Australia Day celebrated in style

The High Commission celebrated Australia Day on 26 January by hosting a reception at Ottawa’s National Arts Centre. The evening marked the end of celebrations commemorating 70 years of diplomatic relations between Australia and Canada. Embassy magazine described the event as “injecting sunshine” into a long, cold Ottawa winter.

The reception was attended by more than 300 representatives from the Canadian government, diplomatic corps, corporate sector and media. Governor General of Canada, HE the Rt Hon Dr David Johnston, was guest of honour. Canadian Minister of National Defence Peter MacKay and Government House Leader John Baird were also in attendance.

In his address, the High Commissioner Justin Brown highlighted the close relationship Australia and Canada share and the many areas in which the two countries cooperate, such as people smuggling, climate change and in the G20 and WTO. Mr Brown also thanked Canadians for their generosity in responding to the recent flood crises in Australia.

Minister MacKay, who spoke on behalf of the Canadian Government, expressed his condolences for Australia’s flood victims and admiration for Australia’s ongoing military efforts in Afghanistan.

To commemorate 70 years of diplomatic relations, a display of historical documents and photographs was showcased at the event.

The series of cablegrams, letters, documents and pictures highlighted key events in Australia and Canada’s shared history – from the initial exchange of High Commissioners in 1939-1940 until the first meeting of Prime Ministers Julia Gillard and Stephen Harper during the G20 Summit in Seoul in November 2010.

To ensure there was a strong Australian flavour at the reception, guests sampled fine Australian wines and tasted roast kangaroo “sliders”, lamingtons and pavlovas.

See pages 6 and 7 for more photos.
Prime Minister Julia Gillard has outlined the Government’s plan to introduce a price on carbon in Australia.

The two-stage plan would start with a fixed price period of three to five years before transitioning to an emissions cap and trade scheme.

The Government has proposed that the carbon price regime be introduced on 1 July 2012, but it still faces the task of securing agreement from a majority in both houses of Parliament.

As a country that is heavily reliant on coal-fired power generation, the scheme is aimed at providing a price-based market signal to encourage reduced emissions by businesses and consumers.

The Government has indicated that it will use the funds raised by the scheme to assist low-income families with household bills and help businesses make the transition to a clean energy economy.

The proposal is the result of work by the Multi-Party Climate Change Parliamentary Committee, which was established after last year’s federal election.

The Committee has not yet completed its work. It will continue to discuss other important elements of the proposal including the starting level of the fixed price, any phasing in of sectors of the economy, and assistance for both households and industry.

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## Australians of the Year

On Australia Day Eve in Canberra, Prime Minister Julia Gillard presented awards to the Australians of the year.

The four major recipients, listed below, displayed courage, determination and inspiration to other Australians in their endeavours.

**Australian of the Year:**
Simon McKeon (social entrepreneur)

**Young Australian of the Year:**
Jessica Watson (sailor)

**Senior Australian of the Year:**
Prof. Ron McCallum AO (equal rights campaigner)

**Local Hero:**
Donald Ritchie OAM (suicide prevention campaigner)

*australianoftheyear.org.au*

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## Student visa review

The Australian Government has commissioned a review of its student visa program, which is to report to government in mid 2011.

The international education sector is important in supporting bilateral ties with key partner countries including Canada, driving employment and delivering skills to the economy.

The review is an opportunity for education providers and stakeholders to share their vision of the sector's future.

On 7 March 2011, a discussion paper was released providing a brief overview of some key issues which have emerged from initial consultations.

Interested parties are encouraged to make a written submission to the review. Submissions close on Friday 15 April 2011.

*immi.gov.au/students*
While many cities and rural areas of Australia have been battered by flooding through the recent southern summer, Australians everywhere have been touched by the ongoing generosity of Canadians in response to the crisis.

The High Commission has been contacted by individuals, not-for-profit organisations and businesses across Canada offering expressions of solidarity and support.

