

Leaders Statement on Enhanced Defence and Security Cooperation

1. Reaffirming the vital Special Strategic Partnership between our two countries, today, we, Prime Minister Albanese and Prime Minister Takaichi announced new steps to enhance Australia-Japan defence and security cooperation to support our shared ambition for a peaceful, stable and prosperous region.
2. This is a natural evolution of our close relationship. It reflects the commitment made in the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation issued on 22 October 2022 by Prime Minister Albanese and Prime Minister Kishida that our two countries would consult on contingencies that may affect our sovereignty and regional security interests and consider measures in response. This Declaration also committed us to further enhance interoperability between the Australian Defence Force and the Japan Self-Defense Forces and to explore additional ways to improve the effectiveness of our bilateral defence cooperation, including through Scope, Objectives and Forms discussions.
3. Since then, on the defence pillar, Japan has formulated its first National Defense Strategy in December 2022. Australia has since released two iterations of its own National Defence Strategy in April 2024 and April 2026. These notable documents clearly demonstrate the strategic alignment of our two countries, and cemented the foundation of our enhanced defence relationship.
4. The enhanced defence cooperation elevates our enduring defence partnership to reflect our unprecedented strategic alignment and increasing number of joint activities. It is underpinned by the Australia-Japan Reciprocal Access Agreement which entered into force on 13 August 2023 providing a framework for the Australian Defence Force and Japan Self-Defense Forces to carry out activities in each other's territories. Since then, Australia and Japan have expanded the scope and sophistication of our joint activities. This has helped to build greater interoperability between our two defence forces, covering personnel and capabilities, as well as trilaterally with the United States recognising the US is a crucial ally to both countries in sustaining a peaceful and stable Indo-Pacific.
5. Our future enhanced defence cooperation will build on these foundations – based on the understanding that Japan and Australia are increasingly vital to each other's strategic depth – to leverage our advantages, including our respective industrial bases, geographical characteristics and networks. Focused on strengthening our respective capability, enhancing alignment and bolstering interoperability for mutual benefit, our enhanced cooperation will also build on policy and intelligence exchanges enabled through the Framework for Strategic Defence Coordination established in 2025.

6. Australia-Japan defence and security cooperation will be reinforced by our two countries' continued close coordination, including through Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations. Its key priorities include:

- Increased information and intelligence cooperation;
- Co-development and co-production of defence capabilities;
- Testing of new equipment, advanced weapons and emerging technologies;
- Maintenance and sustainment of assets, including 'Upgraded Mogami' frigates;
- Enhanced training and exercises in all domains;
- Supply chain cooperation; and
- Securing our critical maritime traffic.

7. The Australia-Japan relationship contributes to realising a free and open Indo-Pacific that is inclusive and resilient. Australia and Japan share an unwavering vision for a secure and prosperous region underpinned by respect for international law. As reflected in the 18 April 2026 Joint Statement of our Defence Ministers, and the signing of the Mogami Memorandum, Australia and Japan are committed to assisting each other to build our respective capability to be able to collectively meet future challenges.