

Economic Cooperation Tops the Agenda during the Philippine Ambassador's Official Visit to Western Australia



(L-R) The Hon Wayne Martin AC, Chief Justice of Australia and Philippine Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz. (05 July 2016)



The Right Honourable Lord Mayor of Perth Lisa Scaffidi looks on as Philippine Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz signs the guestbook. (05 July 2016)

08 July 2016 – H.E. Minda Calaguian-Cruz, Philippine Ambassador to Australia, undertook her first Official Visit to Western Australia on 04-08 July 2016. The introductory visit focused on exploring economic opportunities for the Philippines and Western Australia offered by the dynamism of the Philippines and Southeast Asian region and the emerging diversification of Western Australia's economy. The Ambassador was joined by Labor Attaché Rodolfo Sabulao and Third Secretary and Vice Consul Nicole de Castro.

Western Australia is geographically close to ASEAN's 620 million population and shares a similar time zone with many Asian nations, including the Philippines, and 60% of the world's population. The Philippines has important trade relations with Western Australia with total trade reaching A\$763.4 million (approximately US\$493 million) in 2015. Western Australia is the source of almost half (42.3%) of Australia's total exports to the Philippines.

During all her calls, Ambassador Cruz shared important political and economic developments in the Philippines including the Philippines' sustained economic growth over the years reaching 6.9% GDP growth rate in the first quarter of 2016, the assumption of Philippine President Rodrigo R. Duterte on 30 June 2016, the new administration's uncompromising adherence to the rule of law and commitment to good governance.

The Ambassador highlighted the Philippines-Australia Comprehensive Partnership signed in 2015 which paves the way for more strategic and meaningful collaboration on bilateral, regional and global issues especially as we mark the 70th anniversary of Philippines-Australia relations this year.



(L-R) Ms. Deidre Willmott, Chief Executive of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Philippine Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz. (05 July 2016)



(L-R) The Hon Michael Sutherland MLA, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and Philippine Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz. (06 July 2016) Photo Credit: Office of Hon Michael Sutherland MLA

On 05 July 2016, Ambassador Calaguian-Cruz met with The Hon. Wayne Martin AC, Chief Justice of Western Australia, The Right Honourable Lord Mayor of Perth Lisa Scaffidi, the Department of State Development represented by Ms. Lisa Nolan and Ms. Marlie Espe, and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia (CCI) represented Ms. Deidre Willmott and Mr. Darren Levy. The Ambassador was briefed on investment opportunities in urban and regional development, agribusiness, oil and gas, and strategic industrial areas. The Ambassador was also informed about Western Australia's strategic advantages mineral commodity production, mining technology development, and high standard industry regulations. The Ambassador encouraged moving towards enhancing two-way trade investment considering the Philippines' strong consumption growth, competitive edge in business process outsourcing and creativity, and highly skilled workforce.

The following day, Ambassador Calaguian-Cruz was welcomed by The Hon Kerry Sanderson AO, Governor of Western Australia, The Hon Michael Sutherland MLA, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, The Hon Albert Jacob MLA, Minister for Environment and Heritage representing the Premier, and Mr. Peter Tinley AM MLA, Shadow Minister for Asian Engagement and officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Hon Jacob MLA hosted a State Luncheon for the Ambassador where representatives of the private sector with established business links with the Philippines were present.

The Western Australian officials and the Ambassador discussed the State's strategy on Asian engagement, priority programs on diversifying its economy and potential for direct links between the Philippines and Australia to spur trade, investment and tourism.



(L-R) Philippine Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz called on The Hon Kerry Sanderson AO, Governor of Western Australia (06 July 2016)



State Government Luncheon for Philippine Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz (center) joined in the photo (L-R) by Ms. Natalie Maguire (South East Asia Regional Marketing Manager Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.) Mr. Kevin Dundo (Chairman, Red5 Ltd., The Hon Albert Jacob MLA and Mr. Rob Leonard (Managing Director, Lycopodium Minerals) (06 July 2016)

The Ambassador visited Perth USAsia Centre in the University of Western Australia to meet Professor Gordon Flake where they discussed possible collaboration for policy dialogue on maritime security and Australia’s relations with the Philippines and ASEAN. Ambassador Calaguian-Cruz was also greeted by four Filipinos undertaking their studies in the University.

The Ambassador had a chance to meet with officials of the Department of Mines and Petroleum who provided a background on Western Australia’s high standards of regulating the mining industry from discovery until rehabilitation, consistency of approach and highly consultative processes.



(Picture on the left) Philippine Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz was greeted by The Hon Albert Jacob MLA on The Hon Kerry Sanderson AO, Minister for Environment; Heritage and (picture on the right) Mr. Peter Tinley AM MLA, Shadow Minister for Asian Engagement (06 July 2016)



(L-R) Philippine Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz met the CEO of Perth USAAsia Centre Professor Gordon Flake (06 July 2016)



Philippine Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz (center) with Filipino Students in the University of Western Australia (06 July 2016)

On 07 July 2016, the Ambassador concluded her official events with a visit to Austal's shipyard in Henderson, Western Australia where she met their CEO David Mr. Singleton. Mr. Singleton had high regard for the work ethic and skills of Filipino workers in their shipyard in Henderson. Austal's growing confidence in the Philippine economy is reflected in their newest shipbuilding and support facilities in Balamban, Cebu which opened in January 2013 and plans to expand their operations.



(L-R) Philippine Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz met CEO of Austal Mr. David Singleton (07 July 2016)



Philippine Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz greets Filipino workers in Austal's shipyard in Henderson, Western Australia. Labor Attaché Atty. Rodolfo Sabulao joined the Ambassador (second from left) (07 July 2016)

The Ambassador's visit has generated renewed interest in actively enhancing economic relations between the Philippines and Australia. END