

## Remarks

**Presented by NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth  
On the occasion of the Floating Lantern Ceremony  
at the South West Japan Festival 2023 in Friendship Park, Bunbury  
Saturday September 16, 2023**

It is good to be back in Bunbury. I attended the Matsuri Day last weekend and I liked it so much that I came back traveling from Perth again. The atmosphere here today is great again with activities of kite flying, koinobori, origami, music, tea ceremony and Japanese food.

This Floating Lantern Ceremony is the last event of the South West Japan Festival 2023. I learned that a total of 26 events were held, all on Japan during the festival period of one month this year and attracted many thousands of people. Congratulations to the organisers and volunteers.

Originally, 灯籠流し or 'Floating Lanterns' in Japan is a ceremony in which paper lanterns are released down a river or into the ocean, often performed on the last evening of the 'Obon' season, when it is believed that the spirits of ancestors return to the living world. The lanterns symbolize the lives of those who have passed and return them to their nature.

Lanterns are set afloat at dusk and the scene is a play of light and dark as the lantern glow slowly fades into the distance. Decorate your lanterns with your own message of wishes and prayers. Enjoy the event.

Thank you for your attention.

End