



Australia Arab Chamber of Commerce & Industry Inc.

غرفة التجارة والصناعة الأسترالية - العربية

AUSTRALIA ARAB  
CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE &  
INDUSTRY INC

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Inside this issue:

AACCI News

Australia—Arab News

New Members

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Salaam

AACCI Newsletter

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## AACCI NEWS

### **AACCI announces plans for major Trade and Investment Conference: The Inaugural Australia Arab Business Forum and Expo Melbourne 24-26 October 2010**

The Australia Arab Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AACCI) has announced plans for a landmark conference mapping future prospects for Australia's trade and investment links with the Arab countries. The event is being billed as the Inaugural Australia Arab Business Forum and Expo and will be held in Melbourne from 24-26 October 2010. A final decision on the venue is imminent. The event is designed to attract business leaders, senior officials and political leaders from all parts of Australia and the Arab world, and will feature a range of high profile Arab and Australian guest speakers.



Federation Square, Melbourne

The Australia Arab Business Forum will highlight the current and future economic, infrastructure and developmental requirements of Australia and the Arab countries focusing on the following sectors:

Renewable energy  
Agriculture, Food Security and Water Use Efficiency  
Tourism, Hospitality, Sport and Leisure  
Banking and Investment  
Property, Construction and Infrastructure  
Education and Vocational Training  
Mining and Hydrocarbons

A number of sessions will also be devoted to the role of Women in Business, in recognition of the growing and substantial role of Australian and Arab women who are achieving notable results in pursuit of their business interests.

The Expo will enable both large Australian corporations and smaller companies to showcase to Arab visitors their capabilities as reliable and competitive suppliers of a range of sophisticated goods and services.

AACCI is already in close contact with a range of major stakeholders about the Business Forum and Expo. These include major government organizations both in Victoria and at the Federal level. The Chamber is also in touch with the Arab Embassies in Canberra and has had preliminary discussions with the office of the Secretary-General of the Arab League, whose support for the event is a reflection of the growing significance of the Australian-Arab economic relationship.

In 2008 the value of Australia's merchandise exports with the Arab countries exceeded AUD 9 billion. The Business Forum and Expo will help to highlight the significant contribution to Australia's national wealth that our commercial links with the Arab countries offer. The Chamber hopes that the event will also encourage more Australian companies to take advantage of the opportunities in the Arab markets and induce official circles within Australia to bring a more informed and creative view to bear on the importance of Australia's overall relations with the Arab countries.

Under the direction of AACCI Director and Chairman of the Forum and Expo Organising Committee, Mike Anderson, and with input from AACCI's National Director Ray Najjar and AACCI Director Peter Deacon, a team of dedicated volunteers from the Victorian Chapter is working hard to make this event an outstanding success.

AACCI members will have access to discounted tickets, and early bird rates will also be on offer. A dedicated website for the event will soon be accessible. Meanwhile, enquiries can be made to Mike Anderson (mob 0408 350 846) or AACCI CEO Robert Newton (mob 0423 610 849).

## Chamber in talks with Egyptian Minister

Over 20 AACCI Members met in roundtable discussion in Perth on 15 February with the Egyptian Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs for Asia, His Excellency Mr Ahmed Fathalla.

Also present were Egyptian Ambassador to Australia, His Excellency Mr Omar Metwally, based in Canberra and Egyptian Trade Commissioner, Dr Mohamed Nagy Salem, who is based in Sydney.

