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...the basis of relations between Australia and Japan shall be enduring peace and friendship between the two countries and their peoples", the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Australia and Japan, 1976.



DONE in duplicate, in the English and Japanese languages, each text being equally authentic, at Tokyo, this sixteenth day of June one thousand nine hundred and seventy-six.

For Australia:

Malcolm Fraser

For Japan:

Takeo Fukui

THE BASIC TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN AUSTRALIA & JAPAN



THE BASIC TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP & COOPERATION - 1976

The Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Australia and Japan

The AJBCC set as one of its first tasks the improvement of Australian understanding about Japan. To that end it established a Personnel Exchange Sub-Committee in 1964 to organise cultural and personnel exchanges between Australia and Japan and to promote Japanese studies in Australia. Detailed In the next Chapter is an outline of the AJBCC's Exchange Sub-Committee's scholarship and travel grants and student exchange awards – see page 46.

The Osaka Expo of 1960, the Tokyo Olympics of 1964, the appeal of its reliable electronics heightened the level of interest about Japan amongst the Australian population which was experiencing a renewed Asian consciousness sparked by the Vietnam War. This awareness grew throughout the 1960s and 1970s due to factors such as the hundreds of thousands of 'Boat People' whom left a defeated South Vietnam; the instability that engulfed Indonesia, and particularly Australia's and then the United States' détente with China. The growing interest with respect to Japan became manifest through Sister-State, Sister-City,

Sister-Port relationships at a commercial level, twinning arrangements in the education sphere, and countless Australia-Japan Friendship Societies being established.

The AJBCC's archived files – box 69, folder #209 titled 'The Treaty of Friendship' – builds from correspondence signed by Sir Maurice Mawby, Chair of the Exchange Scheme Sub-Committee, to Sir James Plimsoll CBE, Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, dated 31st October, 1969. This reports that at the 7th Joint Meeting (6th-8th May, 1969, Tokyo) a proposal prepared by the Japanese Committee **"that our two countries should conclude a cultural agreement"** had been accepted. The letter continues *"...assist the promotion of better understanding between our two countries by forming an official framework within which closer cultural relations could be developed, both through the promotion of Japanese studies in Australia and by fostering greater awareness of Australia and its culture in Japan."* Sir Maurice continued, *"Our committees are concerned that the growing economic ties between Australia and Japan must be accompanied by closer cultural links, and that although substantial progress has been made in recent years in the development of better understanding, there is still much to be done. We feel that a cultural agreement would give official recognition to this desire for better understanding between our two peoples and as such would do much to promote cultural exchanges."*



Australia's Prime Minister Malcom Fraser (seated left) and the Japan's Prime Minister, Takeo Miki (seated right), sign the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation in Tokyo on 16 June 1976, watched by the Australian and Japanese Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock and Kiichi Miyazawa
[DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE]



On the 7th November, Sir James responded, *“I share your view that the growing economic ties between Australia and Japan should be accompanied by closer cultural links as a means of promoting better understanding between the two countries.”* He continued, *“We have so far concluded only one cultural agreement – with Indonesia – and there are some practical problems if we go too far or too fast in creating a network of cultural agreements which might be beyond our resources to put into effect satisfactorily. But I believe a cultural agreement with Japan should be worked out and concluded as soon as it is possible to put it into effect....”*

Discussions began between the AJBCC and the nominated official within the Department of External Affairs. In time the proposition became a discussion between the two governments. Although there was a general sentiment that the time was right to move beyond the complementarities of the commercial partnership, that was serving both nations so well, commercial factors came to dominate the government talks. Parallel to the need to provide Japan with reassurance following Australia’s new political relationship with China, although Japan also recognised China, was the need to provide formal assurances of its rights as an economic partner. Certain ministerial viewpoints within the Whitlam Government raised the spectre of nationalisation of mineral assets that unsettled the Japanese investors – see Sir James Vernon’s Annual Report / Address for 1973 comments reported above on page 35. Japan’s preference was for a treaty of commerce and navigation similar to that which it had signed with more than a dozen countries including the United States and the United Kingdom.

Although Australia did not favour such treaties, despite the distractions caused by the oil shock and the Australian domestic political environment, the political will existed to find an alternative means of responding positively. The AJBCC and JABCC were jointly involved, together with researchers from the ANU, with the preparation of a report presented to both governments in 1976 on the Australia Japan relationship and what it should seek to achieve.

After intense consideration by the new Fraser Government of the draft Treaty developed under the Whitlam Government, the decision was made in May 1976 to proceed.

