

Opening Remarks
Presented by NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth
On the occasion of the JET Programme Pre-departure Reception
for the 37th JET participants
Thursday July 20, 2023

Acknowledgements

- The Hon. Matthew Swinbourn MLC, Parliamentary Secretary, and today representing Dr. Tony Buti, Minister for Education; Aboriginal Affairs; Citizenship and Multicultural Interest,
- The Hon Tjorn Sibma MLC, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party in the Legislative Council,
- Mr. Sam Walsh AO, External Director of Mitsui and Co.
- 37th JET participants,
- Returnees and Former JET participants,
- Japanese business leaders in Western Australia,
- Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome

Good evening. Thank for joining us tonight to this Pre-departure reception for our 15 new JET participants who successfully qualified for the 2023 JET program from WA and departing Perth for Japan at the end of this month. Congratulations to you all.

This year, we are also welcoming former JETs in WA including those who recently returned from Japan. I hope this is an opportunity to reconnect with Japan by catching up with former JETs, JET Alumni Association in WA and key people of Japanese business and cultural spheres in Perth.

JET program and participation from WA

The Japan Exchange and Teaching program is one of the longest running, best-managed, and most well taken-care-of programs of its kind worldwide. It aims to promote internationalization of Japan and mutual understanding with people of Japan and other nations through teaching English and grassroots cultural exchange.

Now in its 37th year, it started in 1987 with Australia and WA participating right from the first intake together with the USA, UK, and NZ. Now, more than 75,000 people have participated thus far, and this year we are inviting JETs from 77 countries. Australian JETs are known for being central participants and for being positive mood makers. Within the 37 years, a total of 540 West Australians have participated in the JET Program. I am delighted to have Ms Margo Whittle, a member of the very 1st group here with us tonight.

Message to new JETs

To the new JETs, it is not always metropolitan areas like Tokyo you are assigned to. You might have been assigned to a rural area where you might become one of first foreigners the children meet in their lives. You will find yourself acting as a natural ambassador of Western Australia. You will have the wonderful experience of being a bridge between Japan and Australia, making a positive impact on Japanese people. So, please make use of the opportunity and enjoy becoming an ambassador, learn about Japan as much as possible, and come back to WA and continue to be a bridge. Your interactions with Japanese and with JET colleagues from other countries will open your global vision and I am sure it will be useful to your future career.

Message to JET returnees

To the returning JETs, welcome back to WA from Japan. The contribution of Ex JETs is remarkable. Some have become teachers, scholars, public servants, managers at Japanese companies or famous cultural master like Simon. Some ex JETs in other states even have become members of parliament. We are glad one of the returnees Brittany Beale has chosen to join us at the Consulate-General this year.

You might have arrived back from Japan and find yourself looking for your connection with Japan. In this connection, the Japanese Consulate and JETAAWA are happy to provide you regular opportunities.

In Conclusion

People to people bonds is the most important asset of our longstanding friendly relationship between Japan and Australia and JET participants are making a remarkable contribution. I wish all new JETs good health and wish you a wonderful time working and living in Japan. Keep in contact with your JET colleagues nearby. Take good care of yourself and enjoy Japan.

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