Edmund Damouni, Chairman of the WA Chapter, hosted the meeting and welcomed the visitors on behalf of AACCI. A very positive and constructive exchange of information and views followed. The Minister responded comprehensively to all issues raised by the members present. Key points the Minister made included:

- Egypt and Australia are celebrating 60 years of official bilateral relations in 2010.
- Although there is now a bilateral investment protection agreement in place, there is an urgent need for Australia and Egypt to negotiate a double taxation agreement in order to help encourage investment.
- Australian mining investment in Egypt now totals several hundred million dollars.
- Concern with the imbalance of bilateral merchandise trade. A list of Egyptian agricultural commodities has been submitted to Australian bio-security authorities for quarantine protocol negotiation.
- Egypt is amending its regulations to conform to Australian standards concerning certain fungal levels in wheat.
- Egypt has changed its Halal inspection regime for meat imports to periodic inspections, rather than requiring inspection and verification of every shipment.
- Joint ventures are being sought to overcome some problems with Australian dairy exports to Egypt.

The Minister tabled a list of Private Public Partnership (PPP) projects that offer opportunities for growth in Egypt for Australian companies.

Ambassador Metwally said there is great potential for enhancing bilateral relations. As an example, he cited Centamin's A\$600 million gold mining investment ([www.centamin.com.au](http://www.centamin.com.au)), which has enabled Egypt to become a gold producer again for the first time since the Pharaohs. After 15 years of exploration and project development, on 11 January 2010, Centamin announced that its Sukari Gold Project in Egypt had achieved an important milestone with the commencement of gold exports to an overseas gold refinery.

Dr Salem also addressed the meeting and raised a number of matters including: the Cairo International Trade Fair to be held in March 2010; the establishment of an Australia Egypt Joint Business Council; the AACCI National Trade Mission to Egypt to be conducted later in 2010 and the recent visit to Melbourne by an Egyptian furniture industry delegation.

Minister Fathalla commented that there was potential for Australia – Egypt joint ventures to manufacture furniture in Egypt for export to third countries. In response to areas of specific interest raised by AACCI members present, the Minister commented “following the Copenhagen summit, Egypt has committed to a 20 per cent renewable energy target by 2020 and accordingly there are great opportunities for Australia’s solar energy companies”, he also pointed that “the Egyptian construction sector is now open to foreign companies as well as investment in housing and tourism infrastructure” finally he highlighted that “there are opportunities in Egypt in areas as diverse as oil and gas, ship construction and homeopathy”.



From left to right: Hon Kim Chance, AACCI Director; Dr Mohamed Nagy Salem, Egyptian Trade Commissioner; HE Mr Ahmed Fathalla, Egyptian Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Asia; Mr Edmund Damouni, Chairman AACCI WA Chapter; HE Mr Omar Metwally, Egyptian Ambassador to Australia; Mr Peter Grant, Vice Chairman, AACCI WA Chapter.

The Minister also commented on the broad-ranging opportunities for Australian companies arising from Egypt's partnership agreement with the European Union, which provides for a phased reduction of tariffs over 10 years. Egypt also has a preferential market access agreement with the US and many countries in Eastern and Southern Africa under COMESA. For further information contact Ian Whitaker at [wa@austarab.com.au](mailto:wa@austarab.com.au)

### AACCI representative in the Gulf

Pursuant to the recent amendment of AACCI's constitution made in order to permit recruitment of non-Chapter members, the Chamber has appointed Donna Massie, a former committee member of the WA Chapter, as AACCI's Special Representative in the Gulf Arab Region. Donna has had a long association with the Chamber and has been active in the WA Chapter for many years and is well known in business circles within the Arab Gulf.



Donna's role will focus on promoting the interests of the Chamber and its members in the GCC countries, reinforcing AACCI's status as the peak Australian body leading Australian Arab business. She will also be seeking to recruit new members and will have some capacity to assist members with particular issues that may arise. Should any Chapter based member wish to seek Donna's assistance in the area of business facilitation, they should do so through their Chapter Executive Officer or the CEO. Donna will also be assisting the Chamber strengthen its network of business and official contacts throughout the Gulf. Her appointment is another example of the AACCI Board's determination to broaden the suite of services the Chamber offers to its members.

