



## PRIME MINISTER

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### TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION

When this Government was elected to office last year, Japan's Prime Minister conveyed to us - as well as his congratulations - his desire that the basic treaty of friendship and cooperation be brought to an early conclusion.

The Government, sharing Prime Minister Miki's desire, has given the highest priority to bringing to a successful conclusion the negotiations for the treaty - negotiations which had become rather protracted in 1975.

I can inform the House that the negotiating officials have agreed on a draft text of the treaty of friendship and cooperation. Both Governments have been closely following the progress of negotiations. Issues have been referred by officials to their Governments for decisions as they arose.

As of today the outstanding issues of substance have been resolved.

It may therefore be expected that the two Governments will have little difficulty in approving the draft. It can be expected that the treaty will be signed by Prime Minister Miki and myself during my visit to Tokyo in the winter recess.

Strengthening and deepening the bonds between Australia and Japan is one of this Government's foremost policy objectives. It is no accident that one of my first international visits - the first planned visit other than my visit to New Zealand - is to Japan and China.

Over the past twenty years, economic relations between our two countries have expanded in magnitude and importance. Japan has become Australia's largest trading partner, Japan is second only to the United States as a supplier of Japanese imports.

In the trade area, Liberal and National Country Party Governments have long sought to extend Australia's relations with Japan - in 1957 we took the major step of signing the agreement of commerce with Japan. This agreement was of great mutual value to the two countries and contributed to the present extent of Australian-Japanese trade.

In 1971 we established the Australia-Japan Ministerial Committee in recognition of the fundamental importance of the economic relations of our countries.

But trade relations no matter how fruitful are not and cannot be the totality of countries contacts with one another.

In the case of Japan and Australia the mutually profitable basis of economic exchange makes it even more important that there should be an understanding by the two countries - an understanding of their peoples, language, culture and traditions.

In furtherance of the objective of greater understanding, this Government introduced into this Parliament the bill to establish the Australia-Japan Foundation.

The Foundation will promote the study by Australians and Japanese of the language, culture, social economic and political institutions of one another's countries. It will enrich Australian-Japanese relations both by understanding that knowledge can bring, and no less importantly, by the personal contacts between Australians and Japanese that the Foundation's work makes possible.

The Possibility of a broad treaty between Japan and Australia has a long history being first raised in the 1950's and raised again in the 1970's. It was discussed at the first meeting of the Australia-Japan Ministerial Committee in 1972. The Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence reported in favour of a treaty framework in 1973. Later that year, the then Prime Minister proposed that negotiations for a treaty should begin.

The present Government's commitment to successfully conclude the treaty of friendship and cooperation and Prime Minister Miki's desire that it should be concluded gave new impetus to negotiations which have been delayed during 1975. The result was today's outcome.

As the draft of the treaty is still confidential and formally subject to consideration and approval by the two Governments it would not be appropriate for me, at this stage, to discuss it at length. The treaty of friendship and cooperation is broadranging, and covers virtually the whole relationship between Australia and Japan.

The treaty is unique in the history of international relations.

It is designed to be an umbrella under which further agreements may be made and relations developed in specific areas. It accords significant reciprocal benefits.

The treaty will be the most important step ever taken by Australian Governments in our relations with Japan. It will set the stage for a new and even more cordial era in our dealings with the country which, in a generation, has become our main trading partner, and a corner stone of stability in the region of which Australia is a part.

In the treaty, the Governments and the peoples of Australia and Japan, have fashioned an instrument designed to help close those gaps in understanding which remain, and to bring new progress and confidence in areas where friendship and cooperation are already established. It will lead to a relationship of greater intimacy.

But the significance of the treaty lies not only in our relations with Japan. The great understanding and closer ties between the two countries on a wide range of fronts the treaty makes possible will not only be of great mutual benefit. It will also benefit the countries of the west Pacific and strengthen forces for peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region.

In closing, I place on record the strong spirit of mutual accommodation which has made the Treaty possible. That spirit augers well for the century of the Pacific of which we, Japan and our neighbours, are now embarking.

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