

Speech

Presented by HE Mr YAMAGAMI Shingo, Ambassador of Japan to Australia
On the occasion of The University of Queensland Japan Day
10 November 2021

1. Introduction

Thank you for that kind introduction Professor Rakic.

Professor Terry, Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to the University of Queensland for inviting me to this fantastic event.

It is a wonderful time to be holding such an event because Japan-Australia relations have never been better.

Queensland in particular has been a great partner to Japan.

For over a century, we have shared strong ties thanks to the high level of Japanese immigration, tourism, cultural exchange and trade.

Before the pandemic hit, Queensland saw a yearly Japanese tourist count of some two-hundred and twelve thousand, which contributed 463.5 million dollars to the State economy.

That's around half of all Japanese visitors to Australia.

Japan is also this State's second largest export market.

2. Japan-Queensland Education Exchange

With regards to our strong cultural and education exchange ties, I am keenly aware of the role that this university has played.

This year marks the 56th year since the University of Queensland began offering Japanese programs.

Over the past five decades, Japan-related courses have become more numerous and diverse thanks to the passion of teaching staff.

It is surely no coincidence that Queensland is home to around thirty-per-cent of all of Australia's Japanese learners.

I am particularly encouraged by the career of Dr Morris Low, who, having received two Japanese government scholarships, researched at Nagoya University on the history of Japanese science and technology.

Dr Low has used his rich research and study abroad experience to give back to Japan by facilitating study programs for students from Japan at this university.

One of his recent papers, *Japan at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics*, explores how Australia's welcoming of Japan to the Games contributed to the expansion of Japanese cultural diplomacy.

It is my hope that the Brisbane 2032 Games will provide another such catalyst for a deepening of our bilateral relationship.

Having overcome the tremendous challenges of Tokyo 2020, Japan has a lot to share with Brisbane for a successful Games.

3. Japan-Australia Science Cooperation

The Brisbane Games will also provide ample opportunity for Australia to promote advances in science and technology.

Japan, as many of you know, has historically been a society which highly values technology and craftsmanship.

In the Edo period, the Tokugawa government instituted a hierarchy of samurai, farmers, artisans, and merchants, known as *shinōkōshō*.

Artisans, including engineers, were considered of great value to society.

Japan's post-war economic growth, realised in part through the hard work of such engineers and scientists, further solidified the great respect for technological innovation in Japanese society.

It is therefore with a sense of deep pride that Japanese scientists and engineers strive to make technological breakthroughs.

Of the twenty-eight Japanese Nobel Prize winners, twelve have been physicists, eight chemists and five have been for physiology or medicine.

These days, Japan, like Australia, places particular focus on hydrogen, smart city and space technology.

But there is a wide range of research underway.

UQ's Professor YAMAUCHI Yusuke has been leading a team of researchers to develop innovative nanoporous materials, in collaboration with Japan's National Institute for Materials Science and Waseda University.

The materials developed have potential applications in various environmental, health and energy-related technologies.

Perhaps more significantly however, this project encourages meaningful collaboration between Australian and Japanese early to mid-career researchers.

Dr YAMAUCHI has also been a driving force behind today's event.

I am grateful that his passion for collaborative research has brought us here today.

4. Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to emphasise that today's UQ-Japan Day is a great opportunity for information to be shared and networks to be made.

I hope this opportunity will serve to strengthen the people-to-people ties that have built up the Australia-Japan relationship.

I look forward to seeing what our combined scientific and engineering knowledge and experience can achieve.

Thank you.