

Remarks
Presented by NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth
On the occasion of the Opening of the WA Kendo Renmei State Championship
On Sunday March 3, 2024

Good Morning.

Thank you for inviting me to the West Australian Kendo Renmei State Championship 2024. Following last year's State Championship, this is my second time to attend this important competition.

Last year we saw a big expansion of people-to-people exchanges. This included the resumption of ANA's direct flights between Perth and Narita after three and a half years of suspension. Since then, more people from WA have been visiting Japan, with Tokyo overtaking Bali in December as Australian's favourite holiday destination. It is to the extent that if you ask people around you, someone in your family or close friends are either visiting or have visited Japan recently.

We are glad to have more Kendo "yudansha" are visiting Perth from Japan and sharing skills with members. Similarly in September last year, West Australian Kendo Renmei Iaido Board hosted Ishido Sensei Hanshi 8 dans and Morishita Sensei Kyoshi 8 dan to the State Championship. I believe the increase of these interactions is very useful for budoka in Western Australia.

Taking this opportunity, I wish to congratulate Mr Connor Clarke, State Development Officer of West Australian Kendo Renmei, for being awarded the WA Sports Volunteer of the Year, a prestigious award hosted by SportWest. Connor spoke of his love for Kendo to Minister Templeman and more than 400 dignitaries at HBF Stadium. A great achievement for being a Kendo ambassador.

In closing, as people-to-people bonds are the treasure between Western Australia and Japan and I sincerely wish our friendship through Kendo will continue to grow and flourish in the years to come. I wish all the best to everyone participating the competition today, and wish you further success and development of Kendo in Western Australia and Australia.

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