

2025 Japanese Ship Ise Reception: Remarks by Ambassador Osawa
(8 August 2025)

- Honourable Judith Collins, Minister of Defence;
- Mr. Grahame Morton, Deputy Secretary of the Americas and Asia Group,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade
- Rear Admiral Garin Golding, Royal New Zealand Navy
- Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Members of the Diplomatic
Corps; Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa

We are extremely delighted to invite you aboard this Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force vessel, the JS ISE.

I am honoured to welcome JS ISE and JS SUZUNAMI and their crew members to Te Whanganui-A-Tara, Aotearoa, or Wellington, New Zealand. It's been 18 years since the last visit to Wellington by the Japanese ships Kashima, Sawagiri and Shimayuki during the Overseas Training Cruise in 2007. As for Indo-Pacific Deployment 25, this year is the 9th one, and it is the first time coming to Wellington.

This port visit by two vessels underscores the deep ties shared between Japan and New Zealand. Although our countries are separated by more than 9,000 kilometres, we are neighbouring countries across the Pacific Ocean and our partnership is firmly rooted in shared fundamental values and mutual respect.

As countries responsible for the prosperity of this region, Japan and NZ are working to realise a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”, together with other like-minded partners. I, therefore, am very pleased that JS ISE and JS SUZUNAMI are visiting in Wellington today.

In bilateral relations, Japan and NZ forms the "Strategic Cooperative Partnership" since 2013. In June 2024, the Prime Minister Luxon visited Japan and both leaders released the Joint Leaders’ statement in which they welcomed the strengthened security relationship and affirmed their shared commitment to the further deepening of cooperation and exchanges.

Since then, our relationship has continued to evolve steadily, we reached the agreement in principle of *the Japan-New Zealand Information Security Agreement*, and decided to launch negotiation for an *Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)*. In addition, the defence authorities of Japan

and New Zealand actively conduct high-level exchanges, joint training and unit-to-unit exchanges, and the opportunity for defence exchange and cooperation are increasing.

Also, Minister Collins has taken part in three Japan-New Zealand Defence Ministerial Meetings up to now. I hope we will continue to deepen our relationships.

Furthermore, in the area of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), Japan and New Zealand have consistently shared valuable lessons from past experiences. The Tsunami alert three weeks ago was a wake-up call of ongoing risk of natural disaster for both countries. This emphasizes the importance of cooperation and knowledge sharing to protect people and contribute to a more secure and peaceful Pacific Islands region.

I assure once again that this visit by Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Vessels JS ISE and JS SUZUNAMI to Wellington will serve as a symbolic event demonstrating the steady progress of cooperation and exchanges between two countries.

Lastly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Rear Admiral NATSUI Takashi of Escort Flotilla Four, and to the members of JS ISE and

JS SUZUNAMI for welcoming us tonight. Thank you to the Royal New Zealand Navy, and the Ministry of Defence in New Zealand for their efforts in receiving the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force vessels.

Thank you all for being part of this amazing journey.

No rei ra, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.