

## Remarks

**Presented by NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth**  
**On the occasion of the Inaugural Curtin Japan Engagement Event**  
**Japan in the World: Past, Present, Future**  
**November 8, 2023**

Prof. Seth Kunin, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Global, Curtin University,  
Dr. Reto Hofmann, Dean Global, Japan, Curtin University,  
Dr. Hiroaki Adachi from Tohoku University and his team,  
Prof. Peta Ashworth, Prof. Klaus Regenauer-Lieb, Curtin University,  
Captains of industries including Mitsubishi Cooperation and Tokyo Gas,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to join you in congratulating the announcement of the imminent launch of the Curtin Japan Center for Engagement. Although the formal launch of the Center, I understand will be set for another date in early 2024, I wish to take this occasion to express sincere appreciation to those who made tremendous efforts to establish the first University based Center exclusively on Japan in Western Australia.

It is encouraging to see many quality engagements with Japan are taking place in Curtin University recently, including the Workshop of the Australia-Japan Collaborative Research Networks co-hosted by Curtin University and Fukuoka University chaired by Associate Prof Hussein Znad, and presentation session of Microbubble Technology for Carbon Geo-Storage collaborated with Tokyo Gas, with the participation of Hon Madeleine King MP, and the Hon Bill Johnston MLA.

I am grateful that, since the session in July, Minister Madeleine King has been very active in pronouncing the importance of CCS investment and research, announcing Future Gas Strategy and making effort right now to adopt CCS legal framework at the Federal Parliament.

The Japan Center for Engagement will be an ideal hub on Japan where all the information on collaborative works and joint studies with Japan within Curtin University, as well as student exchanges initiatives are gathered and extra values added by organizing initiatives on culture and history.

Japan and Western Australia enjoys longstanding mutually beneficial relations over more than 140 years starting with Japanese Pearl divers. In the late 1940's, Japan was at the crossroads trying desperately to rebuild, economically, politically and spiritually. In the early 1950's, with new constitution based on international peace was adopted and remarkable economic development started to unfold.

In Australia, forward-thinking politicians, such as Sir Charles Court, from Western Australia and business people joined forces with Japan, looking for ways and means to unlock the potential of two countries and signed a commerce agreement in 1957. Both countries mutually understood respective needs of the times, and Japan became founding partner of the iron ore industry and later LNG industry, all happened in Western Australia. Today, 53 % of Japan's imported iron ore, 35% of LNG, 15% of wheat, 22% of canola seeds are from Western Australia.

Japan and Australia share principles of peace, democracy, human rights and rule of law, and especially this year chairing G7 and Quad respectively.

And this Japan-Western Australia relation is strongly supported by robust human-to-human bonds that were built over many years and fields including student and sister city exchanges. Human bond is the most important asset between Japan and WA.

Last month, there was the milestone 60<sup>th</sup> Conference of Australia Japan Business Cooperation Committee Joint Conference held in Melbourne, attracting the biggest ever 620 delegates of economic and political leaders, who agreed to proceed with next 60 years with common challenge of geopolitics, energy transition as well as technological challenges including generation AI, Space and Cyber security.

It is within this context that intellectual, academic and educational exchange between Japan and Australia is needed more than ever and the establishment of the Japan Center at Curtin University, one of the world's top university on mining engineering is very much welcomed.

I am also delighted to know that Curtin University joined Hasekura League platform of Tohoku University conducting Japanese Studies exploration on a global scale.

Ten days ago, WA Premier, the Hon Roger Cook MLA, and Deputy Premier, the Hon Rita

Saffioti MLA, visited Japan to promote more investment and to strengthen the bilateral relationship with Japan even further, taking the first ANA direct flight finally resumed after 3 years and 7 months.

Premier invited Japan to become a founding partner on Energy Transition. He made a strategic communication with Japanese major resource and energy companies saying: "Western Australia is a trade-exposed economy. We need to work with our Asian regional partners to make sure... we're not simply wrapping ourselves in a blanket of self-satisfaction by reaching net zero ourselves if that is going to be at the detriment of the globe." The message was well received by business leaders of Japan.

Deputy Premier as the treasurer has emphasized that WA is the only state in Australia with the triple A rating by both Moody's and S&P for four consecutive years, to Japanese finance institutions who are providing 20% finance needed to WA.

And I wish to add that within one week after the resumption of direct flight, already four delegations are visiting from Japan making use of the direct flight and human interactions are expected to be up scaled to another level.

Next year, the Government of Japan, JAXA and the Western Australian Government will host the APRSAF, the Asia Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum in Perth where more than 500 delegates from 40 countries are expected to participate, and it is another example of opportunity with Japan.

With those developments, there is no better timing of announcing the launch of the Curtin Japan Center for Engagement. It is so timely and symbolic.

I sincerely hope that the Curtin Japan Center will be able to facilitate the networks among different initiatives on Japan in Curtin University and among different university and institutions in WA and beyond.

Thank you for your attention.

End.