

**Remarks Presented by NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth On the occasion of the Tokyo City University Australia Program (TAP) Student Farewell Ceremony at Edith Cowan University (ECU) Monday 20 May, 2024**

- Prof Arshad Omari, Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor, Edith Cowan University,
- Mr Simon Davies Burrows, Manager of Internationalisation,
- Professors and staff of Edith Cowan University,
- Distinguished visiting journalists from Japan, as special guests,
- Students from Tokyo City University,
- Buddy ambassadors,

Congratulations on your successful completion of the TAP program at Edith Cowan University. It was like yesterday that I welcomed 107 students from Tokyo City University at the beginning of February. Time flies and I hope you had a fruitful 16 weeks of learning in ECU.

You had precious experiences you would have never hoped to get should you have stayed in Japan. The world you see now must be different from what you saw at the beginning of the program; how you see Australia, how you see Japan and what it is like to study abroad. You will get to know more of this difference within you, after you get back to Japan.

You studied in Perth at a time when we saw an explosion of people to people interactions supported by the resumption of Perth to Narita direct flight. We had the biggest ever Perth Japan Festival in March that attracted more than 20,000 people. I am glad many of you and buddies had the chance to enjoy the festival and some of you even served as festival volunteers.

But what I am glad about, is that you took inspiration from Perth Japan Festival and applied it to your own ECU Japan Festival on 16<sup>th</sup> April, which was organized by the students yourselves. I could feel the creativity and passion of the ECU Festival in this cycle was at a different level. Even the showcasing and enjoyment of Nagashi Somen(flowing noodles).

You will now head for Japan and continue your studies and prepare for future professions. Some of you may wish to work abroad, some continue studying, and some may come back to Perth; you have a variety of possibilities. Your range of possibility is now wide open after the TAP program.

I am sure the insights you had during the TAP program in Perth and the experience of being goodwill ambassadors of Japan yourselves will be useful in guiding your future.

And for those of you who wish to come back to study or work in Perth, we will be here and welcome you again.

Taking this occasion, I wish to express my appreciation once again to the professors and staff of ECU for your support to the program. You have now accepted more than 1300 students from TCU since the start in 2016.

Tokyo City University's TAP program dispatches a total of 450 under graduate students every year to 2 universities (Edith Cowan University and Murdoch University) in WA for 16 weeks and is the biggest program of this duration by a single Japanese university in Australia.

Thank you also for welcoming Prof Yashiro Tomonari, the President of Tokyo City University at the end of March who was so impressed with the study environment and support by ECU including the fantastic buddy system, and he was looking forward to advancing the partnership further of which Japanese Consulate is happy to support. We are glad the joint Masters degree program for environmental studies has launched.

Thank you for your attention and congratulations to you all.

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