

Ministerial statement on enhancing Australia-Japan defence cooperation, Canberra, Australia

18 August 2026

1. We, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence of Australia the Hon. Richard Marles MP, and Minister of Defense of Japan Koizumi Shinjiro, met in Canberra today for a Defence Ministers' Meeting under the Australia-Japan Framework for Strategic Defence Coordination.
2. We welcomed the continued evolution of our bilateral defence partnership, marked by growing sophistication and interoperability across all domains. Grounded in the 2022 Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation and our Special Strategic Partnership, we are operationalising our partnership to meet the challenges of the deteriorating global strategic environment.
3. We recognised our countries are vital to each other's strategic depth and are working together to enhance our readiness and capability. We reaffirmed our unprecedented strategic alignment and our shared commitment to realise a free and open Indo-Pacific that is inclusive and resilient.
4. We welcomed strong early progress in implementing the Leaders' Statement on Enhanced Defence and Security Cooperation issued by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae at the 4 May 2026 Australia-Japan Leaders' Meeting.
5. We recognised substantial, measurable progress across five vital areas of defence cooperation identified by our leaders:
 - a. **Increased information and intelligence cooperation:** We are expanding exchanges of information and operational insights to strengthen our collective situational awareness and understanding of the regional strategic environment. We welcomed the increasing regularity of exchanges between our national security officials to share assessments on common threats.
 - b. **Collaborating to deliver Australia's general purpose frigates:** We welcomed rapid momentum on Australia's general purpose frigate program following the landmark selection of the upgraded Mogami class frigate and our 18 April 2026 signing of the "Mogami Memorandum". Work continues at pace to deliver the first vessel to the Royal Australian Navy in 2029. We look forward to establishing associated sustainment and shipbuilding capabilities in Australia. We welcomed the Australia-

Japan-New Zealand meeting in Ankara in July, where the three countries agreed to continue exploring opportunities for deeper trilateral cooperation.

- c. **Co-development and co-production of defence capabilities:** We marked the July 2026 completion of successful field trials of the Boobook laser capability in South Australia, a significant milestone in bilateral defence industrial collaboration representing the first co-development between Australia and Japan.
 - d. **Testing new equipment, advanced weapons and emerging technologies:** We committed to collaborating on testing new equipment, advanced weapons and emerging technologies in Australia. We will establish a framework to facilitate cooperation using Australia's testing ranges to support next-generation, long-range precision strike assets and autonomous capabilities, including to support Japan's hypersonic missile program.
 - e. **Enhanced Training and Exercises:** Our forces are conducting highly complex, multi-domain exercises, fully leveraging the Australia-Japan Reciprocal Access Agreement. We welcomed Japan's July 2026 deployment of F-35s and other air assets to Australia for Exercise Southern Cross and Exercise Pitch Black. We look forward to continuing exercises with an eye to future rotational deployments. We welcomed the deployment of *JS Kumano* to Australia and the participation of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force in Exercise Southern Jackaroo. We recognised the positive impact of cooperation between our operational headquarters to enhance interoperability.
6. We acknowledged the increasingly complex security environment in the Indo-Pacific, and reaffirmed the views we expressed in the Joint Statement issued at the 18 April 2026 Australia-Japan Defence Ministers' Meeting. We reiterated our serious concerns about the situations in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. We reaffirmed our strong opposition to any unilateral actions, including by force or coercion, which escalate tensions and undermine regional peace and stability. We condemned North Korea's development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles and its continued provocative actions, including repeated ballistic missile launches in violation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.
7. We emphasised the importance of deepening practical cooperation and exercises with our shared ally, the United States. We continue to work with close regional partners including India, Indonesia, New Zealand, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea, and with regional institutions such as ASEAN, to enhance regional resilience and uphold a free and open Indo Pacific that is inclusive and resilient. We committed to strengthening regional collective

preparedness and supporting more effective responses to natural disasters through initiatives such as the Quad Indo-Pacific Logistics Network (IPLN), whose second tabletop exercise is to be held at the Japan Ministry of Defense this September. We reaffirmed our commitment to supporting Pacific partners and strengthening regional resilience through close cooperation with, and respect for, Pacific-led institutions and priorities.

8. As we mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Australia and Japan in 2026, we are resolved to continue elevating our defence partnership, ensuring our countries are well positioned to address future challenges and seize new opportunities together.