

Good evening,

Thank you for inviting me to tonight's tenth anniversary celebration of the signing of the Japan Australia Economic Partnership Agreement. Since the agreement was signed in July 2014, both countries have benefitted greatly from tariff reductions. These reductions have increased the value of exported goods and services across so many key industries, contributing to the strong position Japan and Australia find itself in today. We are now in the golden era, the strongest in our history. Greater freedom through trade supports a relationship built on a shared commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. I am personally delighted to see the success of this agreement so far, as ten years ago I was one of the people responsible for ensuring this legislation passed through the Diet!

Last year, Melbourne was the host of the AJBCC conference that saw over 600 attendees gather to discuss important challenges both countries are facing. I'm sure many of you are looking forward to attending this year's conference in Nagoya. It is interesting to see how the themes of these conferences have developed over the last decade as a result of the hard work of key stakeholders, many of whom are in this room. As sister-states, it is wonderful that Victoria and Aichi are the back-to-back hosts of this important event.

In 2025, I am looking forward to the Melbourne to Osaka yacht race, as well as the Osaka Expo, which both promise to be wonderful events.

Thank you again for having me here tonight. I would like to propose a toast to the ongoing success of JAEPA, and to the good health and happiness of everyone here this evening.

Cheers! 乾杯!

I would now like to invite you all to network and enjoy the evening's hospitality.

Thank you.