The Queensland Premier’s Flood Relief Appeal received a number of generous donations from Canadians that are already helping to repair the flood damage.

**The Australian-Canadian Association (YACA) in Toronto hosted a highly successful concert and silent auction on 19 February that raised almost $30,000 for flood relief.**

This superb effort was largely due to the efforts of Johanna Gerrie, President of YACA, who took charge of organising entertainment and encouraging businesses to contribute items for the silent auction.

Ms Gerrie said after the event, “100 per cent of the money raised goes to the Australian Red Cross (via the Canadian Red Cross) and the Queensland Premier’s Disaster Relief Appeal. Both charities are directly involved in helping Australians get back on their feet after the recent flood devastation.”

**McGill University students** in Montreal took part in a flood relief fundraiser called "Hockey Night in Canada for Aussie Pride" on 26 January.

The event was organised last-minute by Alyson McPhee and Kirsten Maier, an Australian living in Montreal, and was supported by more than 100 students from the McGill International Student Network.

At the game between the Concordia Stingers and the McGill Redmen, proceeds from tickets purchased by spectators wearing Australian colours were donated to the Queensland Premier’s Flood Relief Appeal.

**The Down Under Club of Winnipeg (DUCW) combined** their Australia Day and Waitangi Day celebration on February 5 with an evening of fun and fundraising in support of flood relief. The evening featured a surprise auction and quiz.

**Other expat groups** across Canada held similar events.

yaca.ca
downunderclub.mb.ca
On 16 February, a delegation of Australian scientists and officials visited Ottawa to discuss the Square Kilometre Array radio telescope project (SKA). The SKA, a collaboration of 20 countries including Canada and Australia, will deliver the world's most advanced radio telescope, comprising a vast array of low and mid-frequency antennas and dishes, arranged in clusters over more than 3000 km. Australia and New Zealand are bidding to host the SKA.

Dr Brian Boyle, SKA Director for the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and Director of the Australia-New Zealand bid delivered a presentation on SKA at the Rideau Club, which was attended by a number of MPs and members of Ottawa's scientific and diplomatic community.

The delegation then travelled to Alberta for a day of meetings with the University of Calgary. UC is completing preparations for Canada's upcoming role as host of the International SKA Forum in Banff in July, 2011 - an important milestone in the SKA's development.

Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard visited Washington DC and New York City in early March for a series of high-level meetings with US Administration, Congressional and United Nations officials.

In a meeting in the Oval Office, President Barack Obama conveyed the US’s appreciation for Australia’s efforts in Afghanistan.

On 9 March, the Prime Minister addressed a joint sitting of US Congress. Ms Gillard spoke of the close ties between the US and Australia and urged Congress to pass a farm bill that would advance global free trade.

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the ANZUS Treaty, the Prime Minister announced funding for the Vietnam Veteran Education Centre in Washington to highlight Australia’s participation in that conflict.

In New York, Ms Gillard met with United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to discuss Australia’s humanitarian assistance in the Middle East.

On International Women’s Day, Ms Gillard, Australia’s first female Prime Minister, gave a speech at the International Women of Courage Award Ceremony in Washington.
Australian Minister for Tertiary Education Chris Evans has welcomed the National Survey of International Students Studying in Australia report, highlighting that the majority of international students are satisfied with their living and study experiences in Australia.

Following the report’s release in September, Senator Evans said student satisfaction is a key indicator of quality with international students playing a key role in promoting the Australian education experience overseas.

“The report shows 84% of international students were satisfied or very satisfied with their study experience and 86% with their living experience in Australia.”

“It was also encouraging to find that over 85% of students were satisfied or very satisfied with the level of support they received on arrival, confirming Australia’s reputation as a country that welcomes international students.”

In the latest survey, conducted from late 2009 to mid 2010, the top four factors influencing tertiary students’ decision to study in Australia were: quality of teaching (94% of respondents); reputation of qualification from their chosen education institution (93%); personal safety (92%); reputation of institution (91%).

