

Remarks
Presented by NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth
On the occasion of the 35th AABC Bonsai National Convention
Friday May 19, 2023

H.E. Richard Court AC, Former Australian Ambassador to Japan and Former Premier of Western Australia,

Ms Dianne Boekhout, President of the Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs (AABC) and President of the Bonsai Society of Western Australia,

Fujikawa Masayuki Sensei, and all the distinguished master bonsai artists present here tonight,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to congratulate the Bonsai Society of WA for hosting this AABC National Convention in Perth and for providing an opportunity for AABC members to be back together after a difficult three years due to the pandemic.

This is a great day to reunite with old friends, while catching up with your shared love for bonsai. The Consulate-General of Japan in Perth has had the privilege of knowing President Dianne and members of Bonsai Society of WA for many years.

In February this year, I had the honour of presenting the Foreign Minister's Commendation by Japanese Foreign Minister, Hayashi Yoshimasa to Dianne as a representative of the Bonsai Society of WA on February 23 at the birthday celebration of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, in the presence of Premier Mark McGowan and leaders of the Japanese community.

The commendation was in acknowledgement of their contributions in promoting mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and Australia through their bonsai activities over many years. Of note their passion and tenacious efforts, despite the adversity of the pandemic, to host the World Bonsai Convention in 2022 virtually in Perth – an event that was deeply appreciated by countries all over the world, including Japan. And those efforts by the members, I believe, have led to the materializing of this AABC Convention finally in-person, again here in Perth.

I also thank bonsai masters in WA who participated in the Perth Japan Festival in the Supreme Court Gardens in March this year, which attracted more than 16,000 people where many showed an interest in bonsai.

I feel warm to know that this AABC National Bonsai Convention in Perth coincides with the G7 Hiroshima Summit where Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio, who visited Perth last year, is welcoming the world's leaders including Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to discuss global challenges and peace in Hiroshima. I hope for the best out of this G7 Hiroshima Summit, as bonsai signifies peace, prosperity, harmony and respect to nature.

Finally, I wish you to have fruitful deliberation, mutual sharing and learning during this National Bonsai Convention.

Thank you for your attention.

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