



# Australia News

From the Australian High Commission in Ottawa

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## Happy Australia Day from the High Commissioner

*On behalf of all at the High Commission, I wish Australia's friends in Canada a very happy Australia Day. Despite the arctic temperatures, we celebrated Australia Day in Ottawa with Dinner at the Movies—a special screening of the hit Australian movie *The Sapphires*.*

*2012, my first year in Ottawa, was an excellent year for relations between Canada and Australia. We continue to work together as international partners, and I think the world is a better place for it. I look forward to another good year in 2013.*

Louise Hand PSM



## High Commissioner now on Twitter

The High Commissioner launched her Twitter feed in December 2012. The High Commissioner will tweet on Australia-Canada news and events.

**Follow the High Commissioner at @AusHCCanada**

## Australia secures a seat on the Security Council

Australia has been elected to serve as a non-permanent member on the United Nations Security Council for 2013 and 2014. For the next two years Australia will have a direct hand in shaping solutions to the world's most pressing security challenges.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Foreign Minister Bob Carr thanked Australia's regional and global partners for the confidence they had shown in Australia and underlined that Australia would play a constructive role across the breadth of the Council's agenda.

Australia's key priorities will include Afghanistan, Syria, Iran and North Korea. Australia will work to ensure the effectiveness of Security Council sanctions, including those targeting individuals associated with Al-Qaida. The views of close partners such as Canada will make important contributions to Australia's time on the Council.

Welcoming the outcome of the vote, Senator the Hon. Hugh Segal told the Canadian Senate that Australia's election to the Security Council 'strengthens that body as one that reflects the values and the common concerns for a better world — a more humane world — that we share with our Australian brothers and sisters.'

[australia-UNSC.gov.au](http://australia-UNSC.gov.au)

## Australia in the Asian Century

On 28 October Prime Minister Julia Gillard launched a White Paper on *Australia in the Asian Century*. The paper sets out a roadmap to guide Australia to become a more prosperous and resilient nation at a time when Asia is undergoing an unprecedented transformation.

The white paper contains 25 national objectives for governments, business, unions and the community. These objectives are in five areas:

- A productive and resilient economy
- Building capabilities through education & training
- Operating in and connecting with growing Asian markets
- Building comprehensive and sustainable security in the region
- Deeper and broader international relationships.

[asiancentury.dpmc.gov.au](http://asiancentury.dpmc.gov.au)



*Following the release of the White Paper, Prime Minister Julia Gillard (pictured with Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong) attended the Asia-Europe Meeting in Vientiane, Laos.*

## Canada joins Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Talks

Canadian representatives attended the negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) for the first time in Wellington, New Zealand on 3-12 December 2012. In June, Canada became the newest member of the TPP. Through this grouping, 11 parties are working towards an ambitious, comprehensive regional agreement that liberalises trade and investment, including through duty-free access to goods markets and the lifting of restrictions on services and investment.

The Australian Prime Minister and Trade Minister welcomed the addition of Canada to the talks. With the addition of Canada and Mexico, TPP discussions cover nearly 30 per cent of global GDP.

The TPP has the potential to form a basis for free trade across the Asia-Pacific region and will contribute to Australia's efforts to achieve global trade liberalisation.

[trademinister.gov.au](http://trademinister.gov.au)

## A Charter for the Commonwealth

Realising the vision of Heads of Government when they met in Perth, Australia in 2011, all Commonwealth nations have now agreed on a Charter of the Commonwealth. The Charter, the first document of its kind in the Commonwealth, brings together the values and aspirations that unite the Commonwealth – democracy, human rights and the rule of law – in a single, accessible document.



Heads of Government endorsed the Charter after broad consultations among member governments, civil society and the public. Commonwealth Chair-in-Office, Prime Minister Julia Gillard of Australia, said the Charter would belong as much to the people of the Commonwealth as it did to member governments.

The Commonwealth has also succeeded in agreeing to implement the vast majority of the 106 recommendations of the Eminent Persons Group report, *A Commonwealth of the People: Time for Urgent Reform*. The recommendations aim to build a stronger, more resilient and progressive association.

[thecommonwealth.org](http://thecommonwealth.org)

*Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Bob Carr met Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs John Baird at a meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group in New York City.*

# Recognition for consular cooperation

On 20 November the High Commissioner presented an award on behalf of the Australian Government to Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada to recognise Canadian consular assistance to Australian nationals in Syria.

Under a bilateral consular agreement concluded in 1986, Canada provides consular services to Australians in 21 countries where Australia is not represented, while Australia reciprocates by providing consular services to Canadians in 22 nations.

The award was in recognition of the outstanding efforts of the consular team at the Canadian Embassy in Damascus, Syria in 2011 and 2012 which provided consular and passport assistance to Australian nationals in trying circumstances up until its closure in March 2012.

The Honourable Diane Ablonczy, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs) and HE Mr Glenn Davidson, Canadian Ambassador to Afghanistan (former Ambassador to Syria) received the award on behalf of the Canadian consular team.



*LEFT: The High Commissioner with Minister Ablonczy and consular officials.*

*BELOW: Canadian High Commissioner to Australia, Michael Small (R), presents the award to DFAT Deputy Secretary Gillian Bird (L) and former Apia officer Ian Gerard.*

Under the same arrangement, an award was presented by Canadian High Commissioner to Australia, Michael Small, on behalf of the Canadian Government to Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and representatives of the Australian High Commission in Apia, Samoa, for assisting Canadians in that country.

High Commissioner Small highlighted the exemplary assistance provided to Canadians in Samoa following the 2009 tsunami.



## Video Interview with High Commissioner

The High Commissioner recently took part in an interview for DFAT's "Our Ambassador" series for the Departmental YouTube channel in which she discussed the Australia-Canada relationship and her reflections after a year as Australia's chief representative in Canada.

[youtube.com/dfat](http://youtube.com/dfat)

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