

Japan Update 2018 – demography also discussed

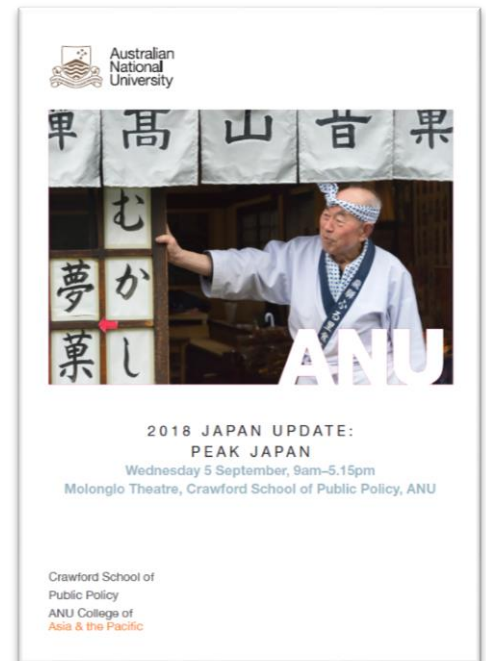
14 September 2018

Dear Friends,

I hope this e-mail finds you well.

Japan Update is an annual symposium hosted by the Australia-Japan Research Centre in the Crawford School of Public Policy, and the Japan Institute at The Australian National University. It provides a comprehensive overview of Japan's current economic and political landscape, and updates Japan's current situation in various fields from various perspectives.

(Japan Update 2018 is supported by the Australia-Japan Foundation of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; the Japan Foundation, Sydney; and the ANU College of Asia and the Pacific. Click [HERE](#) for further details.)



Under the title “Peak Japan”, the sixth Japan Update was held on September 5th focusing on Japan's economy, politics and international relations, and demography. Distinguished and prominent scholars and professionals from Australia, Japan and the United States were invited and shared their insights and latest research on Japan.

This year's symposium also delved into demographic issues currently facing Japan. This is an issue of critical importance to all of us in Japan, as well as to Australia and the rest of the world in this interconnected globalised society.

When discussing population growth, its advantages and disadvantages are often highlighted. Population growth can lead to an increase in domestic consumption, manufacturing capacity and one's GDP. However rapid population growth can create pressure on public services and infrastructure, congestion and rising house prices.

Population growth caused by influx of overseas arrivals also comes with its advantages and disadvantages. It can create a culturally diverse society, like what we see right here in Australia. Former Prime Minister Turnbull often remarked that “Australia is the most successful multicultural society in the world”. However, it may have a negative impact on social cohesion,

which may also lead to discussions on shaping or defining one's national identity.

Also generally, population growth is linked to economic growth, whereas a shrinking population usually leads to a slowing economy.

I believe that the best mix for a balanced population would be comprised of a strong sense of national identity, sound economic growth, an abundant and skilled labour force, and well-maintained urban functions.

All the contributions and recommendations made at this year's Japan Update will be of great value in how we can tackle the issues facing us. Taking this opportunity, I wish to thank and congratulate all those who participated for their support and involvement.

I very much look forward to the next Japan Update and seeing you there.

Yours sincerely,

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Sumio Kusaka

Ambassador of Japan to Australia