



WA's and Japan's Relationship

The relationship between Western Australia and Japan is a strong one, having developed through such broad areas as cultural exchange, trade linkage and mutual economic interest.

History and International Exchange

The ties between Western Australia and Japan date back to approximately 1890, when the first Japanese pearl divers settled in Broome. Following this, such areas as increased mutual economic concerns, trade, and cultural exchange have served to foster a strong and valuable relationship. The mutual importance of this relationship is apparent in the undertakings of both countries from the late 1960s to the present day. 1967 marked the establishment of the Consulate-General of Japan in Perth, and in 1971 the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) opened its doors.¹ Similarly, in 1968, the Office of WA Government Representatives was opened in *Tokyo*, and in *Kobe* in 1989. *Tokyo* also became home to the Japan Office of Tourism Western Australia. In addition, sister-city affiliations were established between municipalities and cities in both countries, 8 in total, a relationship that continues to actively promote cultural exchange today. 2006 marked the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Japan-Australia Friendship

and Co-operation Treaty (NARA Treaty) and was designated the Japan-Australia Year of Exchange. As a part of the celebrations, Japan was given the opportunity to establish a 'Japan Pavilion' in the Perth Royal Show Guest Nation Program, and throughout the state, a variety of Japanese cultural events and exchanges were widely publicised.

Economics and Trade²

Western Australia and Japan have significant trade relations. WA export trade with Japan comprises approximately 37%, or an estimated 12 billion dollars of the national total. Exports to Japan make up approximately 20% of the state's gross export income, with chief exports being gold, iron ore, crude oil, LNG (liquefied natural gas) and other such mining industry products, as well as agricultural and fishery produce such as wheat and lobster, with Japan being second only to China as the largest importer of Western Australian products. Western Australia also imports many products from Japan, primarily cars and medical supplies, which comprise approximately 12% (around 2.6 billion dollars) of WA's total imports, making Japan WA's biggest import source. In addition to this, in 1968, leading other states and territories, WA established a permanent office in Japan to encourage new projects and trade between the countries. The enterprise promoted substantial investment and specialist technical advances in WA such as the North-West shelf gas project and Western Australian iron-ore mining. 

1. The JETRO office eventually closed, after more than 25 years of business, in 1999.
2. All numerical values have been taken from the Western Australian Statistical Indicators 2006-07.

Information:
The Consulate-General of Japan in Perth, Western Australia
The Office of the Western Australian Government Representatives in Japan