

Good evening everyone. こんばんは。

It is my great pleasure to be here today for the opening night of the 27th Japanese Film Festival (JFF) in Melbourne.

Before I begin, I would like to thank the Japan Foundation Sydney, for their dedication and hard work in organising this wonderful festival every year. I would also like to thank The Kino Cinema and ACMI for hosting the festival again this year, and Palace Balwyn for hosting the JFF for the first time.

The program shows that the Japan Foundation has selected a diverse range of Japanese films – there is definitely something for everyone to enjoy! I believe Japanese films are a great way to deepen understanding of Japanese culture here in Australia and further strengthen ties between Japan and Australia.

Speaking of Japan-Australia friendship, the City of Melbourne celebrates the 45th anniversary of its sister city relationship with Osaka this year. The mayor of Osaka is currently visiting Melbourne for the first time to celebrate this milestone. As you may know, the 2025 World Expo will be held in Osaka and many events are planned in the lead-up to the Expo, including the Melbourne to Osaka Double-Handed Yacht Race. At the beginning of today's reception, many of you may have been greeted by MYAKU-MYAKU, the official mascot character of the Osaka-Kansai Expo.

Now I would like to talk briefly about tonight's opening film 大名倒産, 'We're Broke, My Lord!' What an interesting title! I heard that it is a thrilling story that makes people laugh and cry. I am very much looking forward to watching this film, and I'm sure you are too.

I hope that you will come and see many more Japanese films during the festival period. I assure that you will be able to discover and learn about different aspects of Japan.

Thank you.

ありがとうございました。