

**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 November 11, 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.

Professor Mark McMahon, Director, International Strategy  
Professors and staff of Edith Cowan University,  
Tachibana-Sensei from TCU international center,  
Students from Tokyo City University, Buddy ambassadors,  
Ms Monica Barry, a graduate of ECU and former buddy, now working for the Japanese Consulate-General as a Culture and Information officer,

**(Words of Congratulations)**

Congratulations on your completion of the TAP program at ECU. It was like yesterday that I was here to welcome 113 of you in August. I see you had a fruitful 16 weeks of learning here at ECU.

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

**(ANA direct flight and human interactions)**

While you were here in Perth, the ANA Perth-Tokyo direct flight resumed again last month, this time operating all year round. 830,000 Australians visited Japan in the past year including the Lord Mayor of Perth last week and the Governor of Western Australia a week before.

The level of human interactions is expected to be uplifted to a greater height, as we already see many delegations and artists, like Tokyo Groove Jyoshi, are pouring into Western Australia. With the Osaka Kansai Expo in April to October next year, one million Australians are expected to visit Japan in the year ahead.

The Japan Australia relationship on an economic and political front is stronger than ever and will be even more important in the difficult international situations ahead and at the time after the US presidential election. And this relationship that is supported by broad human bonds at a grassroots level that is the most important asset.

#### (Japan Festival)

During your stay in Perth, the ECU Japan Festival must have been one of highlights of your activities. The festival was planned and organized by students themselves and I hope you enjoyed being cultural ambassadors of Japan.

My team enjoyed shodo, Wanko Soba and the whole welcoming atmosphere you created. I was impressed that some of you even traveled 200 km to the South West Japan Festival prior to the ECU Japan Festival and learned some of the festival organization.

This year, I brought prominent members of the Japanese community and cultural performers to the ECU Japan Festival who were also amazed with quality of your entertaining activities. I hope your interactions and conversations with them were useful in thinking the way forward.

I should also add that in September, Tokyu Corporation, a founding supporter of the TAP program celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their investment to Yanchep City which is now connected by the Metronet rail, 50 minutes from Perth. They loved the beauty of the land of Western Australia and are creating a beautiful city, friendly to education exchange.

#### (Bon Voyage)

The ECU campus in city center is an exciting development for the TAP program. I am also happy to see the ECU -TCU joint master course program, also supported by the Government of Japan. It is time for you to advance your way forward.

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.

And I am sure the inspirations you encountered during the TAP program will be useful in thinking about 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 to this beautiful city.

Again, congratulations to you all.  
Thank you for your attention.

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