

**Opening Remarks**  
**Presented by NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth**  
**On the occasion of the Japanese Film Festival 2023 Opening Ceremony**  
**Monday October 16, 2023**

Thank you for the introduction.

I wish to start by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting, Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging.

Director of Japan Foundation Sydney, Mr Yukihiro Ohira;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the opening of the Perth leg of the Japanese Film Festival in Australia 2023. I understand that this is the 27<sup>th</sup> Japanese Film Festival in Australia which originally started in 1997 in Sydney and is now one of the biggest Japanese Film Festivals, attracting more than 30,000 people.

I remember that one year ago, the previous Japanese Film Festival was held here just after the visit of Prime Minister Kishida to Perth.

Since then, positive development has followed. We are excited to see the return of Japanese students in Perth, a number of Matsuri, Japanese cultural festivals were held throughout Western Australia, the resumption of both sister city exchanges and the direct flights to Japan at the end of this month.

Business interaction is also very strong this year including in the traditional resources and agricultural sectors as well as in the new energy sector. There is certainly a synergy between cultural and business activity.

Last week, the Australia Japan Business Cooperation Committee hosted an annual joint conference in Melbourne to celebrate 60 years of bilateral business interaction between Australia and Japan. The conference was the biggest ever in the 60 years, attracting 620 businessmen and officials including myself, and a strong contingent from WA. The number of Japanese citizens in WA has also increased this year to 8,500.

But the most important asset of this remarkable bilateral relationship is the people-to-people bond between our two countries, driven by many of you gathered here tonight.

This Japanese Film Festival is an annual highlight for many Western Australian fans. Films can provide insights into the society and everyday life of Japan, what people in Japan appreciate and what we cherish. Through the films, we can share some of the beauty and goodness of different aspects of Japan, while enjoying the entertainment.

I wish to thank Mr. Ohira and his team at the Japan Foundation, Sydney for organizing this festival and bringing it to Perth yet again.

Tonight's film, 大名倒産 "We're Broke, My Lord", is a comical adventure and drama set in feudal Japan, and released just this year. This Cinderella story of a commoner becoming a lord overnight only to be in for a surprise, is a highly entertaining piece for you to enjoy.

I also hope you will take this opportunity of the Japanese Film Festival to see many more Japanese films on the big screen.

Thank you for your attention.

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