

# PRESS RELEASE

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### **The Philippine Embassy in Canberra and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade co-host a Reception in celebration of 70 years of Diplomatic Relations**

20 June 2016 - To mark the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Australia, Philippine Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz and Australian Foreign Affairs Secretary Peter Varghese co-hosted a diplomatic reception on 20 June 2016 at the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Some 150 members of the diplomatic corps, business, education and community leaders, and DFAT officials joined the officials of the two countries in celebrating seven decades of dynamic friendship.

During the event, Secretary Varghese presented former Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs and former Philippine Ambassador to Australia Delia Domingo-Albert a 70th Anniversary Friendship Award in recognition of her extensive contributions to the enhancement of Philippine-Australian relations. Foremost among her various achievements is the awarding of Philippine Liberation Medals to 3,800 Australian soldiers who participated in the campaign to liberate the Philippines during World War II.

In his remarks, Secretary Varghese recognized Ambassador Albert for being a role model for female diplomats and the empowerment of women. He also commended her for her foresight to initiate BIMP-EAGA's links with Australia.

In accepting her award, Ambassador Albert remarked that like the 3,800 Australian servicemen whom she personally awarded, she is deeply honoured by the recognition being accorded her in celebration of 70 years of bilateral relations.

Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz remarked that bilateral relations reached its peak last year with the signing by President Benigno Aquino III and Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull of the historic joint Declaration on Philippines-Australia Comprehensive Partnership. The Declaration paved the way for a more strategic and meaningful collaboration on bilateral, regional, and global issues of mutual interest.

Given the longstanding relationship anchored in deep historical ties and shared democratic values, Ambassador Calaguian-Cruz exhorted both sides to examine areas for enriching this friendship further and pursuing the ideals of freedom, equality and common prosperity.

The event was capped by a well-received performance by the Bayanihan, the Philippine National Dance Company, which is touring Australia as part of the 118th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence and the 70th Anniversary of Philippines-Australian Diplomatic Relations.