### NSW Chapter meets Chief of Staff and Adviser to the Secretary General of the Arab League

AACCI NSW Chapter hosted a luncheon on February 4 for Mr. Hesham Youssef Chief of Staff and Adviser to the Secretary General of the Arab League. Also present at the luncheon were Gordon Short and Sandra Veness from AACCI and Lauren O'Neil from DFAT.



During the meeting, issues related to bilateral trade with the region were discussed as well as the facilitator role of AACCI in this regards. Mr Youssef has been a career diplomat at the service of the Egyptian Government and from 2001 he has been working at the Arab League.

From left to right: Lauren O'Neil, DFAT; Gordon Short, AACCI NSW Chairman; Sandra Veness AACCI NSW Management Committee and Mr. Hesham Youssef, Chief of Staff and Adviser to the Secretary General of the Arab League.

### WA Chapter meets with Australian Ambassador to Egypt

Australian Ambassador to Egypt, Her Excellency Ms Stephanie Shwabsky (pictured), held mid-term consultations in Perth on 17 February with representatives of AACCI Western Australian Chapter. Representing AACCI in the meeting were Edmund Damouni, Chairman WA Chapter, Peter Grant, Vice Chairman and Torsten Ketelsen, Management Committee member.



The Australian Embassy in Cairo is responsible for covering Australia's relations with not only Egypt, but also Libya (where Australia has a Consulate but no Embassy), Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Eritrea where we do not maintain Embassies.

The wide-ranging discussion focussed on current economic and market conditions and the many opportunities for Australian companies in all the countries in the Ambassador's portfolio. The Ambassador was also informed of the Chamber's activities including its planned trade missions to the region later this year.

### Member Explores Untapped Resource

At a recent meeting held at the Chamber's Victorian headquarters, representatives from the Saudi Students Association met with management from Redflex Traffic Systems.

Melbourne based Redflex recently announced the signing of contracts with Saudi Etihad Al Afandi consortium, worth about A\$34 million over a five year period. The contracts, awarded by the General Traffic Directorate / Ministry of Interior (MOI) for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, are for the supply of speed enforcement systems including the supply and set up of a Violation Processing Centre. The systems are for three major areas of the Kingdom covering Eastern Province, Aseer Province and the region of Tabuk.

Pictured from left to right: Representing Saudi Students Association – Melbourne, Saeed Alshahrani, Mothana Alodhaid, Othamn Algwairi – Association President; representing Redflex Traffic Systems, Simon Pickup, Operations Manager and Andrew Zablockyi, Human Resources Manager.



The meeting, coordinated by AACCI, provided an opportunity for both parties to discuss the possible engagement of Saudi Arabian students, both here in Australia and in the Kingdom, in developing the Redflex systems and programs to operate in the Saudi Arabian environment.

Redflex's Operations Manager, Simon Pickup, is planning to relocate to the Kingdom to coordinate the delivery of the contract. Simon has expressed his gratitude to the Chamber for the networks being provided to assist with his relocation and to the overall project.

The Saudi Students Association in Melbourne represents some 1500 students studying at the many Universities and teaching institutions throughout Victoria. Nationally there are some 5000 Saudi students here. The Association, supported by the Cultural Mission at the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Canberra, offer many and varied activities to support the students ensuring that during their time here they experience the Australian culture first hand.

### Focus on Libya Seminar

Hosted by the Victorian State office of Austrade AACCI members received a comprehensive briefing on the Libyan economy and market opportunities delivered via a video link with Tripoli by Mr Tom Yates, Australia's Senior Trade Commissioner in Libya.

The Trade Commissioner stressed the importance of local market knowledge and representation as a key component to a successful market entry. Substantial business opportunities exist in infrastructure projects, education, agriculture, water projects including desalination plants and health.

Tom Yates and his staff of dedicated local Libyans at the Austrade office in Tripoli have an extensive network of business contacts and a vast knowledge of the market environment. The Trade Commissioner emphasised the importance of Australian business people who are planning a visit to Libya to make contact with the Austrade office prior to departure.

