

## CONSUL GENERAL LAZARO LAUDS MATURITY OF RP-AUSTRALIA RELATIONS IN PHILIPPINE NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS IN NEW SOUTH WALES



Consul General Lazaro speaks at the New South Wales Parliament House in Sydney during the National Day reception hosted by the Philippine Consulate General in Sydney, Australia.

19 June 2007 — Consul General Sydney Maria Theresa Lazaro of the Philippine Consulate General in Sydney, Australia has lauded on 15 June 2007 the success and robustness of Philippine-Australian relations during the Philippine National Day celebration in New South Wales.

In a speech before the National Day Reception at the historic New South Wales Parliament House, Consul General Lazaro remarked, "With the recently-concluded State Visit of Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to Australia on the 30<sup>th</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2007, I would now be able to say that Philippine-Australian

relations have reached a historic milestone in our bilateral relations, as we have reached that stage of maturity where both our countries are now moving forward towards new directions and areas of cooperation by building on the existing frameworks of relations established over the past sixty years.

"From the battlefields of the Pacific, Korea, Vietnam and now in the fight against terror; from the founding of the United Nations to the 1954 Manila Pact establishing the South East Asia Treaty Organization and now with the APEC, the Philippines and Australia, both in war and peace, have been indeed strong allies for a very long time. Now is the time to move that relationship forward to a higher level."

Consul General Lazaro also called on the Filipino-Australian community in the state to continue sustaining the momentum brought about by the State Visit and other worthy projects and initiatives that promote and foster goodwill and cooperation with the local, state and federal governments and with the wider Australian community. She particularly welcomed the Filipino-Australian community's decision to host the 2007 Global Networking Conference of Filipinos in Sydney in September to be timed during the APEC Leaders' Summit. This most-awaited conference of Filipino expatriates and immigrants throughout the world aims to promote closer relations among overseas Filipinos and community organizations.



Consul General Lazaro leads Consulate officers and staff in singing the National Anthem at the flag-raising ceremony on 12 June 2007.

The Consul General also proudly announced that a total of 18 towns and cities throughout New South Wales have participated in National Day celebrations with eight cities, namely Ashfield, Bathurst, Hornsby, Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Shoalhaven, Wagga Wagga and Wollongong participating for the first time.

The annual joint flag-raising ceremonies were kicked off on 1 June at the cities of Bathurst and Dubbo, participated in by Consul General Lazaro and Vice-Consul Ferdinand Victoria, respectively.

A giant Philippine flag, arguably the largest Philippine flag in Australia, was unfurled and raised at the historic Evans Bridge at the city of Bathurst by Vice-Consul Victoria and Deputy Mayor Paul Toole with the help of the Lions Club of Bathurst and attended by a significant number of Filipinos and Australians. The *Read Philippines* Project was launched thereafter at the Bathurst Library, the sixth of its kind inaugurated in the state since its launch in August 2005.

Philippine Senator Ramon Magsaysay, Jr. also graced the National Day celebrations with his attendance at the Philippine National Day Ball organized by the Philippine Communities Council of New South Wales and the inauguration of the *Bulwagang Rizal* at the Philippine Consulate General.

There are now an estimated 70,000 Filipinos residing in the state of New South Wales. END