

Opening Remarks
Presented by NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth
On the occasion of the SMBC Perth 10th Anniversary Reception
On Wednesday July 19, 2023

Acknowledgements

The Hon. Mr. Bill Johnston MLA, Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Energy; Hydrogen Industry; Industrial Relations for the State of Western Australia,

His Excellency Mr. Richard Court AC, Former Australian Ambassador to Japan and Former Premier of Western Australia,

Mr. Yuichi Nishimura, managing executive officer and Co-Head of Asia Pacific region, SMBC and visiting executives from Singapore,

Mr. Koichiro Yui, General Manager and Country Head, SMBC Australia and his team from Perth and Sydney,

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Celebrating the anniversary

It is my distinct honour to say a few words at this occasion in celebrating this milestone. On behalf of the Government of Japan, I wish to congratulate Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation for the 10th year anniversary of SMBC Perth. As Mr Nishimura said earlier, SMBC's loan assets have grown significantly, tripling in the past 10 years to have reached 26 billion dollars. That has been a great achievement and a testament to the success of SMBC establishing its base in WA, SMBC Perth 10 years ago.

Background of Opening SMBC Perth Branch

SMBC's contribution in providing finance to the Ichthys Liquefied Natural Gas and the Roy Hill Iron Ore developments has led to a significant positive socio-economic impact and benefit to Australia, Japan and to the region. Their contribution to these world-leading projects led SMBC to establish its base in Perth. Mr. Nishimura and Mr. Yui, present here tonight, were both in Tokyo at that time and it was their foresight, which drove the Bank's decision to open SMBC's base in Western Australia.

Leading role of Japan's Mega Banks in Australia

Mega banks have significant roles in providing project finance and making it happen. SMBC is known as one of the global leaders in project finance and is the biggest foreign bank in Australia in terms of corporate loan balance, and the No. 5 wholesale bank in Australia after NAB, CBA, Westpac and ANZ. In fact, all Japanese "Mega Banks" including SMBC, MUFG and Mizuho Bank are the top 3 biggest foreign banks in Australia.

SMBC has a portfolio exposure of more than 42 billion dollars in Australia. They finance projects that

have significant positive impacts on prosperity, quality growth, sustainable development and wellbeing of people. SMBC works closely with JBIC, the Japanese Government policy finance institution, to create co-financing packages to various resources and energy projects proposed by Japanese companies. I feel so fortunate to have the presence of Japanese Banks such as SMBC in Australia and their contributions to project finance, especially here in Western Australia.

Current Key Focus

The Government of Japan wishes to give its full support to SMBC and other Mega Banks in their continued efforts in providing finances to energy and resources projects in the pipeline to promote the prosperity and sustainable growth of Australia, Japan and the Asia-Pacific region. I should highlight that their current key focuses include energy transition, which is an important common challenge of the world.

Recently, we hear of new announcements of involvement by Japanese companies in Australia in the field of clean energy almost every week, including INPEX's 50% share purchase with Enel Green Power just last week. Another example is Marubeni, Iwatani and Kansai Power's entering into agreement to FEED for producing green hydrogen on a large scale in the Gladstone Region in Queensland, among others.

The contribution of SMBC is not only limited to resources and energy but their focus also includes fields such as infrastructure, real estate and insurance. The Australian Superannuation fund does asset management to finance many projects also through SMBC and receives returns. The whole big circle of circulation is promoting the growth and wellbeing of people.

Bilateral Relation between Japan and Australia, Western Australia

I am glad that the Hon Minister Bill Johnston kindly joined us tonight in celebrating this event. Premier Roger Cook and WA State Ministers including the Hon Bill Johnstone remain the strongest supporters of the "Special Strategic Partnership" between Japan and Australia, which was enhanced by the visit of Prime Minister Kishida to Perth last October, who also had further talks at the G7 Hiroshima Summit with Prime Minister Albanese.

This Partnership is underlined by the long-standing relationship in resources and energy industries that benefited both countries and was built over many years.

It is based upon mutual trust supported by strong people-to-people bonds, which are the most important asset of all.

In this connection, I am delighted with the resumption of the direct flights recommencing on 29th October at 21:55 of All Nippon Airways flight NH882 that connects Perth and Tokyo in less than 10

hours without transit. We expect a significant jump in volume of human interactions, which is also a huge gain for trade and investment between Japan and Western Australia.

Conclusion

Congratulations again to SMBC for this milestone and its achievement. I sincerely hope for further development for the next 10 years and beyond, with the support of Australian and Japanese partners.

Thank you for your attention.

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