

Speech
Presented by NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth
On the occasion of the UWA Sport Martial Arts Festival
Friday August 16, 2024

Good afternoon,

I am NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth. It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the UWA Sport Martial Arts Festival, and I would like to express my thanks to the UWA Sports staff and the many clubs for their hard work in putting together this inclusive showcase for martial arts.

Today, you will be able to experience firsthand Japanese martial arts such as Aikido, Kendo, Karate, Judo and Kobudo, alongside other international martial arts including Taekwondo, Boxing, Fencing and Wrestling with demonstrations and workshops.

These various disciplines of martial arts may seem very different in their movements and form, but I believe have the shared values of strong discipline, respect, honour, esteem and courtesy to others, self-improvement while treating others with faithfulness and integrity, love of society and contributing to peace.

Martial Arts, go beyond the skills of self-defence, inspiring people to build their confidence, sense of control and the strength of their body and mind.

In the context of sports, there is no better example of the sense of community that sports can bring than the Olympics, bringing people of different countries, cultures and languages together with their shared passion for sport. Martial arts are the highlight of the Olympics for many athletes and spectators across the globe, with the 2024 Paris Olympics showcasing Judo, Taekwondo, Boxing and Wrestling on the world stage.

Australia is a great sporting nation and powerhouse. People around the world have just seen the outstanding performances of Australians in Paris, with the number of medals per capita by far the top of the world. Sport has the power to inspire people, including those in adversity, with a special language that speaks to young people from different backgrounds, and it can have a life-changing positive influence. It has the power to change the world.

Of course, many of us can only dream of reaching the level of Olympians, but through your participation, you can find fitness, make friends, find a new perspective of what you are capable of, and learn spiritual enhancement.

I encourage you all to take this unique opportunity to try your hand at as many martial arts on showcase here today, and you never know, you may discover a new passion.

Thank you for your attention.

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