

**Japan Business Seminar “Unlocking Business Potential with Japan”
(17/March/2026, Auckland)**

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you very much for joining us today.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are now living in an increasingly uncertain international business environment, that is completely different from 10 or 20 years ago. Due to various geopolitical factors, we can no longer take for granted the stable supply of resources such as oil and rare earth elements. Even economic policy is now being influenced by international politics. Under such an environment far from ideal, cooperation between like-minded countries is becoming increasingly important and needs to be updated, deepened and enlarged.

No one would deny that Japan and New Zealand are like-minded countries. We are core members of CPTPP, the highest level of trade agreement. Japan is New Zealand’s fifth-largest trading partner and establishing complementary trade flows; primary products from New Zealand and industrial products from Japan. Japan is also very much interested in supporting NZ primary industries in the form of investment, as the 4th investor. Public perception also reflects the strengthening of our relationship. According to research by the Asia New Zealand Foundation, Japan is regarded as the second most trusted in the world, just after Australia.

Then, what could be a brand-new strategy for updating our economic relationship? I think there is a missing link: investment from New Zealand into Japan. So far, we do not yet see so much investment by New Zealand companies into Japan, with some limited exception. A classical excuse is that “New Zealand is a small country”. But even so, there is a blue ocean where disadvantage can be advantage. I can imagine at least two areas:

First, NZ has a number of creative startups who are waiting for a partner who can commercialise their ideas. If they can collaborate with a Japanese company, they can access to a Japanese market of 120 million and more. Second, one of the weak points of Japan is the low proportion of renewable energy. As New Zealand has a lot of experience of it, if it can look at Japan and invest there, that will become a good cooperation.

Actually, there are some encouraging forerunners of New Zealand companies investing in Japan. By enlarging these efforts, we can see a better future beyond simple world of complementarity. Let us make a world of mutual benefit! “Stronger Together” should be a new slogan!

In order to have a closer relationship with Japanese company, we must learn some typical “Japanese way of Business”. Today, we have one speaker who know very well one of our core spirits of management, “Kaizen”. Also by connecting with today’s Japanese participants, you can enrich your knowledge in Japan.

Today, I am also very much pleased to have such great participants from various backgrounds: Auckland Business Chamber, Nisuiikai (Japan Chamber of Commerce Auckland), Japan New Zealand Business Council and Government officials and other businesspeople from various ethnicities.

I encourage all of you to take advantage of today’s event, including the networking session, to exchange ideas, deepen connections, and explore new opportunities for cooperation and investment between Japan and New Zealand.

Thank you very much for your attention, and I hope you will enjoy the opportunity.