

Dear friend,

I hope this email finds you well.

Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Julie Bishop MP, paid a working visit to Japan from 15 to 16 February. During this, Ms. Bishop visited Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and held several meetings, including the Japan–Australia Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Fumio Kishida, Japan's Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The Japan–Australia Foreign Ministers' Meeting and working dinner on 15 February marked the 40th anniversary of the Australia–Japan Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. The two ministers reiterated that as countries who share the fundamental values of freedom, the rule of law and democracy, it is critical to further promote cooperation over a wide range of areas, such as the economy, trade and investment, and security and defence. They also emphasised that when dealing with issues being faced by the region and international community, Japan and Australia's enhanced cooperation is vital, which is in line with the outcomes of the Australia–Japan Foreign and Defense Ministerial Consultations (2+2) in November, and the Japan–Australia Summit Meeting in December.

Prime Minister Abe expressed the importance of cooperation between both countries to further progress our strategic relationship, which was confirmed in last year's Japan–Australia Summit Meeting. In response, Minister Bishop noted Australia's efforts in further strengthening Japan and Australia's special strategic relationship over a wide range of areas, such as the economy, security and defence. She also expressed her hope that Prime Minister Abe visit Australia in 2016.

Both meetings included discussions on Australia–Japan cooperation on submarines. The design proposed by Japan is based on the Soryu class submarine currently used by the Maritime Self Defence Force, which incorporates the latest in proven technologies. Japan is currently the only country that manufactures and operates the over-4000 tonne class, conventional engine submarine in the world. MHI that has been producing the boats has always delivered them on time and on budget for the past several decades. Japan is convinced that the submarine corporation will go a long

way for innovation and jobs creation as well as technology transfer within Australia's defence industries.

I believe Ms. Bishop's visit to Japan was very successful, and I am looking forward to building our relations further by working with you to facilitate a visit of Prime Minister Abe to Australia this year.

Yours sincerely,

/S/

Sumio Kusaka

Ambassador of Japan to Australia