

Good afternoon,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to make some closing remarks at this AGM of the newly named Australia-Japan Business Council of Victoria.

This year is particularly special, with the organisation celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

It is wonderful to see so many people here who are strong advocates for our great relationship.

I would like to thank Celeste Koravos for her tireless commitment as CEO. Over the last 12 months, Celeste and the Board have worked hard to promote the organisation's activities across a wide network in Victoria, and, as Patron, I am delighted to see its continued growth.

Even though this week's Quad meeting in Sydney has been postponed, we were fortunate enough to have our own Quad musical event in Melbourne a few weeks ago. Guests were welcomed by the Quad Quartet, a newly formed band of musicians and instruments from Australia, India, Japan and the United States, to raise awareness of the important work of the Quad.

There are many industries of cooperation in the Australia-Japan relationship, and one of the most important of these is the renewable energy sector. This can be an emotionally- charged issue, and it is important for business people like those in the room tonight to lead the way in developing this industry and managing the future of our bilateral partnership in a practical manner. We are now in the 'second wave' of our relationship as we move on from the pandemic and build connections in new and exciting areas. Organisations like AJBCV are instrumental in further strengthening our ties across a range of important sectors and encouraging the next generation of leaders.

Since arriving in Melbourne, I have very much enjoyed events such as the Gala dinner and the Melbourne-Japan Kai roundtable series. I have heard from my colleagues that *konshinkai* is growing in popularity, and I would encourage you all to attend the next networking night. Of course, I am already looking forward to this year's Gala dinner and I hope to see you all there.

Congratulations to everyone who was elected to the Board today; I know you will achieve great things over the next 12 months. I am very much looking forward to the continued growth of the Australia-Japan Business Council of Victoria and I wish you all the best for this new chapter.

Thank you.