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## Australia Signs \$6B Frigate Deal With Japan

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Australia has finalized a landmark defense deal to acquire 11 Mogami-class stealth frigates from Japan’s Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, in what officials describe as one of the biggest defense export agreements in Japan’s post-war history.

Defense Minister Richard Marles confirmed on Tuesday that the AU\$10 billion (US\$6.5 billion) purchase will span the next decade and forms part of a broader effort to modernize and expand Australia’s naval capabilities.

“This is clearly the biggest defense-industry agreement ever struck between Japan and Australia,” Marles said. “The decision was based on what’s best for Australia’s defense

capability.”

The deal aims to bolster Australia’s fleet from 11 to 26 major warships over the next 10 years, a key element of its ongoing military restructuring. The move is seen as a response to increasing regional tensions and competition, particularly involving China.

The Mogami-class frigates are advanced warships equipped with stealth technology and long-range missile systems. According to Marles, they will replace the aging Anzac-class vessels currently in service, with the first new frigate expected to be operational by 2030.

“These vessels feature 32 vertical launch cells and can deploy long-range missiles,” Marles added, describing the new fleet as next-generation and highly capable.

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries secured the contract over Germany’s ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems. The first three frigates will be constructed overseas, while the remaining vessels are planned to be built in Western Australia, contributing to local industry.

Australian Defense Industry Minister Pat Conroy stated the warships will enhance the country’s naval strength significantly. “The acquisition of these stealth frigates will make our navy not only bigger but more lethal,” he said.

The agreement also marks a strategic deepening of defense ties between Australia and Japan. Both countries are part of the Quad alliance alongside the United States and India, and share concerns over regional maritime security.

Japanese government spokesperson Yoshimasa Hayashi called the deal proof of trust in our nation’s high-level technology” and a big step toward elevating national security cooperation” between the two countries.

Japan has gradually eased its restrictions on weapons exports in recent years. This deal is the second major export under revised guidelines, following a 2014 agreement involving air surveillance radar exports to the Philippines.

The deal comes alongside Australia’s ongoing submarine procurement under the AUKUS pact, involving the United States and the United Kingdom. That separate program is projected to cost up to AU\$235 billion over 30 years.

Australia is targeting defense spending of 2.4% of GDP, surpassing NATO's 2% guideline, as it seeks to strengthen national security amid a shifting regional landscape.