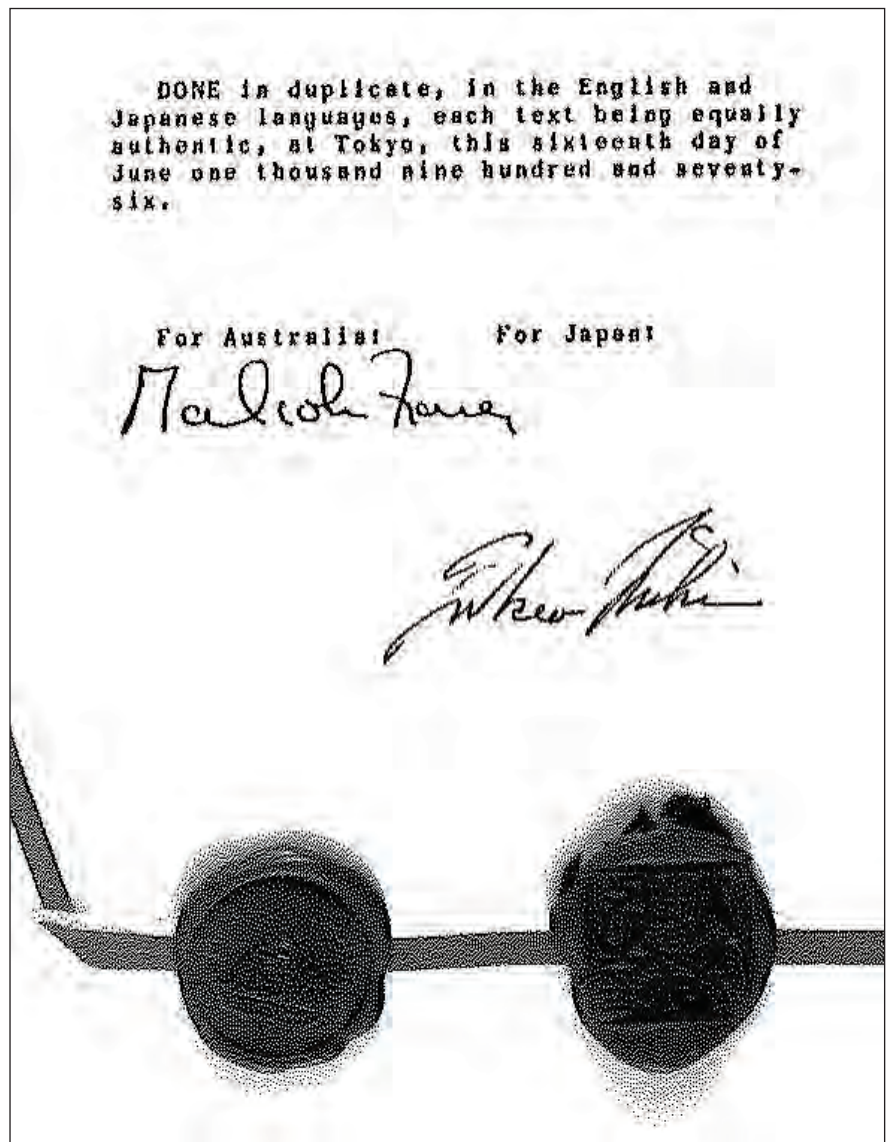
Declaring that *“the basis of relations between Australia and Japan shall be enduring peace and friendship between the two countries and their peoples”*, the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was signed in Tokyo on 16 June 1976 by Prime Ministers Malcolm Fraser and Takeo Miki. It came into force on 21st August, 1977.

The agreement broadened the framework of the bilateral relationship by enhancing ties *“in the political, economic, trade, commercial, social, cultural and other fields”*. It was the first of its kind that Australia had concluded with any country. For Japan, the treaty was more comprehensive in its scope and purpose than Japan’s treaties of commerce and navigation.

The Joint Communique of the 15th Joint Meeting held in October 1977 in Brisbane, states *“The conference acknowledged the value of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Australia and Japan as a milestone in Australia-Japan relations. Delegates recognised that the Treaty established in a formal way the friendship, community of interest and interdependence existing between the two countries and established a broad framework for future co-operation.”*



During their meeting in Tokyo in 2003, Prime Ministers John Howard and Junichiro Koizumi, decided that the Basic Treaty's thirtieth anniversary should be celebrated during 2006 by a formal 'Year of Exchange 2006' designation. That year, over 1,000 events in Australia and Japan celebrated, indeed demonstrated, a genuine mutual appreciation of each nation's culture and society. ■



*The signatures to the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation of Australia's Prime Minister Malcom Fraser, and Japan's Prime Minister, Takeo Miki
[DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE]*