

**Speech by Ambassador SUZUKI Kazuhiro**  
**On the occasion of the Questacon 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023**

Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we gather to celebrate an outstanding milestone - the 35th anniversary of the establishment of Questacon. It is my honor to extend heartfelt congratulations on this significant achievement.

Before I begin, I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land upon which we meet, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people, and pay my respects to their elders past, present, and emerging.

The advancement of science is crucial and has a profound impact on the future of our nations. It's not an exaggeration to say that it shapes our tomorrow.

Establishing the national science institution of Questacon, an initiative led by the founding director, Professor Michael Gore AO, has proved to be a wise decision.

As a Japanese Ambassador, I am incredibly glad that Japan was a part of the project in inspiring future generations through science.

Actually, parents in ACT should thank Questacon, because ACT Year 6 students have been the best performers in the nation over the years when it comes to Science Literacy, according to the national assessment.

The history of scientific and technological exchange between Japan and Australia is long and strong.

Take space, for example. We celebrate the success of the Hayabusa 1 in 2010 & 2 in 2020 sample return missions. Next year, we look forward to the planned exploration of Martian moons, aiming to bring back samples to Australia in 2029.

This will deepen our collaborative ties in space further.

I am also grateful for the exchange involving Australia's younger generation in space-related activities.

For instance, initiatives using Japan's module in the International Space Station (ISS) have been exemplary.

The "Seeds in Space" program involved storing seeds of Australia's national flower, the Golden Wattle, in the ISS module, later distributed to schools across Australia for observation of germination and growth.

The "Kibo Robot Programming Challenge" saw Australian teams remotely operating robots inside the Japanese module to compete in an international contest. It will only be a matter of time before they are commanding Gundams, Power Rangers or Voltron!

Another potential collaboration may lie in robotics.

Australia's first Moon rover will be named soon and be launched from earth in the coming years, but Japan has a tradition of robotics, dating back to Karakuri Ningyo or traditional Japanese mechanized puppets. Japanese love robots, such as Astro Boys if you know. This is integral to our manufacturing industry.

From today's SoftBank Pepper to future service robots, the potential of collaboration is immense and exciting.

Coming back to the activities of Questacon, we are deeply thankful for the numerous contributions to Japan.

This includes the traveling exhibitions held across Japan, notably the visit to the areas affected by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. We will never forget the assistance rendered to us in that true time of need. A friend in need is a friend indeed, as they say. In June this year, Questacon's exhibits were generously donated to Joetsu City in Japan .

Moving forward, we remain committed to using science to inspire young minds in both Japan and Australia.

We come from different histories and cultures but encouraging the curiosity of our children's mind is something we both share.

Thank you once again, congratulations to Questacon on this remarkable anniversary.