



Australia Arab Chamber of Commerce & Industry Inc.

غرفة التجارة والصناعة الأسترالية - العربية

AUSTRALIA ARAB
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE &
INDUSTRY INC

ABN 61 001 639 452

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Editor
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Salaam

AACCI Newsletter

March—April 2009

AACCI NEWS

AACCI's WA Chapter Chairman addresses South Western Chambers of Commerce and Industry Conference

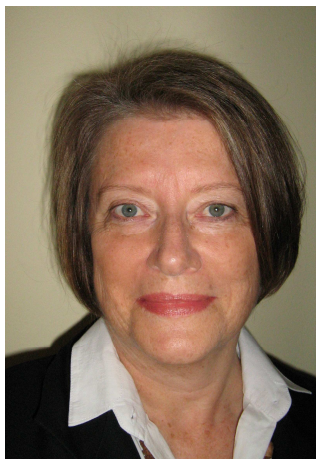
On 2 April the Chairman of the Western Australian Chapter, and Director of AACCI, Edmund Damouni, addressed a conference in Bunbury which highlighted developments within the south west region of Western Australia and the opportunities and challenges of doing business in economic hot spots around the world.

Mr Damouni (pictured right at the conference) focused on the opportunities existing in the Middle East for Australian companies, and highlighted the benefits that membership of AACCI can provide to Australian companies.

Mr Damouni referred to the growth in the number of Australians doing business in the Middle East. Drawing from his extensive knowledge of Middle Eastern Markets and his recent experience of leading a Western Australian trade mission to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, he pointed the diversity of opportunities in two-way trade, particularly those available in the Middle East.



New AACCI Executive Officer appointed in NSW



AACCI has engaged the services of Ms Margaret Barbalet as Executive Officer for the NSW Chapter. Recently retired from the Australian foreign service, Margaret has had a long term association with the Middle East, and most recently served as Deputy Head of Mission at the Australian Embassy Abu Dhabi. Margaret has told Salaam she looks forward to resuming her earlier role supporting Australian companies in their efforts to do business in the Middle East. As Executive Officer for NSW Margaret is eager to develop close contact with AACCI's NSW-based members and work to ensure their continued membership of AACCI is rewarding.

NSW-based members of AACCI can look forward to a continuing program of activities, including networking meetings and business briefings, designed to support members who are pursuing commercial interests in the Arab countries. AACCI acknowledges with gratitude the substantial contribution to the NSW Chapter made by Terry Mullane, Katrine Bryce and Les Rennie, all of whom have worked diligently to deliver secretariat services to the NSW-based membership.

Reminder to AACCI Members



Your Members' Website contains a time zone chart and an easy to operate foreign currency calculator linked to up-to-the-minute rates. You will find these useful tools listed on the left hand menu of the website.



Palestine Focus in Victoria

On 1 May AACCI hosted a 'round table' breakfast with The Head of the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi.

Providing a brief overview of the Palestine political and economic situation Mr Abdulhadi went on to brief members on the areas of major focus for the Palestinian Authority.

Areas of priority are electricity network, communications, agriculture and water security, safety equipment & services, training of government personal such as police and education. Another area of priority is the construction of affordable housing. These are just a few of the current priorities. There are also a number of 'Quick Impact Projects' which are funded by the various International aid agencies. For example, an Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) \$500 million lending facility to help Palestinians buy much-needed housing.

With 45% of the population under the age of 25 years of age education is high on the list of government priorities. Also identified was the need for Palestinian business to invest in enhancing the workforce skills and capabilities along with the need to invest in capital machinery and equipment.



Pictured from left to right: Garry Kennedy, Austrade; Mike Anderson, AACCI Victoria Chapter Chairman; Barbara Haggerty, BGH International; Mr Izzat Abdulhadi, The Head of the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia & New Zealand; William Kent – Tompkins,UDA P/L; Max White, AACCI Victoria Chapter EO; Fred Parakh, BTI Logistics and Joe Perri, Joe Perri & Associates

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- Certificate issuance if the two steps above are satisfactory

For further details, please contact **Mianda Yau** of BIVAC on 02 9584 8269 or 0416 068 880 or email her at mianda@gmail.com

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AACCI present at Sixth Project Qatar Exhibition



Mr Edmund Damouni and Mr Wayne Rogers from 20*20 Construction Systems at the Australian Pavilion in Project Qatar

The Australian pavilion at Doha Exhibition Centre, host of the sixth Project Qatar exhibition, showcased Australian 18 firms, offering advanced solutions to meet the requirements of the region's growing construction industry.