The briefing also covered overviews of the Moroccan, Tunisian and Algerian markets. Contact details for the Austrade office in Tripoli can be obtained from your local AACCI State Chapter Secretariat.

AACCI would like to thank the Victorian State office of Austrade for providing the facilities and technical equipment for this informative briefing session .



### AACCI Executive Officers Conference 4-5 February 2010

In early February Executive Officers of AACCI met in Canberra with the CEO for a two day conference ranging over a number of internal management matters. They were joined for part of the program by AACCI National Chairman Ray Najjar and Victorian Chair and AACCI Director Mike Anderson. WA Chair and AACCI Director Edmund Damouni, who was in Sydney on business, also attended the conference dinner to compensate for the absence of an Executive Officer from Western Australia. (The Executive Officer position in WA has been vacant since Christmas but CCIWA's Ian Whitaker has been keeping the seat warm in a temporary capacity while a permanent replacement for the former incumbent is found.)

The conference was an important event in AACCI's calendar, laying the groundwork for the Chamber's budget and program for 2010-2011. Executive Officers reviewed the Chamber's performance over the recent past, noting a small decline in membership growth in the current financial year and discussing ways of attracting new members to the Chamber's ranks. They also noted the significance of the Chamber's work as a certifier of export documentation and the importance to AACCI's future status of ensuring this service was performed efficiently and in accordance with the expectations of all stakeholders.



Participants in the conference from left to right: Don Williamson (Qld), Robert Newton (CEO), Max White (Victoria), Minerva Nasser-Eddine (South Australia) and John Hume (New South Wales)

Executive Officers were briefed by Mike Anderson on preparations for the Australia Arab Business Forum and Expo. They agreed that this would be a major activity for the Chamber and noted the importance of ensuring that all Chapters were fully involved, so that members from all over Australia would benefit.

The Executive Officers hosted a dinner on 4 February. Guests included a range of the Chamber's ACT based members and friends, including senior officials from DFAT and Austrade. Guest speaker was Dr Matthew Gray of the ANU's Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies, who gave an excellent analysis of the economic and business environments of the Arab countries as they and the global economy emerge from the difficulties of the GFC.

The conference served to assist Executive Officers in comparing standards of work performance and benchmarking to ensure best practice across the organisation. Participants noted that AACCI's strength lay in its national reach and its ability to network amongst senior business and government circles throughout Australia. A report from the conference will be considered by Directors at the next AACCI Board meeting scheduled for June 2010.



At the conference dinner, AACCI National Chairman Ray Najjar (left) with Dr Matthew Gray of ANU's Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies, and Ms Jenny Bloomfield, Assistant Secretary, Middle East Branch, DFAT

### AACCI QLD Member conducts Women's Leadership and Empowerment programs in the Middle East



Women's Leadership Program at Kuwait Economic Society attendees with Dr Catherine Norton and Mr Glenn Miles Australian Ambassador to Kuwait (centre).

Queensland Member Norton Consulting Group's Dr Catherine Norton conducts Women's Leadership and Empowerment Programs in Middle East. In November 2009 she conducted a series of activities aimed at empowering women in Kuwait.

Dr Norton, who works with the Kuwait Fund For Arab Economic Development, conducted an initial women's leadership workshop in 2008 and with the support of the Federal Government's Council for Arab Australia Relations was able to continue her work this year in 2009.

The events included one on one business coaching and mentoring for female business owners and organizational leaders in Kuwait and an interactive Women's Leadership Workshop that attracted 45 participants.

Supporters of the event included local women's organisations Save Our Skills (SOS) and Business and Professional Women (BPW) of Kuwait as well as the Kuwait Economic Society (KES) which provided the venue for the workshop.

Mr Glenn Miles, the Australian Ambassador to Kuwait, opened the workshop with a short speech about the changing role of women. In addition Jumana Al-Awadhi, Secretary General of Business and Professional Women (BPW) Kuwait introduced the evening.

