

Japan Update 2026 Reception

Professor Shiro Armstrong

Ladies and gentlemen

I would like to extend my warmest congratulations on the outstanding success of today's Japan Update.

As I highlighted in my remarks this morning, this year holds particular significance as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Japan and Australia, better known as the NARA Treaty.

Following a highly insightful opening address by Minister Tim Ayres, the theme of this year's Update has perfectly framed our vision for the next 50 years of Japan-Australia relations.

Tonight, it is my distinct privilege to recognise an individual who has long served as a cornerstone of our bilateral intellectual community.

I am sure I speak for everyone when I say that Professor Shiro Armstrong's exceptional record speaks for itself.

In our circles, his is a face that everyone knows.

He is a central figure in driving our shared mission forward, and a mentor and trusted colleague to so many in this room.

For more than a decade, Shiro has brought together the preeminent minds from Japan and Australia to engage in vital exchanges of ideas.

He has consistently fostered an environment for economic and strategic debate that is passionate, intellectually fierce, and unyielding in its commitment to rigorous academic pursuit.

In recognition of his long-standing achievements and unwavering dedication to Japan-Australia relations, I am honoured to present him with the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation.

Shiro's contributions as an eminent economist are immense.

As a leading authority on Japan-Australia economic relations, his insights have been

instrumental in shaping our policy.

His leadership has been central to the Australian National University, where he has served as Director of the Australia-Japan Research Centre since 2014.

Throughout his directorship, he has been a driving voice for the evolution of our bilateral ties, arguing that our two countries must advance beyond traditional trading partners into a comprehensive strategic and economic security partnership.

This builds on a long legacy of regional impact.

In 2008, Shiro founded and became the Editor-in-Chief of the East Asia Forum, establishing it as an indispensable policy analysis platform for the Asia-Pacific.

Concurrently, through his directorship of the East Asian Bureau of Economic Research, he has successfully networked major Asian research institutions to advance multilateral policy.

Shiro possesses an exceptional ability to bridge the gap between high-level policy decisions and corporate reality.

For the past eight years, his co-authored annual report on Japan-Australia investment has served as a benchmark reference for our respective business communities.

His collaborative work extends directly to Japan, where he has served as a Visiting Fellow at the Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry in Tokyo for over a decade.

Here in Canberra, he continuously advises the Australian Government on economic policy. I was particularly pleased to see him contribute as one of the roughly 30 select participants at the Government's Economic Reform Roundtable last August, hosted by Treasurer Jim Chalmers alongside the Prime Minister. This stands as a testament to his exceptional counsel, which is grounded in deep expertise on Japan-Australia economic relations and widely recognised for its vital contribution to Australia's broader economic reform agenda.

Furthermore, his dedication to academic exchange is on display every September through his stewardship of the very Japan Update we celebrate today.

While a brief citation cannot encapsulate the full breadth of Shiro's achievements, it is entirely fitting that in this milestone year, the Japanese Government bestows this official commendation upon him.

Thank you.