

Good afternoon. こんにちは。

It is my great pleasure to be able to say a few words at this online JET Pre-Departure Orientation.

I arrived in Melbourne eight months ago and this is my first time seeing off Australian JET participants to Japan.

I heard that twenty-one new JET Programme participants from Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania will depart for Japan next month, and two more participants will be following them by the end of November.

Due to current national border closures to prevent the spread of coronavirus, we are forced to live in a world without people-to-people exchanges. In such difficult time, you are becoming important special envoys to Japan from Australia! I believe many of you will soon be living and working in rather rural areas of Japan where internationalisation and revitalisation of local communities are most needed. I believe you can make a difference to the success of these local communities and to the minds of the local people, by becoming an active member and passionate supporter of your local community, where you will soon be calling it a second home.

JET participants can not only contribute to improving English communication skills among students, but also raise their global awareness. Embracing internationalisation and multiculturalism in their minds is the key to revitalise local communities as well as to achieve diversified and inclusive societies without discrimination.

Since July this year, Kevin Muscat, an Australian former soccer player as well as a coach at Melbourne Victory, has been appointed as the manager of Yokohama F Marinos which is a well-known soccer team in Japan. In just a few months, he has already won the J-League Manager of the Month award and the team has been playing extremely well under his leadership. I believe he is working extremely hard in an unfamiliar foreign country but also enjoying the life in Japan. Growing up in the western suburb of Melbourne, St Albans, Kevin could be the inspiration for Australian people like you who will be living and working in Japan. I hope you will also enjoy living and working in Japan like Kevin and become an important link between the local Japanese communities and Australia for many years to come.

Finally, I wish all of the newly appointed JET participants good health and all the best on your journey. Have a wonderful time in Japan and I hope you all make long-lasting friendships and connections with Japanese people and culture.

Thank you and take care. 行ってらっしゃい！