[aei.gov.au]
[gostudyinaustralia.org]

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**International students love Australia**

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**Carleton University Model CHOGM**

Second Secretary Michael Googan gave the keynote speech at the Closing Ceremonies of the Carleton University Model Commonwealth Heads Of Government Meeting (CHOGM) on 16 January. Mr Googan, above, spoke about Australia’s participation in and goals for the Commonwealth in the lead-up to CHOGM in October 2011 in Perth.
Australia Day in Ottawa

(Clockwise from top left): Australia-Canada historical documents display; musician Jay Thomson on the didgeridoo; Ms Caroline Linke, High Commissioner Justin Brown and the Governor General; Canadian Defence Minister Peter MacKay addressing the reception; Mr Brown during his address.
Australia Day in Ottawa

[Images of people at a formal event]
Injured veterans tame Mount Washington

Mount Washington, Vancouver Island, was the venue for a unique event bringing together injured veterans from the Australia and Canadian Defence Forces in mid-February.

The 4th Vancouver Island Society for Adaptive Snowsports (VISAS) Veterans’ Festival saw veterans from both countries with acquired disabilities take on the disciplines of skiing and snowboarding and emerge with great memories as well as new skills.

On festival race day, when the veterans displayed their impressive racing abilities, the Australian High Commissioner was joined by Commodore Hans Jung, Canadian Forces Surgeon General, on Mount Washington.

Mr Brown said, “Australia is honoured to have the opportunity to attend the VISAS festival with the Canadian Forces Soldier-On Program. Our two countries have a lot in common, and the Veterans’ Ski Festival was a very tangible demonstration of the valued relationship between Canada and Australia.”

“The Festival provided an excellent opportunity for the veterans to establish friendships, and for coordinators to conduct mutually beneficial discussions on a range of issues from adaptive sports equipment through to veteran support programs.”

Lt-Col Jamie Patten-Richens, Defence Adviser at the High Commission, was equally impressed.

“The VISAS coordination was exceptional - no request went unattended, from quality instruction on the snow right through to locating multi-voltage power transformers. The Festival was extremely beneficial for all and provided the perfect opportunity to cement the relationship between the ADF Paralympic Sports and Canadian Forces Soldier-On Programs.”
High Commissioner interview with Asia Pacific Foundation

During his recent visit to British Columbia, the High Commissioner was interviewed on camera by the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada.

The interview covered a number of issues surrounding Australia’s engagement with Asia.

View the complete interview on the Asia Pacific Foundation website:

asiapacific.ca/media/video

Trade Minister addresses major trade issues

Australian Trade Minister, Dr Craig Emerson, has recently delivered two major speeches outlining his views on Australian trade policy.

Transcripts of Dr Emerson’s speeches, “The future of trade policy in an uncertain world” at the Lowy institute and “Global trade: is multilateralism relevant?” to the Partnership Summit, are available at Dr Emerson’s website:

trademinister.gov.au/speeches

Australian Think Tank Corner

The Lowy Institute for International Policy

released a new report by its West Asia Program Director, But this time, everything turns out differently, examining the consequences for the Middle East of the recent uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt.

The Institute's most recent international economy commentary, Managing the global economy: G-20 or G-zero? examines the role of the G-20 in global economic governance, and outlines five major challenges facing the body. lowyinstitute.org

Australian Strategic Policy Institute

has released its 2011 strategic assessment. In its review, the ASPI suggests that over the next twenty years Australia will have two major strategic issues to address: the shifting great-power relationships in Asia and the growing capacity of non-state actors to pose strategic-level threats to states.

Another policy analysis reviews the Royal Australian Navy's sealift and amphibious capabilities and examines some future options. aspi.org.au

The Centre for Independent Studies

has published a report entitled Tax, Borrow, Spend, contrasting the recent performance of each Australian state in fiscal management, using the indicators of debt, spending and taxation. cis.org.au

Did you know?

