

Speech
Presented by Mr NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth
On the occasion of the Japan Roadshow 2025 Perth
Hosted by the Japan National Tourism Organization
Monday February 3, 2025

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

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you again to the 'Japan Roadshow' hosted by the Japan National Tourism Organization, JNTO, Japan's official Tourism Board.

Last year, a record 920,200 Australians visited Japan compared to 613,000 in 2023, an impressive 50% increase in 2024. This number is an all-time high, higher than the pre-COVID period. Japan recorded 36.87 million visitors throughout 2024, exceeding the previous 12-month high set in 2019 with 31.9 million visitors. This means we have a surge of visitors, especially from Australia.

Job well done to the Japan Road Show 2024 for their contributions to this impressive outcome.

A breakthrough of last year was the resumption of the ANA Perth to Tokyo direct flights, which now operates all year round.

In Perth, we anticipate the ANA direct flights will make a massive contribution to the number of WA visitors to Japan, with the three-times-a-week flights accounting for 35,000 seats a year. After a five-month pause, the direct flights resumed just in time for the Australia-Japan Business Co-operation Committee Joint Business Conference in Nagoya in October, and we have already seen an increase in business missions to Perth which we expect will further boost investment and trade between Australia and Japan.

I had the pleasure of accompanying HE the Governor of Western Australia, the Hon Chris Dawson, to the joint business conference, where he made the announcement that the next AJBCC/JABCC Joint Business Conference will be held in Perth, the first time in 17 years. We anticipate some 600 top business leaders from Japan and Australia will converge on Perth and we look forward to the opportunities that will arise from the 2025 AJBCC Conference.

With Japan hosting the Osaka Kansai Expo 2025 from April to October, we are expecting

well over one million Australians will visit Japan this year, and the Japan Roadshow is a great opportunity to explore the demands of Australian tourists and match these demands with Japanese tourism providers.

For those who wish to visit the Expo, combining the trip with Kyoto Gion Festival, Gujo Odori in Gifu, Kochi Yosakoi Festival or Tokushima Awaodori will be a great experience. And for those looking to explore more of Japan, the time of year is perfect to see the different kinds of Japanese Summer Festivals unique to each local town, with even the Lord Mayor of Perth being among the 20,000 festival goers who marched in the Kagoshima Ohara Festival last year.

For those who wish to avoid the heat and explore the Tohoku North Eastern Japan, the Yamagata Hanagasa Festival, Aomori Nebuta Festival and Akita Kanto Lantern Festival are a must-see. And for those who do not have time for festivals, try a 'Spirited Away' Onsen hot spring experience in Kusatsu, Dogo and Arima.

The Perth Japan Festival on Saturday March 15 at the Supreme Court Gardens is the perfect opportunity to experience a Japanese festival atmosphere with Japanese drumming, Bon Odori, tea ceremony, martial arts, ikebana flower arranging and pop culture all showcased in one place. Last year, more 20,000 people attended the Perth Japan Festival and attendance is growing each year.

As the Deputy Premier, the Hon Rita Saffioti, announced in December, Perth will host the FIFA World Cup Qualifier, where the Socceroos will face Samurai Blue on June 5, attracting a massive crowd of Australian and Japanese soccer fans to OPTUS Stadium. I am meeting with representatives from the national team this week to discuss how we can make the most of this exciting sporting event.

2025 is an exciting year for Japan and Western Australia, and we wish to maximize the opportunities brought on by the joint business conference in October.

I hope today's presentations and networking will be useful and productive in encouraging more Australians to visit and enjoy Japan.

Thank you for your attention.

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