Informally the leaders of the KES and BPW-Kuwait were very pleased with the number of participants at the workshop and events. Attendees also came from other Gulf Countries. Local organizers were also very pleased with the positive word of mouth response made by participants. The local community was highly involved through the participation and support from local women's groups and the media with stories reported in at least 4 local newspapers. Such events can only succeed with local support.

Dr Norton plans to continue her workshop activities in Kuwait, Abu Dhabi and Dubai and other MENA countries throughout 2010. If anyone is interested in more information please contact Dr Norton on 0412 596 594 or email on: [cnorton@nortonconsultinggroup.com](mailto:cnorton@nortonconsultinggroup.com)

**Did you know you can advertise your company and its services or products on the AACCI website?**

**For more information about this please contact the National Secretariat:  
[ed@austarab.com.au](mailto:ed@austarab.com.au)**

### Business Visitors from Aleppo meet Representatives of NSW Chapter

AACCI Director James Harb and NSW Chapter Committee member Sandra Veness, together with AACCI NSW Executive Officer John Hume, hosted a luncheon for a group of businessmen from Aleppo, Syria with the purpose of sharing business interests and developing networking contacts.

The visitors were from a variety of business sectors including tourism and currency exchange, steel industry, tyres and pharmaceuticals. Their visit gave them the opportunity to explore the potential for business with the Australian counterparts and to learn about the local business environment.

Pictured from left to right: Wafa and Mohamed Dalati; Mahmoud Ahmad Assi; Abdulaziz Hinde; Management Committee Member and Director, James Harb; Jamal Sabbagh and Management Committee Member Sandra Veness and AACCI Executive Officer, John Hume



## AUSTRALIA—ARAB NEWS

### Austrade appoints Business Development Manager in Kuwait

Austrade has announced the appointment of Mohammad Imran as its new Business Development Manager in Kuwait. Born and raised in Kuwait, Mr Imran comes to Austrade from private industry and brings with him a strong client based focus, a strength that will be important in building Austrade's activity base in Kuwait.

AACCI welcomes Mr Imran's appointment as a sign of the Australian Government's continuing commitment to the development of Australia's trade and investment links with the Arab countries.

Mr Imran can be contacted at Australian Embassy in Kuwait, phone:+965 2232 2422 Ext 429 or Email: mohammad.imran@austrade.gov.au



### Landmark Islamic finance publication

Trade Minister Simon Crean launched in February the Australian Government's first-ever comprehensive publication on Islamic finance. The booklet Islamic Finance provides a detailed explanation of the opportunities that booming Shariah-compliant investment and banking offers Australia's financial services sector.

"Islamic financing is a crucial plank in the Government's strategy to make Australia a financial hub in the Asia Pacific region," Mr Crean said. "There is huge potential in Islamic financing which is estimated to be worth more than A\$1 trillion (US\$822 billion) and has grown at 10 per cent per annum for the past decade."

Islamic finance is based on the principles of Islamic law - or the Shariah - which prohibits the earning of interest. Instead, there is a focus on profit sharing based on the buying and selling of tangible assets such as property.

Key opportunities for the Islamic finance industry include:

- attracting Islamic banks to establish operations in Australia;
- Australian-based banks providing Shariah-compliant investment and financing products across the Asia Pacific and Gulf regions;
- Shariah-compliant managed funds; and
- attracting investment in Australian assets and business from overseas Shariah investors

Some 365,000 Muslims live in Australia and would use Islamic financial services if they were more accessible. The report is available at [www.austrade.gov.au](http://www.austrade.gov.au)

### AACCI's Documentation Certification Services

Members and non-members are reminded of the extensive services provided by AACCI for the certification of documents relating to merchandise exports. A full list of our certification centres is available on the AACCI website ([www.austarab.com.au](http://www.austarab.com.au)). AACCI also offers electronic certification facilities through two leading service providers – E-Certify and Ozdocs International. Readers should again consult the Chamber's website for details, including advice on how to register for this state-of-the-art service.

