

Speech
Presented by Mr NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth
On the occasion of the New Year's Celebration Reception
Consul-General's Official Residence, Perth, Australia
January 23 January

1 Acknowledgements

- The Hon Jackie Jarvis MLC, representing the Premier of Western Australia, and Minister for Agriculture and Food; Forestry; Small Business,
 - The Hon Alanna Clohesy MLC, President of the Legislative Council,
 - The Hon Don Punch MLA, Minister for Regional Development; Disability Services; Fisheries; Seniors and Aging; Volunteering;
 - The Hon Hannah Beazley MLA, Minister for Local Government; Youth, Minister Assisting the Minister for Training and Workforce Development,
 - His Excellency Richard Court AC, Former Ambassador of Australia to Japan and Former Premier of Western Australia,
 - Ms Libby Mettam MLA, Leader of the WA Liberal Party,
 - Dr David Honey MLA, representing the Leader of the Opposition,
 - Ms Jessica Shaw MLA,
 - Ms Robyn Clarke MLA,
 - Mr Kevin Michel MLA,
 - Mr Garry Korte, CEO of Hancock Prospecting,
 - Ms Listiana Operananta, Dean of Consular Corps and Consul-General of Indonesia, and members of Consular Corps in WA,
 - Ms Sawako Nakanishi, Chairperson of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Perth and Deputy Managing Director of Mitsubishi Australia,
 - Leaders of the Japanese and Australian business sectors,
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land we are meeting, the Wadjak people of the Noongar Nation and pay my respect to elders, past, present and emerging,

2 Opening Remarks

Welcome to the New Year's celebration at the official residence of Consulate-General of Japan, co-hosted by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry in Perth. This is the 50th year since this heritage of Western Australia, Minawara, built in 1900 by Walter James the fifth Premier designed by Talbot Hobbs, became the House of Japanese Hospitality.

3 The Noto Peninsula Earthquake

Japan started 2024 with the sad news of the Noto Peninsula Earthquake that caused

tremendous damage and loss of life, followed by the airplane crash at Haneda Airport. I wish to express my heartfelt sympathy to those affected and express condolences to the families of those who lost their lives, including the five dedicated coast guard officers on an emergency mission to deliver assistance to victims of the earthquake.

I wish to thank you for all the messages of sympathy expressed by Australians at these times of difficulty. Japan is gathering our efforts to help those affected and work towards their earliest possible recovery. (For those who wish to support can do so, as the details of donation accounts are available at the reception desk today. I thank you again sincerely for your support.)

4 Human Exchanges

The last year, 2023 was the year human exchanges had their expansion. It was like the blossoming of flowers after a long winter. This included the resumption of ANA's Perth Narita direct flights after three and a half years of suspension due to the pandemic.

The Premier, the Hon Roger Cook MLA, and the Deputy Premier, the Hon Rita Saffioti MLA, became the first passengers of the direct flight to make an official visit to Japan, further strengthening the Japan-WA relationship.

We have also seen Japanese festivals in WA going from strength to strength including in Perth, Broome and the South West. We were delighted that the Parliamentary Friendship Group of Japan was launched in March. We are also excited by the announcement that Curtin University is officially launching the Japan Center for Engagement very soon with the effort of Prof Reto Hoffman. Furthermore, the long awaited JECCWA, Japan Education and Culture Center in WA will be launched at the former Hyogo Center site with the support of the WA Government in 2 weeks-time thanks to AJSWA which is also celebrating 50th year milestone this year.

ANA has announced officially today that Perth Narita line will have a temporary pause as from April 14th due to the shortage of aircrafts caused by the "Pratt & Whitney" engine issue, but it has also been announced that it will definitely re-start again in October, aiming to have even more flights than currently. I appreciate ANA for its continued strong commitment to bring Japan closer to WA.

5 Energy and Resources Partnership

Japan and Western Australia enjoy longstanding relations over more than 140 years starting with Japanese Pearl divers. Just 12 years after World War II, forward thinking politicians from Western Australia such as Sir Charles Court, father of Ambassador Richard Court, and business people joined forces with Japan, looking for ways and means to unlock the potential of our two countries, signing a commerce agreement in 1957. It led to the remarkable economic success of both Japan and Australia, first with iron ore,

and later with LNG, and has contributed to the world economy on a massive scale.

Professor Ross Garnaut, the globally eminent economic policy intellectual for over 30 years, who is originally from Perth, spoke at a AJBCWA's lecture in November and described the Japan-WA partnership as a rare success model of the world based on mutual trust. Today, Japan relies on WA so much that 53 % of Japan's imported iron ore, 35% of LNG, 15% of wheat (just ideal for udon noodles) are from Western Australia. (By the way, you have chance to taste udon noodles made from WA wheat tonight.) We are also proud that Japanese investment and finance have been useful to Australia in terms of robust job creation, industrial development, as well as tax and royalty revenue.

Nevertheless, Japan and Australia should not take the relationship for granted but should make continuous efforts to do it better and to evolve the partnership so that it is fit for today's world.

We are now advancing the partnership forward to tackle the common challenge of the energy transition. Japan is committed to net zero just as Australia is, and is developing paths to reduce and manage CO2 emissions affordably. We are doing this in collaboration with Australian partners.

We deeply appreciate Premier Cook's invitation to Japan to become a founding partner of the energy transition industry. Japanese business leaders highly appreciate the Premier's visionary pronouncement on the Energy Transition Summit that has set a tone, making a nationwide impact.

Japanese industry wishes to work closely with Australian partners to produce alternative energy and decarbonization solutions, including CCS, e-methane and MCH, and also proceed with the development of new gas fields such as Scarborough, Barossa and Browse, needed for Australia and Asia including Japan, for both energy security as well as decreasing carbon emissions in the transition from coal without stopping our economies.

6 Free and Open Indo-Pacific and beyond

Japan and Australia share the principles of peace, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Last year Japan chaired the G7 and Australia chaired the Quad Summit, both held in Hiroshima. For Japan, Australia is at the centre of like-minded countries and the scope of security cooperation is widening based on the Security Cooperation Declaration signed by the two Prime Ministers in Perth in 2022.

In the face of continuous aggression to Ukraine by Russia and the conflict in the Middle East, with an increasingly fluid situation in the Indo-Pacific, our ongoing cooperation to uphold the rule based international order and a Free and Open Indo-Pacific is more

important than ever. We appreciate Australia and India for hosting the Indian Ocean Conference on 9-10th February in Perth, in which Japan will certainly take part.

7 Foreseeing Highlights of 2024

And the Japan-Western Australia relationship is supported by robust personal ties built over many years. It is my firm belief, and I repeat today, that human bonds are the most important asset between Japan and Western Australia. In that connection, 2024 is a milestone year.

Firstly, City of Perth celebrates its oldest sister city relationship with Kagoshima City with the 50th year anniversary and a Kagoshima-themed Perth Japan Festival will be held on 23rd of March at the Supreme Court Gardens where more than 16,000 people are expected to participate.

Secondly, as the construction of the Yanchep Station is near completion, Tokyu Group is celebrating their 50th year of investment in developing Yanchep this year, as a clean, sustainable city only 50 minutes travel by train from Perth.

8 Towards happy and prosperous 2024

In conclusion, we wish to further advance the positive turn of events of last year after the visit of Prime Minister Kishida to Perth 14 months ago, and are looking forward to deepening and broadening the relations with Western Australia further.

Thank you for your attention.

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