

Speech to honour the Hon Warren Entsch MP

Hilton Cairns

7 April 2022

**‘Conferment of The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold
and Silver Star to the Honorable Warren George
Entsch MP’**

HE YAMAGAMI Shingo

Ambassador of Japan to Australia

1. Introduction

- It is my honour to welcome you to the conferment of The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star to the Honorable Warren George Entsch MP.
- This prestigious award is bestowed on you, Mr Entsch, for exceptional merit in recognition of your contribution to the strengthening of ties between Japan and Australia.

2. Warren's profile

- When we talk about Warren, he is no typical politician, since he has a resume longer than the smile on a crocodile.
- Now, I don't want to be accused of foreign interference, but we've gathered a bit of information about your extraordinary life.
- Correct me if any of this is wrong, Warren.
- Warren started working at the age of 14 years old cleaning toilets as a lad porter at the Mareeba train station, West of Cairns.
- At the age of 15, Mr Entsch found himself in the Bank of New South Wales carrying a gun akin to a .44 magnum!!

- No, he wasn't robbing the joint, he was a security guard.
- Warren ended up quitting when the bank disapproved of his "long" hair that he had styled on The Rolling Stones.
- At 18 years of age, Warren was arrested by the military police and threatened with jail!
- The story goes that Warren had ignored an Army conscription letter, since he was already in the Air Force. He assumed the Defence bureaucracy would resolve its mistake.
- That didn't happen. Instead, Warren was given several weeks of washing pots and pans as punishment.
- Warren then went on to earn his crust by catching wild bulls by hand. This eventually led him into the crocs business.
- And when I say crocs, I don't mean the stylish footwear.
- No, as you all may already know, Warren was a crocodile catcher.
- Warren later became a pastoral farmer, and got involved in pastoral leases and native title issues.

- This is what eventually led him into federal politics in 1996.
- What an impressive life prior to politics! And what's more, I have left out that he also worked at:
 - The Queensland government insurance office.
 - Yabulu Nickel refinery.
 - A bird park.
 - A real estate agent.
 - Annnnnnd once caught, and was bitten by, a poisonous 7 foot Taipan snake.
- To adapt the immortal words of Paul Hogan, "That's not a resume. This is a resume!"

3. Warren's contribution to Japan

- Despite Warren's hectic life he has also developed a love for Japan that is as expansive as his electorate of Leichhardt.
- Mr Entsch had a Japanese business partner from the late-1980s, has Japanese family members through his nephew, has been to Japan approximately 20 times and for the past 15 years has regularly attended the Obon Memorial Event at Thursday Island's Japanese Graveyard to pay respect to our Japanese ancestors.

- Warren has also been very influential in promoting the Japan-Australia relationship through his association with the Australia-Japan Parliamentary Group, or AJPG.
- He joined the AJPG over 20 years ago and was the Chair for approximately 5 years from 2015.
- Through the AJPG, Warren has gone out of his way to break new ground.
- One example of this is through the Australian Political Exchange Council. Warren was the first AJPG Chair to meet a Japanese delegation from this Council in 2015 and 2017.
- Also, when the AJPG's Japanese counterpart, headed by Mr Aisawa Ichiro MP, visited Australia in September 2019, Warren hosted a dinner and introduced them to some of his Australian colleagues, including the incumbent AJPG Chair, the Hon. Dr. David Gillespie MP.
- Warren has demonstrated a commitment to a deepening of the Japan-Australia relationship at a local level by engaging with consulate officials as well as private Japanese residents in North Queensland.
- One example I can recall was when Warren helped a Japanese doctor looking to work in Cairns with the necessary support to get accredited by the Australian Medical Association.

- On a more personal level, for years Warren has been gifting the Japanese Embassy with the most beautiful Queensland finger limes.
- Our resident chef takes great pride in exciting guests with his fusion of Japanese ingredients and fresh Australian produce, provided by Warren.
- Warren, you have contributed so much to the advancement of the Japan- Australia relationship.
- Your contributions carry weight because you have a reputation for standing up for what you believe is right.

4. Conclusion

- I look forward to working with you into the future and maybe even going for a ride on your Harley Davidson!
- And so, it is my great pleasure to announce that the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star, is hereby awarded, by the Emperor of Japan, to the Honorable Warren George Entsch MP.
- Congratulations!