

Opening Remarks
Presented by NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth
On the occasion of the Japanese Film Festival 2024 Opening Ceremony
Monday October 14, 2024

Thank you for the introduction.

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

Ms Aoyama, Japan Foundation Sydney,
Distinguished guests; Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the opening of the Perth leg of the Japanese Film Festival in Australia 2024.

This is the 28th Japanese Film Festival in Australia, which originally started in 1997 in Sydney and is now showing in all the major cities of Australia, being one of the biggest Japanese Film Festivals in the world, attracting more than 30,000 people.

This Japanese Film Festival became an annual highlight for many Western Australian fans. Films can provide insights into the society and everyday life of Japan, including subtle nuances of what people in Japan appreciate.

This is my third film festival in Perth and it is wonderful to see human interactions between Japan and WA has expanded in the past two years. Recently Minister Madeleine King told me that the number of school children studying Japanese language in the state has increased from 29,000 in 2022 to 32,000 in 2023, that is the precise reflection of the growing interest in Japan in WA.

That goes along with the biggest ever Perth Japan Festival attracting 20,000 people and many other matsuri being held around WA, and Tokyo overtaking Bali and became most popular city to spend holidays for Australians in December last year.

Business interaction is also very strong including in the resource and energy sectors as well as growing involvement in critical minerals and energy transition industries. Japanese investment to Australia was at its highest in 2023.

There is certainly a synergy between cultural and business activities.

Through films we can share and showcase beauty and goodness of different aspects of Japan, while enjoying the entertainment.

I am a great fan of the director Yoji Yamada, a grand master of human stories. He is best known for the “Tora san” series that lasted for 23 years, producing two films per year and that shows how much his stories were loved by Japanese people. This is his 90th film with great actors such as Sayuri Yoshinaga and Yo Oizumi. Director Yamada is incredibly 93 years old and still going strong.

And don’t forget that tonight’s film is only the start of this week-long showcase of Japanese cinema, and I hope you will take this opportunity to see many more Japanese films on the big screen.

Thank you for your attention and let us all enjoy.

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