

Remarks
Presented by NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth
On the occasion of the TAP Welcoming Ceremony for TCU students Cycle B
at Murdoch University
On Thursday August 8, 2024

(Acknowledgments)

I also 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.

Thank you to Mr Walter McGuire for the solemn Welcome to Country with your wise words and the blessings to the students.

- Mr Kelly Smith, Pro Vice Chancellor International, Murdoch University,
- Teachers from Murdoch College
- Tachibana Hideki Sensei and representatives from Tokyo City University,
- Professors and managers of Murdoch University including Diane Rimmer,
- Students from Tokyo City University, and Murdoch student buddies,

(Words of Welcome)

I wish to welcome the 112 students from Tokyo City University on the TAP Program of the second cohort of 2024 to Perth. Welcome also to the state of art Boola Katitjin building, meaning many storage of knowledge. Great to see you all arrived safely from the heat of an unusually hot summer of Japan.

This is a great opportunity to learn, experience and make friends with different cultural backgrounds. After the program's 16 weeks, I believe how you see Australia, Japan and the world will be different. In this cycle, you are lucky to be embraced by the beautiful blossoms of wild flowers and jacaranda around Perth.

As you know, Tokyo City University's TAP program dispatches a total of 450 undergraduates every year to two universities in WA for 16 weeks and it is the biggest program of this duration by a single Japanese university in Australia.

I am sure it is going to be fun, but I strongly recommend you to try to make use of this precious opportunity to gain as much as possible. This learning experience can be life changing and it can be an important turning point for your future careers.

(Bilateral Relations)

Japan and Western Australia share very strong ties that have been built over many years.

Japan's bilateral relation with Australia is at an all-time high. Last week we had the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Tokyo with the participation of Minister Penny Wong from Australia. The

meeting affirmed the importance of strengthening our collaboration to uphold peace and rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific in the challenging situation. This is on top of our strong relations around resources and energy built upon mutual trust among business leaders and government officials with the broad support of people-to-people friendships.

I say this every time that economically, 53% of Japan's imported iron ore, 30% of LNG and 15% of wheat, just ideal for udon noodles are all from Western Australia. Substantial amounts of Japan's imported sugar, beef and canola oil are also from Australia. Australia is everywhere in our life in Japan, with 8 hours of Japan's electricity owed to energy imported from Australia.

(Expanding people-to-people exchange)

During 2023 and 2024, we have seen a remarkable expansion of people-to-people exchange. In December and April, more than 80,000 Australians visited Japan. Japan became one of the most popular holiday destination for Australians. It is to the extent that one high ranking official of WA government even told me two-thirds of Australians have visited Japan, which is not quite true but it sounds like it is.

Last month, Kagoshima City and the City of Perth have celebrated the 50th year of their sister city relationship. Adachi-ku also sent delegation from Tokyo until yesterday in celebrating 40 years of sister city relationship with City of Belmont, near Perth Airport.

If you go 200 km south of Perth, you will find Bunbury which is very active in sister cities exchanges with Setagaya-ku, and Busselton is sending delegation to its sister city, Sugito-cho in Saitama as we speak now. Bunbury, Busselton and Harvey are preparing for the South West Japan Festival in early September which you can enjoy during your stay.

(Goodwill ambassadors between Japan and Australia)

We have 8,500 Japanese citizens living in Western Australia, and Japanese language is a popular foreign language taught in government schools. You will find friendliness and a level of understanding of Japan among people all around you. Our close bilateral relationship is based on mutual trust built over the years through people-to-people interactions between Japan and Australia, and is something we should all cherish.

Yesterday, it was wonderful to see the youngest ever Australian medalist at the age of 14 in the Olympics who won a gold medal in park skateboarding. She is a proud Australian whose mother Aiko is Japanese. Arisa Trew and her family live in Gold Coast but you find many natural ambassadors like her who bridge Japan and Australia also here in Perth.

It was wonderful to see the medalists from Australia, Japan and UK whose mothers are also Japanese, are communicating in Japanese and English at the press conference.

For the next 16 weeks, you will find yourself to be an ambassador for Japan, sharing culture and values of Japan to your friends.

I attended the Murdoch Japan Festival organized by TCU students of previous cycle earlier this year. The festival was attracting many international students and sharing fun of Japanese Matsuri activities. I am looking forward to joining you again but this time, perhaps I will introduce some local prominent residents who have rich experience with Australia for you to gain broader insight, that is what I promised to Prof Yashiro, the President of TCU, who visited March this year.

(Words of Appreciation)

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the professors and staff of Murdoch University for supporting this excellent program and the students of TCU, and for promoting exchange between Japan and Australia.

Prof Yashiro was impressed with the study environment and support by Murdoch University including the fantastic buddy system, and he was looking forward to advancing the partnership further and the Japanese Consulate will continue to render support.

Let me now say a few words to the TCU students in Japanese.

東京都市大学の皆さん、パースへようこそ。在パース日本国総領事の内藤です。貴重な16週間の留学の機会を楽しんで有効に活用して頂ければと思います。海外から日本を見つめ、世界を見る、そして自分自身を向上させるチャンスです。様々な発見を日本に持ち帰り、職業選択の時にも役立つと思います。今後、海外留学を続ける方や、オーストラリアや世界を相手に活躍する方もおられると思います。昨日パースにホームステイした足立区の高校生達を見送りましたが、やはり当地で勉強を続け、可能性を広げたいと強い思いを述べていました。

パースは安全で暮らしやすい街ですが、やはり外国ですので十分注意して下さい。くれぐれも体調管理には留意され、旅券等紛失しないよう、また犯罪に合うリスクが高まるような行動しないよう心掛けてください。具体的には総領事館の担当者より注意がありますので、参考にして頂ければと思います。その上で困った事態となれば総領事館までご相談頂ければと思います。

皆様のパースでの留学経験が、有意義で且つ楽しいものになることを願っております。ありがとうございました。

Thank you for your attention.

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