

**Statement of the Honorable Caroline Kennedy  
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Australia  
Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
April 7, 2022**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Romney, Members of the Committee:

It is an honor to appear before you this morning as the President's nominee to serve as United States Ambassador to Australia. I am grateful for the consideration of this distinguished Committee, and I look forward to answering your questions and hearing first-hand your thoughts and concerns about our vital relationship with Australia.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and other Members of Congress to advance the interests of the United States, protect the safety of our citizens, and strengthen the bilateral relationship for the benefit of both our countries.

I would also like to thank my family for their support during this process, and their enthusiasm for this mission. My husband, Ed and my son Jack are here with me, and my daughters and my new grandson are watching from home. Ed and I visited Australia on our honeymoon, and we were thrilled to return with our children in 2014.

I am humbled by this opportunity and the chance to be here today. I will always be grateful to the Australian coast watchers and Solomon Islanders who rescued my father during WW2, and I know he hoped to be the first sitting President to visit Australia during his second term. If confirmed, I hope to be able to carry that legacy forward in my own small way. Whenever I come to the Senate, I feel the presence of my Uncle Teddy whose devotion to this institution, to his colleagues and to our country was an inspiration to generations of Americans, and whose love and support meant the world to me.

I can think of no greater privilege than serving my country abroad. From 2013-2017, as Ambassador to Japan, I was proud to advocate for American ideals in a country that, like Australia, shares our commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. I gained broad exposure to the changing dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region – the increasing security tensions and evolving demands on the U.S. military; the rising trade, economic, and climate challenges; the importance of working with U.S. allies and partners; and of building support for people-to-people ties among younger generations. These challenges have only become more urgent in the past five years.

I appreciated the opportunity to work closely with our talented diplomats and local staff and I believe these experiences will help me to be successful if I am confirmed to this position.

Before serving abroad, I worked to make history more accessible and inspire new generations to public service. I spent ten years working with the NYC public schools to build public-private partnerships, chaired the Harvard Institute of Politics, and the JFK Library Foundation which has honored political courage for the past thirty years. The lessons I learned from these experiences and from writing books on the Constitution, poetry, and civics will help me represent the United States in a world where the liberal international order is being undermined, reminding us that American values are more essential than ever.

There is no country more committed to those values than our close ally and Five Eyes partner, Australia. Australia has fought with us for the past 100 years, together we mark the 71st anniversary of the ANZUS treaty, and our Marines have rotated through Darwin for the past ten years. Our future security cooperation will build on this strong foundation – last year we announced AUKUS, an ambitious, enhanced, 21<sup>st</sup> century partnership between the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia. If confirmed, I will work hard to further this ground-breaking partnership.

Australia is an essential partner in the Quad, among our most significant diplomatic initiatives in the Indo-Pacific. Together with Japan and India, we are engaging in a range of activities to promote a free and open, secure, and resilient Indo-Pacific. These initiatives include health and climate security and emerging technologies. We also partner closely with Australia on coordinating humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, as well as vaccine deliveries across the Pacific Islands and throughout the region.

The United States is Australia's most important economic partner - our two-way trade has doubled since our Free Trade Agreement went into effect in 2005. We are increasing vital cooperation on critical technologies, rare earth minerals, supply chain resilience, and energy transformation.

As we emerge from the restrictions of the past two years, Americans and Australians are eager to resume their in-person ties of friendship, business, tourism, and study abroad which are among the closest in the world. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the talented members of Mission Australia to assist

these efforts and ensure that the ties between our countries grow stronger in the coming years.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.