**Arab students show their culture at Central Queensland University—Gold Coast**

Students from 52 nationalities shared traditions and cultures at Central Queensland University Gold Coast's 2nd Annual International Day celebrations. CQ University is one of AACCI's new members in 2010.

Officially marking celebrations for Australia Day, India Republic Day and Chinese New Year, the event showcased diversity and provided a platform for the development of cultural awareness on the campus and across the wider community.

Arab students, resplendent in costumes from the region, provided a visual and sensory feast with the Saudi students sharing freshly brewed aromatic coffee and a selection of dates from different Saudi regions, while the students from the UAE, invited guests into a desert tent which displayed traditional costumes and hospitality, including sweet and savory food and delicious green tea flavored with mint or lemon.



**Qatar Airways Chooses Melbourne**

Qatar Airways has added Australia to their fast growing list of routes with Melbourne chosen as its first Australian destination.

The Five Star airline also chose Melbourne to be the location of its head quarters for the Asia Pacific region, relocating from Tokyo. Qatar Airways investments are a testimony to both Melbourne's quality as a destination as well as the strength of Victoria's trade and investment ties with the Middle East.



**Emirates bring the Noodle House and Left Bank to Australia**

Emirates Leisure, part of the Emirates Airlines Group, has added two more restaurants to Melbourne's already renowned list of dining options.

The now famous Noodle House as well as the Left Bank has been opened in the popular South Bank precinct. Melbourne is home to the Emirates Leisure head office in Australia with investments that include the well known Hudson's Coffee chain.

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**AACCI "Leading Australia-Arab Business".**

**AACCI Welcomes its recently joined members around the country**

Profiles of AACCI's new members along with our existing members are available on the "Members Area" of the AACCI website <http://members.austarab.com.au/>

<b>New South Wales</b>	
Illawarra Institute of Tafe	<a href="http://www.illawarra.tafensw.edu.au">www.illawarra.tafensw.edu.au</a>
<b>Queensland</b>	
Unison Joints Pty Ltd	<a href="http://www.unisonjoints.com.au">www.unisonjoints.com.au</a>
Global Building Systems Pty Ltd	<a href="http://www.formblock.net">www.formblock.net</a>
CQUniversity Gold Coast	<a href="http://www.goldcoast.cqu.edu.au">www.goldcoast.cqu.edu.au</a>
Etihad Airways	<a href="http://www.etihadairways.com">www.etihadairways.com</a>
Qatar Airways	<a href="http://www.qatarairways.com">www.qatarairways.com</a>
Australian Medicinal Honey	
Urbis Pty Ltd	<a href="http://www.urbis.com.au">www.urbis.com.au</a>
Stockyard Beef Pty Ltd	<a href="http://www.stockyardbeef.com.au">www.stockyardbeef.com.au</a>
<b>South Australia</b>	
Innovative Total Solutions Australia Pty Ltd	
<b>Victoria</b>	
Syrah Resources Ltd	<a href="http://www.syrahresources.com.au">www.syrahresources.com.au</a>
Sudanese Australia Economic Firm	
IDP Education Pty Ltd	<a href="http://www.idp.com">www.idp.com</a>
Longwarry Food Park	<a href="http://www.longwarry.com">www.longwarry.com</a>
Borch Leeman Pty Ltd	<a href="http://www.borchleeman.com.au">www.borchleeman.com.au</a>
C.T. Freight Pty Ltd	<a href="http://www.ctfreight.com.au">www.ctfreight.com.au</a>
Ausco Pak Pty Ltd	<a href="http://www.auscopak.com.au">www.auscopak.com.au</a>
<b>Western Australia</b>	
Primewest Management Ltd	<a href="http://www.primewestmanagement.com.au">www.primewestmanagement.com.au</a>
Sadleirs International	<a href="http://www.sadleirs.com.au">www.sadleirs.com.au</a>

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