

**Opening Remarks by Naito Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth
WA Branding Seminar co-hosted with Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry
in Perth (JCCIP) on Thursday 29th, 2024**

Distinguished Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet on, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation and pay my respect to elders, past, present and emerging.

It was on 17th of October last year that we had previous brainstorming session on WA branding initiated by JCCIP and it was right before the visit of Premier and Deputy Premier taking the first ANA' Perth to Narita direct flight after 3 years and 7 months of suspension. The official visit of Premier was very successful making impact and even jumpstarting the direct flight with Tokyo having overtaken Bali in December and became Australia's favorite holiday destination. Thank you to JTSI and TWA for all your effort and adding some of the takeaways of the previous session into Premier's notes.

I am also delighted to say, thanks to Premier's policy pronouncements, Japanese investment in WA is also on the rise, with the announcement on Friday of JERA's participation to Scarborough JV and its commitment, Japanese investment in last six months, including that of LNG Japan, now amounts to 3.5 billion dollars on just one project. Our energy and resources partnership including new energy is making firm advancement forward. But, perhaps, we will need more efforts for our collaboration if we consider our big challenges ahead. Nevertheless, I will leave the matter to another conference to discuss.

In the previous WA branding session in October, I remember we had a number of creative ideas presented, including a family package to get out of boiling Japanese summer to do summer homework in Perth also meet with quakkas, a camping caravan adventure tour and a working holiday package in agricultural farms to experience and earn for young people.

Now we are in a different stage of how we could sustainably implement those ideas. We also know ANA's direct flight will have a technical pause as from 14th April till end of

October due to various reasons including shortage of aircrafts caused by the US made engine issue. ANA has also announced that it will definitely re-start in October. I appreciate ANA for its continued strong commitment to bring Japan closer to WA. There are strong desire among people in WA including Japanese residents for more frequent flights.

But there have been many pleasant surprises as to the operation outcome of ANA's direct flight for the past 4 months and I am personally looking forward to their presentation on their cargo logistics today.

Earlier this month, Japan National Tourism Organization, JNTO in short, had a networking event in Perth, namely "Japan Roadshow 2024 Perth", where 100 of travel consultants in WA gathered and had match up meetings with over 30 top Japanese agents, mostly local travel agencies across all regions of Japan, from Hokkaido in the north, to Okinawa in the south, who came to WA for this event, allowing them to learn and discuss each other directly about potential business opportunity.

According to JNTO, Australian are the one of the best customers in Japan, as they tend to enjoy Japan to the full, spending an average of 2 weeks in Japan. We hope these efforts of "Visit Japan campaign" will further push up the volume of Western Australian visitors to Japan.

Similarly on WA inbound , JCCIP and Consulate General of Japan wish to join hands with WA government to deepen our thoughts, with more suggestions and ideas about the packages & campaigns so that we can make best use of the direct flight to bring Japan and WA closer together. According to ABC news report, number of working holiday visas from Japan is record high last year since 2005.

We welcome friends from the South West here today. Sister City relation and educational exchanges are important facet of WA brand and the South West region has a plenty of tourist appeal and have a lot of experiences and ideas.

I wish to congratulate once again Pauline for receiving Order of Rising Sun Gold and Silver rays on Friday from His Majesty the Emperor, with blessing by the Governor of Western Australia, for your 50 years of contribution of Japan WA friendship including 30 years of promoting sister city relations especially, Sugito-Busselton and Setagaya-Bunbury sister

city relations.

Japanese business community based in Perth who personally know the beauty Western Australia and have insights on which elements can capture heart of Japanese back home. I hope they can make good contribution.

There are also line-up of many events this year that we can caputulate.

This exercise is also fun. So let us all enjoy it.

Thank you for your attention.

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