

Remarks
Presented by Acting Consul-General Hasegawa
On the occasion of the 2025 Perth Japan Festival
Saturday March 15 2025

Mr Paul Shillington, President of Perth Japan Festival Inc.,
The Hon Dr Buti MLA, Minister for Education; Aboriginal Affairs; Citizenship and
Multicultural Interests,
Councillor Liam Gobbert, City of Perth,
Sponsors and supporters,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the country that we are standing on today and honour the Elders, past and present.

It is my great pleasure to be able to say a few words at the opening of the Perth Japan Festival - a festival that has gone from strength to strength as it has grown and evolved since its inception. Let me begin by thanking and acknowledging all the hard work of the festival committee, organizers and volunteers to bring this together. A heartfelt thank you also to the festival's foundation sponsors, gold sponsors and community sponsors. Without your support the Japan Festival could never happen. Thank you also to the many volunteers here today, including a number of Japanese students volunteering who are currently living in Perth on student exchange.

The Perth Japan Festival has become a popular fixture in the Perth calendar, drawing a great crowd each year. Festivals in Japan play such an important role in building community spirit, promoting local culture and customs, and bringing people together. They can be found in all regions across the country at all times of the year. The Perth Japan Festival brings all of these elements together, creating an authentic experience of Japan and its festivals right here in Perth, while providing an opportunity to enjoy Japanese culture, performances, food and more.

As part of the festivities this year we are fortunate to have Kanto Daiichi High School's Cheerleading Team the Barbies joining us from Japan to showcase their world-class talent. We also have Tokyo Groove Jyoshi here from Japan to perform, bringing their groove funk style for your enjoyment. I'd like to extend a huge welcome to both of these groups. I'm sure we are all going to enjoy their performances.

Such cultural exchange between our countries is reflective of the increased people to people exchange that we have continued to see between Japan and Australia in recent years. Building on this strong friendship, ANA's direct flights between Perth and Tokyo have seen an increase in tourism numbers, both inbound and outbound, and will continue to bring new opportunities such as the upcoming Expo 2025 Kansai Osaka, and the FIFA world cup qualifier between the Socceroos and the Samurai Blue, being played at Optus Stadium on June 5.

This extensive people to people exchange is a cornerstone of the incredibly close bilateral relations between our countries. The natural resources and energy sectors are clear examples of this, where companies such as Rio Tinto, Woodside Energy, INPEX and Mitsui Iron Ore Development are leading the development and production of LNG, iron-ore and other resources projects, which drive Japan's economy.

Later this year the Australia Japan Joint Business Conference will be held here in Perth, after being held in Nagoya last year, bringing the importance of the WA-Japan relationship into sharper focus, and continuing to build upon the strong work already being done by all those in the Japan-related community here in Perth - especially those who have worked so hard to bring us this amazing Perth Japan festival.

Festivals are a team effort, and I would like to thank everyone involved again for their hard work and commitment. I look forward to everything the festival has in store for us today, and I hope you all have an amazing time and get a great taste of Japan right here in Perth.

Thank you.