The Australian city of Gold Coast in southern Queensland is one of two candidate cities to host the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

The other city in contention is Hambantota, Sri Lanka.
Ottawa: Kangaroos, Beavers & Gorgonzola
The High Commissioner opened the exhibition entitled ‘Kangaroos, Beavers and Gorgonzola’ at La Nouvelle Scene Gallery in Ottawa on 5 March. The exhibition showcases artworks by a unique collaboration of 42 Australian and Canadian artists who visited Italy last year and is open until 14 April. Proceeds from sale of the artworks will go to Fundacion Germen de Paz in Colombia.

Kingston: Kingston WritersFest 2011
Kingston WritersFest welcomes Australia’s J.M. Coetzee, Nobel Prize winner and author of Disgrace, to the stage on Thursday, September 22 for readings and conversation with Paul Auster, celebrated American novelist and poet. Coetzee and Auster join 50 internationally renowned authors for four days of readings, discussions, and master classes. Tickets on sale August 18 at the Grand Theatre Box Office; for Early Bird specials and announcements, join the mailing list.
kingstonwritersfest.ca

Ottawa: Cricket
Keen cricketers in Ottawa are encouraged to sign up for the upcoming Ottawa Valley Cricket Council season. Also stay tuned for the match between the Australian High Commission and the UK High Commission in late July. cricketstar.net/ovcc

Ottawa: Australian Rules Football
Sporting enthusiasts interested in playing, watching or supporting Australia’s national sport are invited to contact the Ottawa Swans, the newest team in the Ontario Australian Football League. The Swans’ pre-season starts in late March and new players are welcome. ottawaswans.com

Quebec: Jardins de Metis
The 2011 edition of the International Garden Festival features gardens by two of Australia’s leading landscape designers. The Noli Tangere garden by Terragram (Vladimir Sitta, Anita Madura and Robert Faber) is a suspended living mat of plants that envelops a secret garden below the surface. Habitation, a Sydney based group of landscape architects, is presenting The Grass is Greener, a giant living wall whose central window invites visitors to imagine what is on the other side. Held every year at the Reford Gardens on the banks of the St. Lawrence River, the International Garden Festival is open June 25 to October 2. refordgardens.com

Calling on Canadian alumni of Australian universities
The High Commission wants to hear from Canadian graduates of Australian universities.

We are compiling a register of Australian alumni who would be interested in hearing regular news of Australia and in being invited to special events arranged by the High Commission in Canada.

If you would like to register, please visit the High Commission website.

Please feel free to circulate this invitation to fellow Canadian alumni of Australian universities.

canada.embassy.gov.au
Exports: $33 billion – leading categories include coal, meat (and meat preparations), non-ferrous metals and metalliferous ores.

Trade with Canada: Exports to Canada were $136 million last year - led by metalliferous ores, meat and machinery exports. Imports from Canada were valued at $325.5 million, making it the 19th largest importer to Queensland.

History: Queensland, known as the ‘Sunshine State’, is Australia’s second largest state by size and the third most populous. It was initially part of the British-administered state of New South Wales and its capital city of Brisbane was established in 1825 as a penal settlement. In 1859, Queen Victoria approved its separation from New South Wales to form an independent colony. A land-order system devised by the new government and a discovery of gold led to a rapid expansion in population during the 1860s. In 1922, Queensland abolished the legislative council (its upper house), becoming the only state in Australia with a unicameral parliament.

Economy: Historically, Queensland’s economy has been based on agriculture and mineral resources. Leading exports are coal, metalliferous ores, and non-ferrous metals (such as aluminium, copper, and nickel). It does, however, have a fast growing knowledge-based sector, which is becoming a growing contributor to the state’s exports of goods and services.

