

**Interview with Lawrence Christoffelsz, CEO, Australian Trade
& Logistics Corporation for their import/export channel**

Tuesday 23 April 2024

1. Please tell about your role as the CG here in Melbourne.

I am the Consul-General of Japan in Melbourne and have responsibility for the three states of Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania.

The three major aims of our mission are 1) To ensure the safety and security of Japanese residents within our states; 2) To promote trade and investment with Japan and; 3) To further strengthen bilateral relations between Japan and those three states in the areas of people-to-people exchanges, education, sport, science and technology and arts and culture including popular culture.

2. What are the current/emerging trade & investment opportunities between Japan and Australia?

Japanese foreign direct investment (FDI) in Australia reached a record high of \$133.8 billion, ranking third and accounting for 12% of total FDI in Australia. Two-way trade between Australia and Japan was valued at \$143.3 billion in FY2023. Japan is Australia's second largest trading partner and its exports to Japan are worth \$115 billion, making Japan the second-largest export destination.

Energy accounts for 74% of exports to Japan. Japan and Australia have a traditional reciprocal relationship. Japan has been a partner in the development of coal, iron ore, and LNG. We would like to continue to be strong partners in energy transition going forward, as we have been in the past.

We can expect investment and trade opportunities in renewable energy, hydrogen, ammonia, CCS, and many other areas such as real estate and innovation for decarbonization.

3. What initiatives or events do you have planned in 2024? (e.g. trade delegations, official visits, cultural events, etc.)

The Australia-Japan Joint Business Conference meeting held in Melbourne last October was attended by Australian and Japanese ministers and more than 700 high-level participants from the business community.

This October, the same meeting will be held in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture.

The National Gallery of Victoria's upcoming Yayoi Kusama exhibition may also be of interest to your listeners. It opens in December and features more than 180 works.

Also Expo will be held in Osaka in Kansai in Japan from 13th April till the 13th of October 2025 and will further deepen the Australia-Japan relationship. The theme is 'Designing Future Society for our Lives. Over 125 countries will be represented and 25 international organisations.

4. Why should people visit and do business with Japan?

Japan has the fourth largest GDP in the world and has abundant capital and technological capabilities.

Australia has vast resources, land and an excellent natural environment with wind and solar power.

Japan and Australia have a complementary relationship.

It is important that Australia and Japan work together to contribute to CO2 reduction in the Asia-Pacific region and the world.

Australia and Japan have a special strategic partnership based on many shared interests and values such as democracy, freedom of speech and human rights. We are moving towards a golden era of the relationship, which will flourish further in the years to come.