

**Remarks by NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth
at Australia Japan Business Council event
A Conversation on the WA-Japan Relationship
December 1, 2022**

Deputy Premier, Hon. Roger Cook, MLA,
Deputy Director-General Simone Spencer,
Chairman of AJBC, Mr Richard Sandover,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great honour to speak to you this evening about WA-Japan relations and the opportunities that stem from these relations.

Since the visit of Prime Minister Kishida to Perth in 21st and 22nd October, profile of Western Australia in Japan and Internationally is lifted and we already witnessing progress.

For example, I joined the tape cutting of Uniqulo store in Jundalup this morning. According COO of Uniqulo Australia, this is the 31st Uniqulo store opened in Australia and 4th one in Perth since the first one was opened in 2014. They are doing extremely well in Australia as a high quality yet affordable fashion brand of Japan with innovative products such as “Heatech” and “Aerism” being popular. Uniqulo is preparing for further investment next year as part of post covit maketing strategy. Uniqulo is just one example of this morning but things are moving daily.

I wish to returen to the Prime Minister Kishida’s visit to Japan for a while. This is the third visit of Japanese Prime Minister to Western Australia in the History. Back in 2014, late Prime Minister Abe visited Perth and Pilbara. And 48 years ago in 1974, Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka visited Perth. But this visit of Prime Minister Kishida, as Deputy Premier has alluded to, was the very first visit of Japanese Prime Minister that only destination was Perth.

It is extraodianry that within half a year Prime Minister Albanese and Prime Minister Kishida met 5 times already including Annual Leaders meeting in Perth. And all the key elements of increasingly important Australia-Japan relations are condensed like crystal in Western Australia.

According to the statistics of WA Government (which is translated into Japanese language which effectively shows a friendly posture to Japanese investors), 28 percent of Japan's imported LNG comes from Western Australia, 60 percent of iron ore and more than 10 percent of wheat, all from the State of Western Australia only. The stable supply chain partnership was built over years of mutual interactions that led to the development of the industries.

If I may quote Ambassador Yamagami's words, describing the visit as; ...the ideal setting—located at the geopolitical nexus of Australia and the Indo-Pacific, and the economic nexus of our own Japan-Australia relationship.”

During the visit two leaders signed the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation. In terms of Japan-Australia security and defence cooperation, in the years since 2007 when then-Prime Ministers ABE Shinzo and John Howard issued the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation. And during Prime Minister KISHIDA's visit our leaders renewed this Joint Declaration. In order to reflect the vast changes in the strategic environment of the Indo-Pacific region that have taken place over the 15 years since 2007, this renewed declaration outlines the direction of our bilateral cooperation for the next decade. Prime Minister Kishida described this new declaration as a guiding compass of security cooperation for the next 10 years. In terms of concrete action, the leaders announced initiatives to enhance interoperability between the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the Australian Defence Force, and intelligence cooperation was given explicit mention.

We also had substantive agreement on Energy and resource cooperation. The export of resources and energy in the form of coal, iron ore, and LNG from Australia to Japan, and the investment in those sectors from Japan to Australia, have underpinned the economic relationship between our two countries.

At the Leaders' Meeting, it was clearly reaffirmed that Australia's will continue to be a stable supplier of resources and a trusted destination for investment.

While continuing to cooperate on trade and investment in energy and resources, the two leaders confirmed that cooperation on decarbonisation, including in the area of hydrogen and ammonia which is a new frontier for the Japan-Australia economic partnership.

Furthermore, the leaders agreed to further our critical minerals partnership, using the example of rare earth collaboration as a foundation, to build secure critical mineral supply chains.

The leaders also confirmed that Japan and Australia now form the core of a partnership of like-minded countries to realise the vision of a Free and Open

At the Leaders' Meeting, there was an exchange of opinions about strengthening ties with South-East Asia and Pacific Island nations. Given concerns that we cannot allow today's Ukraine to become tomorrow's East Asia, both leaders agreed that Russia's intimidating remarks about the use of nuclear weapons are a grave threat to the peace and security of the international community and are absolutely unacceptable.

Thanks to the visit by Prime Minister Kishida to Perth six weeks ago, relations with Japan are closer than ever before and I have been hearing of new and exciting areas of cooperation daily. To mention few, Japan Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC) had official opening in Sydney in October and signed a MOU with Woodside on stable energy supply. On 30th November, Yokogawa Electric receives order for green hydrogen business system in Mitsui-funded WA project.

During the Australian Hydrogen Conference in WA next week, a good presence of Japanese companies is expected. I am pleased to say we will assist the Japan Organization for Metals and Energy Security or JOGMEC who will attend along with several Japanese firms. By way of amending law, TOR of JOGMEC has officially broadened to include Hydrogen, Ammonia, other forms of alternative energy, as well as CCS and CCU projects in assisting Japanese companies and partners with finance and researches. We have President Hosono visiting Perth and he will make his presentation. Toyota who is working with ATCO for first hydrogen station in WA is presenting Mirai, hydrogen vehicle at the conference venue.

We are also grateful that restrictions of movements are gradually being lifted. Resumption of mutual visa exemption for short stay less than 90 days since 11th of October has already making a big difference.

Indeed, looking at cultural exchanges, high school students have resumed school trips and the Tokyo City University Australia Program (TAP Program) has also resumed and we

welcomed 140 students from Tokyo recently to Perth. Western Australia and Japan share 11 Sister City/State Relationships & Friendship Agreements, and Japanese language is the second most studied foreign language in WA.

To conclude, the visit of Prime Minister Kishida to Perth and its success owes to deep mutual understanding between Japan and Australia and culmination of enduring efforts of two nations. 8250 Japanese residents in WA include permanent residents who, overcoming difficult times over the years, became bridges between the two countries.

What impressed me most since arriving here in Perth six weeks ago, has been that I met a number of ambassadors bridging two nations. I am happy we have Yukie Nakamura, a chocolate ambassador among us tonight. How fortunate are we to have these bridges. I humbled myself with this and realized my role as Consul General is to become an effective back stage moderator so that goodwill ambassadors can shine.

Thank you for your attention.

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