Today, tourism is one of Queensland’s key sectors, directly employing 122,000 people or 5.7 per cent of all persons employed. The sector directly contributes $9.2 billion to the Queensland economy and accounts for 4.7 per cent of Queensland’s Gross State Product. Overseas education services exports are also an important and growing component of Queensland’s international services exports. There are approximately 72,560 overseas student enrolments in Queensland. India, China and South Korea are the three largest markets.

Provincial partnerships: Queensland has formed agreements with individual Canadian provinces to capitalise on mutual interests and priorities. The relationship between British Columbia and Queensland has been cemented in a Memorandum of Cooperation that includes commitments to exploring collaborations regarding clean energy, water stewardship and climate change; managing resources responsibly; developing regional economies and indigenous communities; promoting bilateral education opportunities. Manitoba and Queensland have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to acknowledge and strengthen the relationship around the life sciences industry.
Resources and mining in Toronto

The High Commissioner attended the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) Mining Investment Show in Toronto on 6 March.

Australia had a strong presence at PDAC 2011; a record of over 250 Australian participants were registered.

The convention is a key in promoting commercial linkages between the Australian and Canadian mining sectors.

In attendance were Western Australian Minister for Mines and Petroleum Norman Moore and South Australian Minister for Mineral Resources Development and Industry and Trade, Tom Koutsantonis.

As Mr Brown pointed out in his address, “Investment in Mining Resources”, Australia is focused on providing an investment environment that is internationally competitive and provides a high degree of investor certainty.

Australian licences now recognised in four provinces

Australian residents of Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan are able to exchange their Australian driver’s licence for a provincial licence, without having to undergo a driving test.

These two provinces join British Columbia and Ontario by officially recognising Australian licences.

The Australian Government welcomes the recognition of Australian driver’s licences by the Governments of Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan.

Such arrangements are valuable in facilitating the two-way movement of skilled personnel between Australia and Canada and promoting commercial links.

The Australian Government is seeking to put in place similar arrangements with all Canadian provinces and territories.

Commonwealth Business Forum – Perth 2011

The Commonwealth Business Forum (CBF) will be held in Perth on 25-27 October, just prior to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) on 28-30 October 2011.

The theme of the CBF will be ‘Participating for Global Growth: The Commonwealth, Indian Ocean and the Pacific Rim’. It will highlight global economic partnerships for trade and investment, providing an opportunity to attract a senior business audience to Australia from a range of key Commonwealth countries. It is anticipated that attendance will include 1000 delegates from 51 countries, 10 Heads of Government and 40 Ministers.

The Australian High Commission encourages Canadian business representatives to travel to Australia to participate in the Forum.

Details and registration for the CBF program in Perth are available at: cbf2011.com
Foreign Minister visits Afghanistan

Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd undertook a three-day visit to Afghanistan in early March, visiting Kabul and Tarin Kowt.

Mr Rudd's visit reaffirmed the Australian Government's deep appreciation for the dedication and commitment shown by military and civilian personnel in Afghanistan.

"These last months have been tough, and the resilience of Australian men and women in the field is impressive," Mr Rudd said. "What is encouraging, however, is the clear evidence of progress being made in our mission. Areas long under insurgent control have been cleared of the Taliban.

"Key roads between districts in Uruzgan, closed for many years, are now open, allowing ordinary Afghans to go about their daily lives again. Better security is also allowing the Afghan Government to bring government services to more people."

In a meeting with President Karzai, Mr Rudd underlined Australia's long-term commitment to Afghanistan, and discussed plans for transition to Afghan-led security by the end of 2014.

Multicultural policy announced

The Australian Government recently announced a new multicultural policy that aims to cement Australia’s position as a leading advocate for multiculturalism.

The policy features four guiding principles:

1: The Australian Government celebrates and values the benefits of cultural diversity for all Australians, within the broader aims of national unity, community harmony and maintenance of our democratic values. Diverse cultural expression enriches all Australians and makes our multicultural nation more vibrant and creative. An enduring theme of Australia’s multicultural policy is that everyone belongs.

