

08 Joint Chairs' Statement

46th Australia-Japan Joint Business Conference
12th – 14th October 2008 - Perth

JOINT CHAIRMENS' STATEMENT

Mr Imai, Delegates

Our conference has canvassed a number of issues that have a vital impact on the operation of business in our two countries as well as considering how joint innovation and collaboration in a number of new economy sectors could lead to future opportunities in the bilateral commerce.

More than three hundred and twenty delegates and accompanying persons gathered in Perth for our conference that met under a general theme of *“Australia and Japan – Responding proactively to change”*

We are particularly grateful for the 35 speakers who have devoted precious time to prepare presentations and commentaries of great value and challenge to us over the past two days during seven plenary sessions. This morning's Technology Exposition was an additional featured session of our conference that stimulated delegates with new products, systems and technologies of the 'new economy'.

The Conference was delighted to have had His Excellency Dr Ken Michael AC, Governor of Western Australia as its Guest of Honour at the Welcome Reception and the Right Honourable Lord Mayor of the City of Perth, Ms Lisa Scaffidi address yesterday's Opening Ceremony. The Hon. Colin Barnett MEd. MLA, Premier of Western Australia was the distinguished Guest of Honour at the Conference Dinner.

Plenary Session One: *“Is ‘behind-the-border’ economic reform enhancing the global competitiveness of Australia and Japan?”*

This session explored the dimension that, other than global trade reform, is the most critical to increasing a nation's international competitiveness. Our conference occurs within a year of new administrations in both Australia and Japan. Both governments are committed to structural reform. The question arises: is the agenda acceptable, or 'going far or fast enough', for business?

Plenary Session Two: “*Responding to Climate Change*”

This session began with a presentation by Professor Ross Garnaut AO, Convenor of the Garnaut Review of Climate Policy Options for the Australian Government. Both governments are still reflecting on their detailed responses to the global challenge of climate change. These decisions will be most significant for the structural reform of each country's economy.

All speakers were of the belief that a global response to climate change is essential, indeed crucial. As a number of the speakers demonstrated, new technologies will be key to reducing industry's carbon footprints and this provides business opportunities for both countries.

Plenary Session Three: “*Energy – The fine ‘Demand-Supply’ balance*”

The ‘Security of Energy’ issue is of great concern to Japan because in an extreme situation it impacts its continuing existence not only its international competitiveness. Australian industry concerns relate to the structural reform options facing the government when it makes ‘climate change’ decisions of long term impact. The speakers’ insights covered LNG, Uranium and Coal.

The Technology Exposition Session

Apart from the iconic Professor Barry Marshall AC, Nobel Laureate, as Keynote Speaker, the presentation by seven ‘new economy’ companies with world-class products, systems or technologies is a timely reminder to all that it is by innovation that the standard of living of a country is maintained or progressed. These presentations verify that Australia is not simply a quarry, a farm or a beach but the home of many very smart ideas which due to the size of the local market have to attract global attention to realise their potential or become commercial.

In a dynamic global economy, ‘innovation’ is a critical element for the growth of companies and countries. As two ‘services’ sector dominated economies, Japan and Australia are very conscious of this. As strong global traders, we are equally conscious of the global dimension of innovation

East Asia is the most dynamic region of the global economy. Japan and Australia are the sophisticated developed economies on the northern and southern axis of the region. Both our futures are fully intertwined with the growing integration of the East Asian economies. Consequently, it is believed that not only should we be looking for opportunities to enhance Japan-Australia bilateral linkages, but together, to be alert to trilateral linkages where our skills and resources working collaboratively could be further enhanced.

Plenary Session Four: “*Knowledge Management – Building critical resources within the company*”

Surrounded by a world of change that is crowded by data, Australian and Japanese enterprises were introduced to different means of generating innovation within their own companies to build their international competitiveness.

Plenary Session Five: “*Innovation and Collaboration in East Asia – Education*”

The present disposition with regard to research and development, whether in academic or business, is to look to relationships with the US and Europe organizations and not thinking automatically of the prospect for collaborative bilateral linkages. Our Speaker introduced a proposition for an R&D consortium that would encourage new networks between publicly funded research institutions and business.

Plenary Session Six: “*Innovation and Collaboration in East Asia*

- ***Tourism***
- ***ICT***
- ***Financial Services***

Like ‘Education’, these three areas are at the forefront of the globalising of the world’s economies and the East Asian region is the most dynamic region of the global economy. The presenters identified insights into the innovation and collaboration that the new environment in the region has generated. The opportunities are not exhausted.

Plenary Session Seven: “*Innovation and Collaboration – Energy and Resources*”

The application of new technologies and systems is critical for productivity and profitability and the aspiration of the session is that we might have some case studies.

Delegates, sharing the belief of the broader business communities of both countries, adopted a Conference Statement that called on both governments to intensify endeavours for an early conclusion of the bilateral EPA/FTA negotiations. Such a conclusion is seen as contributing greatly to the stability and economic growth of the East Asian region. Although the bilateral commerce is strong, it is business’s belief that increased integration would bring substantial benefit to Australia and Japan

Whilst a more detailed Record of the conference’s sessions will be prepared over coming weeks, Mr Imai has considered this Chairmen’s Statement and agrees that this be conveyed as our shared view.