

Thanks, Professor Heather Zwick.
Professor Tim Dunne, Pro-Vice-Chancellor,
Your Excellency Mr Baek-soon Lee, Korean Ambassador to Australia,

Academics and Representatives from the Government and Industry,

First of all, I also acknowledge the Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands on which we meet today.

On behalf of the Korean communities in Asia Pacific region representing the National Unification Advisory Council, I am very privileged to take this opportunity to congratulate the University of Queensland on the inauguration of the Korean Studies Centre.

This is another historic moment for the increasingly significant relationship between Australia and Korea.

And the opening of the centre is a powerful momentum to widen the spectrum of Korea-related researches and studies, qualitatively and quantitatively.

In particular, I sincerely hope that the Centre will take an initiative in exploring a variety of comprehensive researches into more systematic and strategic approaches to the Korean peninsula issues.

Indeed, Korean nationals and compatriots including Australian Koreans fully support for the homeland Government seeking permanent peace in the region rather than simply reiterating the hard-line views.

Thus, Korean communities in Australia are of the strongest view that the Centre becomes a prime move in leading more comprehensive and long-term researches into the Korean peninsula, and even unprecedented longitudinal study of Australian perspectives on Australia-Korea relationship.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me remind you of the two points before I wrap up my remarks.

Australia has been an avant-courier in public Korean language studies.

25 years ago, Korean language was adopted, for the first time in the world, as an official subject of university entrance exam, namely, HSC in NSW.

Based on the nationwide expansion of Korean language studies at schools, Korean studies have been continuing to grow at tertiary level over the past two decades.

It is a fait accompli that Korean studies academics in Australia are a trailblazer of Korean education all around the world.

At the same time, it should be emphasised that this prima facie achievement was impossible without consistent assistance from the South Korean Government.

Now, the opening of UQ's Korean studies Centre will usher Korean studies in Australia, into the new era of innovation and leap to foster more comprehensive research into Korean peninsula.

Academics and my colleagues from Australian Korean communities,

Please let me take this opportunity to extend my special thanks to University of Queensland and Pro-vice Chancellor, Professor Dunne for their acknowledgment for my small contributions to the centre.

My support stems from my enthusiasm for the expansion of Korean studies in Australia, and of course, I will endeavour to continue to support the centre.

Once again, congratulations, and I highly appreciate all the efforts for the opening of the centre made by the University of Queensland.