

Remarks

Presented by Acting Consul-General HASEGAWA

On the occasion of the JS Shirase Onboard Reception

Friday April 4, 2025

Mr Shane Love MLA, Leader of the Nationals WA,
The Hon David Johnston, former Minister for Defence,
Commodore Ivan Ingham, AM CSC, RAN, Senior Australian Defence Force Officer WA,
Friends of Japan and Shirase Supporters,

Good evening.

I wish to start by acknowledging that we meet on the waters of the Derbarl Yerrigan in the land of the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation, the traditional custodians of the land, and I pay my respects to their elders; past, present and emerging.

I am sure I speak for all present when I give my thanks to Captain Kazuki Saito, Commanding Officer of Icebreaker JS Shirase and Dr Naomi Harada, Leader of 66th Antarctic Research Expedition Team, our hosts this evening, who have so generously welcomed us all aboard today to celebrate their return to this fine port city.

Fremantle is, in fact, the sister city of Shirase's home port city of Yokosuka and is often thought of as the second home of the Shirase. We would like to welcome home the Shirase crew and expedition team, who have completed an important Antarctic observation mission.

Antarctic observation is of great significance as a measure the global environment, and these vital missions would not be possible without the cooperation of Australia. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude for the warm welcome and the ongoing support of the Shirase's annual port calls and resupplies.

My favourite pub, just up the road from here, Gage Roads, has a photo of the former icebreaker Fuji docked in Fremantle, and the striking orange hulls of the Japanese icebreakers have long been a symbol of friendship between Japan and Western Australia.

The Shirase also brings together those within the local Japanese community, with permanent residents, expats and students alike gathering on the shore to wave flags and show their support as the vessel enters and leaves port.

We hope onboard visits by students from Fremantle College and the Japanese School in Perth will serve as an inspiration for future generations, educating students on both the inner workings of the vessel and the importance of Antarctic research and expeditions.

With Japan and Australia facing off in the FIFA World Cup Asian qualifier in Perth in June and the AJBCC Joint Business Conference following in October, we expect Perth will garner further attention in the broader context of the Japan-Australia relationship.

This evening, I hope the expedition team and crew will have the opportunity to share with you, the people of Western Australia, their experiences having just returned from Antarctica and forge new friendships between Japan and Western Australia.

Thank you for your hospitality and we wish you a safe voyage home to Japan.