

October 22, 2013

Tokyo, Japan

**51st Japan-Australia Joint Business Conference
Joint Statement**

Japan-Australia Business Cooperation Committee (JABCC)
Australia-Japan Business Cooperation Committee (AJBCC)

Since 2002, the Japan-Australia Business Co-operation Committee (JABCC) and the Australia-Japan Business Co-operation Committee (AJBCC) have repeatedly emphasised the importance of concluding a bilateral Economic Partnership Agreement / Free Trade Agreement (EPA/FTA). Unfortunately, this agreement remains uncompleted despite both governments holding 16 meetings aimed at negotiating a settlement since April 2007.

At the 51st Japan-Australia Joint Business Conference held in Tokyo from 20th to 22nd October, the JABCC and the AJBCC reaffirmed that a Japan-Australia EPA/FTA is essential for further expanding and deepening bilateral economic relations.

On 9th October, the leaders of Japan and Australia met in Brunei. Prime Minister Abe said he "would like to elevate our strategic partnership and bring this relationship to a new phase," while Prime Minister Abbott emphasised that "Japan is Australia's best friend in Asia and we want to keep it a very strong friendship." The JABCC and the AJBCC both expect strong leadership from the two countries' Prime Ministers and request that both governments, under said leadership, strive to conclude a Japan-Australia EPA/FTA and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) at the earliest possible date.