



AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 13 December 2006

AUSTRALIA – JAPAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS A SIGNIFICANT EVENT

Statement by Mr Peter Hendy, Chief Executive

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), Australia's largest and most representative business organisation, welcomes the announcement by the Prime Ministers of Australia and Japan that they will enter into negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

Japan still remains Australia's major trading partner and an FTA, which includes agricultural products, will be a significant boost for future Australian exports.

Any such Agreement must be bold and comprehensive, covering all sectors, and be consistent with both countries' obligations under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) – namely, covering 'substantially all trade'.

Importantly, it should also be 'WTO-plus' – delivering outcomes above and beyond those already available to each country through the multilateral trading system.

Without prejudging any negotiations, priority sectors for commerce and industry would include areas such as government procurement, investment, movement of natural persons and services.

Two-way trade between Australia and Japan was \$53.9 billion in 2005-06.

The negotiation of this agreement will be a fitting way to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Australia Japan Commerce Agreement that initiated the decades long economic partnership between the two countries.

ACCI provides secretariat services for the Australia-Japan Business Co-operation Committee and has played an important role in progressing the trade relationship between our two countries for decades.

ACCI is the nation's leading business organisation on international trade issues, with exclusive Australian representation on bodies including the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), International Labour Organisation (ILO), International Organisation of Employers (IOE), Confederation of Asia-Pacific Employers (CAPE) and the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI).

For further information:

Peter Hendy	Chief Executive	02 6273 2311 / 0419 422 650
Brett Hogan	Director of Communications	03 9668 9950 / 0407 273 884

MR 138/06

www.acci.asn.au

LEADING AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS