

**Joint Statement**  
**by the**  
**Australia Japan Business Co-operation Committee (AJBCC)**  
**and**  
**Japan Australia Business Co-operation Committee (JABCC)**

The AJBCC and JABCC Committees submitted their recommendation to their respective Prime Ministers to further strengthen economic relations between Australia and Japan prior to the meeting of Prime Ministers Howard and Koizumi in Canberra in May 2002.

The AJBCC and JABCC Committees have followed the progress by officials of their exploration of “all options for deeper economic linkages”. In accordance with the decision of Prime Ministers Howard and Koizumi meeting in May 2002, the Committees note that there is scheduled a Vice Ministerial-level meeting during June to finalise the recommendation “on the way forward” to be made to the Prime Ministers.

The AJBCC represented by Mr. Hugh Morgan, Chairman and JABCC, represented by Mr. T.Imai, Chairman and its Steering Committee members met today (June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2003) to review and discuss the future direction of Australia and Japan for deeper economic linkages in anticipation of a meeting of the Prime Ministers during July.

The Committees note that certain progress has been made in the area of facilitation measures that would facilitate the needs of present day business practices and future collaboration. The Committees recommend both Governments continue their efforts to address relatively easy areas and progressively build up to more difficult areas.

The Committees reiterate their belief that a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, which includes a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), would deliver the optimum bilateral liberalization of trade and investment conditions. The Committees urge their Governments to be ambitious in their recognition of the scope and longer term significance of the relationship.

The Committees appreciated the efforts and progress of the consultations made to date between both Governments and the Committees expressed their desire that the current consultation process continue. Accordingly, we reiterate our request that both Governments will take necessary measures to work toward a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

Under the 1957 Commerce Agreement and the 1976 ‘Nara Treaty’, Australia and Japan extended to each other “Most Favoured Nation” treatment. Given that both countries are currently engaged in a range of bilateral consultations, the Committees asked both Governments to be conscious of the significance of the relationship and not dilute that key element of the relationship.