will be a wonderful year for Japan and Australia, for Japan and Western Australia.

Thank you for your attention.

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