

**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 Murdoch University on Friday 24 May, 2024**

- Mr Kelly Smith, Pro Vice Chancellor International, Murdoch University,
- Teachers from Murdoch College
- Ms Stephanie Coates, Tokyo City University,
- Professors and managers of Murdoch University including Dianne Rimmer,
- Students from Tokyo City University, and buddies,

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

Congratulations on your successful completion of the TAP program at Murdoch University. Time flies and it was like yesterday that I welcomed 108 students from Tokyo City University here in February. I hope you had a fruitful 16 weeks of learning at Murdoch University.

You had precious experiences you would have never hoped to get should you have stayed in Japan. The world you are seeing with your eyes now must be different from what you saw at the beginning of the program; not only how you see Australia, but also how you see Japan. 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 a big expansion of people to people interactions. We had the biggest ever Perth Japan Festival in March that attracted more than 20,000 people. I am glad many of you had the chance to enjoy it and some of you even served as festival volunteers.

I was able to attend the Japan Festival at Murdoch University which was organized by students themselves and I was encouraged to see TCU students enjoying being cultural ambassador themselves. I had the chance to talk to students who are willing to learn more from the Perth community.

I was pleasantly surprised to see some of you voluntarily joined the Japanese community in welcoming the Icebreaker Shirase coming back from its Antarctic expedition in March. At the pier of Fremantle Ports, we waved national flags of both Japan and Australia, cheering “お帰りなさい” (welcome back) with Taiko drums, as the Shirase slowly moved in, and witnessed the crew waving back with their Maritime Defence Force hats from the deck. This tradition that has continued for 59 years by the hospitable Japanese community continues to

bridge Japan and Australia with pride.

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 broadened widely now by the TAP program.

Insights you had during your stay in Perth 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 Murdoch University for your support to the program.

Tokyo City University's TAP program dispatches a total of 450 undergraduate students every year to 2 universities in WA, Murdoch University and ECU for 16 weeks and it is the biggest program of this scale 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 Murdoch University, and was looking forward to advancing the partnership further, which the Japanese Consulate is happy to support.

Today I was glad to learn that Prof Andrew Deeks, President and Vice Chancellor of Murdoch University is planning his visit to Japan and to TCU in November which will be another great opportunity to deepen the collaboration.

Thank you for your attention and congratulations to you all.

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