Speech by Ambassador Suzuki on the occasion of Nikkei Forum, Sydney
Wednesday 26 August 2026

Before I begin, I would also like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today, and pay my respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging.

The Honourable, Scott Morison, 30th Prime Minister of Australia

The Honourable Stephen Smith Former Foreign Minister and Defence Minister of Australia
Mr. Michiaki Hirose, Chair of the Japan Australia Business Cooperation Committee
Ms. Jan Adams, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Mr. Ms. Debra Hazelton, Chair of the Export Finance Australia
Mr. Bruce Miller, Chair of the Foreign Investment Review Board
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning.

It is a great pleasure to join you at the Nikkei Asia Forum Sydney.

I would particularly like to thank Takahashi-san and Arakawa-san of Nikkei for giving me this opportunity to share my perspective with leaders from government, business and academia — leaders who will help shape the future of our region.

This June marked the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Japan and Australia — the Nara Treaty.

For half a century, this Treaty has provided the foundation for our political, economic and people-to-people ties. And much of what we have built together was built by Business.

But I believe something even more exciting is happening now.

Japan and Australia are not just traditional, longstanding partners. We are partners of the next growth story. Why?

First, Demographics.

Australia has some of the strongest population growth prospects among the world's major advanced economies. And it is already home to some of the world's wealthiest consumers.

Put these together — a growing population and affluent consumers — and you have an extraordinary market opportunity.

Japanese companies are responding.

Their investment is expanding beyond the traditional pillars of resources and energy — into housing, real estate, financial services, logistics, retail and food.

This is not simply capital moving from one country to another. It is investment becoming part of everyday Australian life.

And the Japanese presence is growing with it. Since 2024, Australia has been home to the world's second-largest Japanese community, after the United States, overtaking China.

Today, Aussies wear Uniqlo, enjoy matcha lattes, and shop at Daiso for Japanese stationery and everyday products.

So, if you haven't been to Daiso yet, put it on your must-do list this weekend. But perhaps go without your children — they may refuse to leave!

And this appreciation of Japanese quality is not limited to consumer products.

Last year, Australia selected Japan's upgraded Mogami-class as the platform for its future general-purpose frigates.

From stationary to frigates.

What explains this confidence in Japanese products and technology?

I believe it is a distinctive combination of quality, functionality, durability and reliability — technology designed not simply to impress, but to perform, to last and to earn trust.

And trust matters.

For the sixth consecutive year, Japan is the country Australians trust most among the major global powers.

In both the 2025 and 2026 Lowy Institute Polls, around nine out of ten Australians said they trusted Japan to act responsibly in the world.

That trust has been earned over decades — through reliability, shared values and mutual respect.

Japan and Australia are also two of the region's most stable advanced democracies, strongly committed to freedom, democracy and the rule of law.

This is the foundation for the next frontier: Advanced Technology.

The intensifying competition for technological leadership, particularly in AI, makes one thing clear: cutting-edge technology requires trusted partners.

And Japan-Australia cooperation in this field is only beginning.

Prime Minister Takaichi has called for Japan to "win through technology — and win in business," while Prime Minister Albanese's Future Made in Australia agenda seeks to build new industries and strengthen Australia's economic capabilities.

To achieve these goals, we need to strengthen science, technology and innovation — and connect research much more effectively with practical application.

This is where our two countries are highly complementary.

Japan brings decades of applied science and manufacturing expertise. Australia brings world-class universities, research institutions and rapidly growing capabilities in frontier technologies.

Together, we can turn research into practical applications and new businesses — in defence industries, critical minerals, digital and AI, quantum technologies, space, and transport infrastructure.

This is also closely aligned with the second pillar of Prime Minister Takaichi's updated Free and Open Indo-Pacific, delivered in Hanoi just before her visit to Canberra in May: creating new economic growth opportunities through public-private collaboration and shared rules.

In practical terms, this means bringing Japanese expertise and technology together with Australian partners, and turning our complementary strengths into concrete projects, new businesses and new markets.

Japan and Australia are natural partners in putting this approach into practice — connecting government mechanisms with business, universities and research institutions.

That is how we can move from research to innovation, and from innovation to business.

Japan is also becoming a more attractive destination for foreign investment.

The Takaichi Government has made clear that healthy foreign investment, technology, talent and management expertise are welcome in Japan.

And in March, our Embassy hosted an Invest in Japan promotion seminar here in Sydney, where I learned a great deal about high-tech startups and investors already operating successfully in Japan.

So my message to Australian business today is clear and simple:

Japan is not only a trusted partner. Japan is an increasingly attractive investment destination.

If you are looking for your next market, your next technology partner, or your next investment opportunity — look to Japan.

And if you are already doing business with Japan, think bigger.

The next fifty years of Japan-Australia relations will not be defined only by what we inherited from the past.

They will be defined by what we choose to build together.

So let us seize this moment.

Let us invest in each other. Let us innovate together.

And let us build the next growth story — together.

Thank you.