



## Australian High Commission

MEDIA RELEASE

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### Australia and Sri Lanka – a long and rich history

2017 marks a special moment in Australia and Sri Lanka's long shared history – 70 years of official diplomatic relations.

Australia was one of the first countries to establish such ties, pre-dating Sri Lanka's independence. Australia's first diplomat to Sri Lanka, Trade Commissioner Charles Frost, arrived in Colombo in April 1947. He was accredited as High Commissioner following independence the next year.

Australia and Sri Lanka share individual and institutional connections that span almost every part of our societies. A large and vibrant Sri Lankan-origin community – drawn from all ethnicities – significantly enriches Australia's multicultural life.

“This 70th Anniversary gives us the chance to reflect on the rich history between our countries. The celebrations will draw us closer and remind us of our many shared values and interests”, said Australian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Bryce Hutchesson.

“It is a time of hope and opportunity for Sri Lanka, and for developing further the ties between us. There is much Australia and Sri Lanka can do together to realise the potential of our relationship.”

Anniversary celebrations were launched with the unveiling of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary symbol at the ‘Sri Lanka Festival 2016’ hosted by the Sri Lankan High Commission in Canberra on 12 November.

The event brought together the Sri Lankan-origin community from Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra in promoting Sri Lanka as a destination for tourism, trade and investment as well as showcasing the diversity of its culture, dance, food, arts and craft.

The 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is a partnership between the Australian and Sri Lankan Governments. The Anniversary will feature a range of activities in Australia and Sri Lanka in 2017, focusing on commerce, art, photography, sport, film and literature.

Follow the celebrations at:

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