2: The Australian Government is committed to a just, inclusive and socially cohesive society where everyone can participate in the opportunities that Australia offers and where government services are responsive to the needs of Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Australia’s multicultural policy aligns with the Government’s Social Inclusion Agenda where Australians of all backgrounds feel valued and can participate in our society.

3: The Australian Government welcomes the economic, trade and investment benefits which arise from our successful multicultural nation. Immigration brings much needed skills and labour. It has also given us energy, ingenuity and enterprise. Immigration and cultural diversity have created economic renewal and prosperity in our communities. Our trade relations have been strengthened, our business horizons broadened and we have become more open to the world.

4: The Australian Government will act to promote understanding and acceptance while responding to expressions of intolerance and discrimination with strength, and where necessary, with the force of the law. Racism and discrimination affects people’s health and wellbeing and denies people fair access to opportunities and services.

immi.gov.au
Out and about with the High Commissioner

Before the end-of-year break, the High Commissioner undertook an official visit to Québec City where he met with Premier Charest, Lieutenant Governor Duchesne, the Minister of International Relations, Monique Gagnon-Tremblay, as well as a number of senior government officials. He also held discussions with senior staff at Laval University.

Following Australia Day celebrations on 26 January, the High Commissioner travelled to Comox, British Columbia to support three Australian veterans who were participating in a learn to ski program conducted for the Canadian Forces by the Vancouver Island Society for Adaptive Snowsports program. After that inspiring experience, the High Commissioner was in Vancouver to address members of the Canada-Australia/NZ Business Association (CANZBA) on the topic ‘The Gillard Government and the Canada-Australia Relationship’. He also spoke about Asia-Pacific economic and political/strategic developments at a roundtable convened by the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada.

In February the High Commissioner held a private working session with the members of the House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade on a range of trade policy and negotiations issues. He hosted lunch for the Commonwealth Heads of Mission group where guest speaker Mr Guy Saint-Jacques, Chief Climate Change Negotiator, led a discussion on Canada’s approach to the UN climate change negotiations.

He also hosted two receptions to welcome new arrivals to the High Commission, Detective Superintendent Mick Kelsey of the Australian Federal Police, and David Charlton, Defence Liaison Officer, who replaces Jason Gallagher.

February was also a busy month for Australian visitors. The High Commissioner welcomed a senior delegation promoting the Australia/NZ bid to host the SKA telescope, led by Dr Brian Boyle of Australia’s primary research institute, the CSIRO. A visit by Michael Smith, Executive Director of the Asia Pacific Civil-Military Centre of Excellence was a fine opportunity to continue productive exchanges with Canadian agencies on civilian–military cooperation in conflict and natural disasters.

During the first week of March, the High Commissioner attended the Prospector and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) Mining Investment Show in Toronto which attracted more than 250 Australian companies as well as the Western Australian Minister for Mines and Petroleum, Norman Moore. During his time in Toronto, the High Commissioner attended a dinner hosted by the Government of South Australia, met with the Australian exhibitors and addressed a seminar on investing in Australia’s resource sector. He also held a roundtable at the University of Toronto’s School of Public Policy and Governance.

In support of Australian artistic talent, the High Commissioner attended an Atlantic Ballet of Canada performance, “Ghosts of Violence” which featured Australian dancer Kyle Davey. On 5 March he also opened the ‘Kangaroos, Beavers and Gorgonzola’ art exhibition, which includes paintings by nine Australian artists from the Splashout Studios Art School in Adelaide.

Through the winter months the High Commissioner attended forums including the “Strategic Dialogue” forum, hosted by Gowling Lafleur Henderson, on the global economic crisis and international security, a Public Policy Forum session on energy and climate change, a session hosted by the French Embassy entitled “UN General Assembly and the G20: towards a new governance?” and a Canada2020 Speakers Series on directions in the US economy.

He was also pleased to attend the launch of Senator Hugh Segal’s new book The Right Balance. Canada’s Conservative Tradition.