The Australia–Japan Research Centre (AJRC) hosted a roundtable discussion on ‘The Politics of Economic Reform in Japan’ on Friday 26 July at the Australian National University (ANU). Professor T. J. Pempel from the University of Washington led the discussion with a presentation on ‘Regime Change -Japanese Politics in a Changing World Economy’. A panel discussion on ‘The Political Economy of Reform’ began with a presentation by Centre Associate Ms Veronica Taylor from the Asian Law Centre, University of Melbourne, on ‘Restructuring Transactions in the Shadow of the Japan Fair Trade Commission’. Former Associate Director of the AJRC, Associate Professor Hayden Lesbirel from James Cook University, followed with ‘Wheeling and Dealing: Reforming Electricity Markets in Japan’. Centre student Mr Tony Warren presented a paper on ‘The Political Economy of Reform in Services and Professor Purnendra Jain from the University of Adelaide closed the session with his paper on ‘Political Reform and Local Government in Japan’.

The second session, ‘The Politics of Reform in Japan’, began with a paper by AJRC Research Committee member Professor Alan Rix (University of Queensland) on ‘Reforming Japan’s Natural Disaster Management System’. This was followed by AJRC student Mr Chris Pokarier’s paper, ‘Some Reflections on Recent Economic and Political Developments in Japan’. Centre Associate Dr Aurelia George Mulgan (ADFA, University of New South Wales) presented two papers: ‘Electoral Determinants of Agrarian Power: Measuring Rural Decline in Japan’ and ‘Politics of Deregulation and Japanese Agriculture’. The last paper in the session, ‘Consumer Movements in a New Political Environment’, was presented by Centre Research Fellow and Lecturer in Political Science at the ANU, Dr Keiko Tabusa.