

JAPAN WELCOMES INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN NEW COLOMBO PLAN

Media Release

At a meeting in Tokyo on 15 October, the Foreign Minister of Japan, Fumio Kishida, and the Foreign Minister of Australia, Julie Bishop, shared views on further deepening cooperation between the two countries on continuous people-to-people exchanges, particularly youth exchanges.

The Ministers underlined the benefits which strong education links brought to the bilateral relationship. They noted that Australia and Japan enjoy well-established university links which provide a firm basis for increasing student mobility between the two countries.

Foreign Minister Bishop commended Japan's exchange programmes, including JENESYS 2.0, which will see 30,000 youth from the region, including 280 Australian youth, undertaking a two-week study program in Japan in 2013-14 and the JET programme, which sees about 130 new participants from Australia in 2013.

Ministers discussed the New Colombo Plan initiative of the Australian Government which aims to lift knowledge of the Asia Pacific in Australia and strengthen people-to-people and institutional relationships, through study and internships undertaken by Australian undergraduate students in the region.

Foreign Minister Kishida welcomed Foreign Minister Bishop's invitation for Japan to participate in the New Colombo Plan pilot phase in 2014. Ministers confirmed the New Colombo Plan would facilitate closer engagement by encouraging increasing numbers of talented young Australians to study and gain career experience in Japan. Ministers expressed their determination that the two countries would work closely to ensure the early and successful implementation of the initiative.