

Opening Remarks
Presented by Naito Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth
On the occasion of the WA Japanese Language Speech Contest 2023
(Saturday 26th August 2023)

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good afternoon,

It is my great pleasure to be here with you at the Western Australia Japanese Language Speech Contest 2023.

I wish to thank the Japanese Language Teachers' Association of Western Australia(JLTAWA), and the sponsors including the Japan Foundation Sydney and the University of Western Australia for their efforts to make this speech contest happen. We are grateful for your efforts and continued support.

Since my arrival last October, I have been anxiously looking forward to the Japanese Language speech contest. Making a speech not only shows your language skills, but it also shares your thoughts in a way to resonate with others. If you do it in Japanese language, it requires a good level of understanding on traditional values of Japanese culture and people.

It needs analysis of the society, selecting the theme and logic, analysis of how the audience would feel by listening to the speech, all done using Japanese language. Each Japanese word and expression having precise meanings and nuances of cultural backgrounds and values. Ownership of word usage, expressions and sentences all belongs to the speechmaker. This is an extraordinary exercise that requires passion, and I am happy to witness it today.

We have a group of dedicated Japanese language teachers in Western Australia working hard to keep Japanese language education strong, relevant and interesting to young Western Australians, from primary school, right through to university. The strength of Japanese language education in this country clearly contributes to Australia-Japan relations. We are witnessing the renewed recognition in Japan of the importance of Australia, specifically with Western Australia, as demonstrated by Prime Minister Kishida's visit to Perth last October. The relationship is supported by people-to-people

bonds that should never be taken for granted, and we should all continue to make updated efforts of the times.

All my assistants in the Consulate-General of Japan in Perth can participate in sophisticated economic and political discussions in Japanese and I am proud of them.

Japanese language education leads to cultural and language exchange, which in turn opens doors and creates further opportunities for economic and even political exchange. Language study opens up windows of opportunity, and motivation for experiences they would never have otherwise had. Thus, I would like to again underline the importance of events such as this speech contest in developing and strengthening the ties between our two countries.

I would like to thank students, for your courage in enrolling in the contest, and standing up before us to make a speech in a language other than your own.

I truly hope each and every one of you participants can show the very best of your own performance while enjoying delivering your speeches in full. I wish you all the best of luck and look forward to hearing your speeches.

Thank you for your attention.

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