

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2007

Address by

His Excellency Mr Hideaki Ueda  
Ambassador of Japan to Australia

at the Official book launch of  
Australia-Japan Friendship and Prosperity

Venue: The Residence  
Date: Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2007

The Honourable Minister Truss,  
The Honorable Andrew Southcott, Chair of Australia Japan  
Parliamentary Group,  
Dr Ashton Calvert, Chair of the Australia-Japan Year of Exchange  
Executive Committee,  
Ms Jaqui Lane, CEO of Focus Publishing,  
Professor Jenny Corbett, one of the distinguished authors,  
Representatives of corporate sponsors,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I warmly welcome you this evening to the official launch of *Australia-Japan Friendship and Prosperity*.

I would like to sincerely congratulate the members of the book's Advisory group, *Focus Publishing* and everyone involved in this project that devoted their time and efforts into producing such a fine collaborative piece.

The publication of this book on Australia-Japan bilateral relations is quite timely, given that 2006 was the Australia-Japan Year of Exchange and 2007 coincides with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of Agreement on Commerce between Australia and Japan.

Another coincidence of history; The commerce agreement was signed by the then Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi 50 years ago, and his grandson, Prime Minister Abe is keen to further strengthen Australia-Japan bilateral relations today.

As you all know, the Australia-Japan Year of Exchange commemorated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. In total, around 1000 events took place both in Australia and Japan to help celebrate the Year of Exchange.

In Australia, approximately 80 events were financially supported by the YOE Grass-roots Support Program which was funded through Japanese corporate sponsorship. Events that took place in Japan also received support from Australian businesses. Their financial assistance contributed greatly to the success of the YOE.

Last year I also witnessed many occasions where Japanese people and Australian nationals came together to promote and further improve the Australia-Japan relationship through people to people contact. In fact, almost 500 officially endorsed events took place throughout Australia during the year.

The 2006 Year of Exchange was not only a celebration, but also intended to be a forward-looking year, and an opportunity to re-focus on the importance of our strong bilateral ties, to strengthen existing relations and to build an awareness of our friendship and cooperation.

Such momentum has prompted significant developments in Australia Japan relations in 2007.

In political and security areas, our Prime Ministers signed The Japan Australia Security Declaration on the 13<sup>th</sup> of this month, and it is envisaged that Australia and Japan will cooperate on a practical level to promote peace and security in the Asia Pacific region and in the world.

In economic area, our Prime Ministers agreed late last year to commence negotiations in 2007 for an Australia-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement.

I hope this new EPA will be mutually beneficial and support our economic relations for the next 50 years in the same way the Australia Japan Commerce Agreement supported the economic relationship between our two countries over the last five decades. Further, a Social Security Agreement was recently signed between our two countries and negotiations are also underway for revising the current Tax Treaty.

In view of the above, I should say that Prime Minister Howard's recent visit to Japan embodies our always developing bilateral relations.

In addition to The Australia Japan Security Declaration, the Memorandum on Cooperation in Education was also signed during Prime Minister Howard's visit.

That Prime Minister Howard visited Japan for 4 days in an extremely busy year demonstrates most eloquently the importance Prime Minister Howard attaches to Australia's relationship with Japan. Japan profoundly appreciates it.

This year Australia will host the APEC Summit meeting. It is expected that this will provide another valuable opportunity for Australia and Japan to work together to produce concrete outcomes in an important regional forum.

The mutually strong and dynamic partnership between Australia and Japan continues to prosper each year and I hope that the launch of this magnificent book will rekindle people's awareness of our long-standing relationship and encourage everyone to become involved in nurturing our genuine friendship well into the future.

Congratulations on a wonderful publication.

Thank you.