

PRESS RELEASE

Philippine Embassy, Canberra

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CONSULAR MISSION TO PERTH SERVICES OVER A THOUSAND CLIENTS

The Philippine Embassy rendered consular services to a total of one thousand four hundred seventeen (1,417) consular clients in Perth, Western Australia from 4 to 8 July 2016.

The Consular Mission, which coincided with Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz's Official Visit to Western Australia from 5-6 July 2016, was headed by Consul Jim B. San Agustin and Vice Consul Nicole De Castro, and included Ms. Madelaine David, Mr. Ruel Peñaflores, and the Philippine Labor Attaché, Atty. Rodolfo Sabulao.

The Perth Mission, with the support of volunteers from the Filipino Australian Club of Perth, Inc., attended to one thousand two hundred ninety eight (1,298) Philippine ePassport applicants and administered the oath of allegiance to one hundred nineteen (119) former Filipinos who reacquired their Philippine citizenship under Republic Act No. 9225 or the Citizenship Retention and Re-acquisition Act of 2003.

On 6 July 2016, FACPI organized its first Townhall Meeting with Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz. In attendance were more than 50 leaders/members of Filipino Community organizations in Perth, including the Filipino Community Council of WA, Migrante International and the Knights of Rizal.

Ambassador Calaguian-Cruz apprised the Community of developments in Philippine-Australian bilateral relations, particularly on joint programs to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Philippines-Australia diplomatic relations this year. She encouraged the Community to initiate its own programs to celebrate this milestone, including joining the "Adopt a School" Program of the Embassy to introduce the Philippines and Filipino culture to Australian schools, and contributing to the Embassy's documentary project highlighting the strong historical and people-to-people links between the Philippines and Australia.

The Ambassador also briefed the meeting on the highlights of her Official Visit, including her meetings with Perth Mayor Lisa Scaffidi, WA Governor Kerry Sanderson, and Legislative Assembly Speaker Michael Sutherland. She shared the good news that Western Australia now accounts for almost half of Australia's exports to the Philippines.

The Ambassador also took the opportunity to explain various Philippine Government programs for Filipinos overseas, including the Citizenship Reacquisition and Retention Law (RA 9225) and the Overseas Absentee Voting Act (RA 9189). Other concerns raised at the Meeting were the ongoing search for a Philippine Honorary Consul to Western Australia, and the Embassy's response to Assistance to Nationals (ATN) cases in Western Australia. The Ambassador assured the Meeting that the temporary closure of the Consulate General in Perth will not affect the Embassy's delivery of consular and ATN services to Filipinos in WA.



Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz addressing the Filipino Community in Perth during FACPI's first Townhall Meeting on 6 July 2016



Consul Jim San Agustin administering the Oath of Allegiance to former Filipino citizens who reacquired their Philippine citizenship



Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz with officers of the Filipino-Australian Club of Perth, Inc. (FACPI) (top photo) and the Filipino Community Council of WA