Mr Edmund Damouni, AACCI's WA Chair was one of the Australian delegates at the event. He told Gulf Times that "...there is a large number of Australian business dealing with the region as well as many students from the region studying in Australia..." Mr Damouni also said Australian business houses were keen on setting up ventures in the region in partnership with local business houses, to benefit each other.

20*20 Construction Systems, a company from Armadale, WA resented its low cost housing plan which is based on the promise that a house could be finalised in a maximum of 30 days, saving considerable amounts of money on labour costs, and low use of water. The company official said 20*20 is currently building in large numbers in northwest Australia where weather conditions and terrain are similar to those existing in the Middle East.

The steel panels used in the construction are cold-pressed in the production process to ensure there is not heat generated, this characteristic makes the system appropriate for the high temperatures of the region. The panel and modular systems are also easy and quick to transport. The firm is negotiating with an Iraqi construction firm to build a housing scheme consisting of 10,000 units in Al Muthanna province of Iraq. **Adapted from an article which appeared in The Gulf Times**

AUSTRALIA—ARAB NEWS

Expansion of Air Services Arrangements with Qatar

Australia's Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Anthony Albanese announced Australia and Qatar have settled new air services arrangements, and that Qatar Airways will commence services to Sydney and Melbourne in late 2009.

Qatar Airways' new services will boost the Australia's aviation industry and tourism, and the new air service arrangements will open up new routes - increasing choice and competition for Australian travelers. The new arrangements with Qatar were agreed in February and will allow Qatar Airways to provide a total of 14 services per week to Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney or Perth. In the past they were only allowed seven services per week, and access to Sydney was delayed for 12 months.

To encourage international airlines to service Australia's regional destinations, unrestricted access remains available to all other Australian airports. The new arrangements will allow Australian international carriers to operate through Qatar to any point in the European Union and five other points in the Middle East and Africa. Previously, Australian airlines could only operate services to 10 points beyond Qatar in the Middle East, UK/Europe and Africa.

Australian and Qatari airlines can now develop a variety of international air services and improve connection to destinations in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Consumers will have a wide range of services and fares to choose from as these new services develop over time.



The AACCI Website Members' Area

Members are reminded to visit the Members' Area of the AACCI website on a regular basis. The Notice Board is regularly updated to provide members with details of business opportunities and tenders which have been communicated by the Arab Embassies and Consulates-General accredited in Australia, as well as other news items of interest and potential benefit to members. The Members' Area also includes a Calendar and Events page which keeps track of upcoming AACCI events across Australia. Remember that membership of AACCI enables attendance at any AACCI function in any location in Australia, or overseas.

Inauguration of Palmyra miniature city at Cockington Green Gardens in Canberra.



Pictured on the left, Major General Michael Jeffrey and Mrs Jeffrey, fourth from left Syrian Ambassador HE MR Tammam Sulaiman, centre Dr Fiona Hill.

Syria’s Ambassador to Australia, H.E. Mr. Tammam Sulaiman, in the presence of the former Governor-General of Australia Major General Michael Jeffrey and his wife, inaugurated the Palmyra miniature city at Cockington Green Gardens in Canberra on 18 March 2009.

Australian dignitaries, Arab Ambassadors and members of the Friends of Syria group attended the ceremony. AACCI Victoria Chapter member and Friends of Syria president Dr Fiona Hill addressed the guests.

Palmira (in arabic, Tadmor) was an important city in ancient Syria. Located 215 kms. North east of Damascus, it lies at the cross roads of trade routes linking Persia to the Mediterranean Sea. It remains one of the most important and visually stunning archaeological sites in the Middle East.

Cockington Green is one of Canberra’s landmark attractions. The park is constantly growing with the addition of the International display area, where the Palmyra minicity is located. Cockington Green is home to another arabian attraction, a miniature model of the Nabatean and Roman city of Petra, Jordan.

Ministerial visit to Saudi Arabia

Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Stephen Smith, visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Sunday 3 May and Monday 4 May. This was the first visit to Saudi Arabia by an Australian Foreign Minister since 2003. Australia places a high priority on enhancing its relationship with Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is strategically significant, the world’s largest oil exporter and the largest economy in the Gulf. Saudi Arabia is Australia’s second largest trade partner in the Gulf, with merchandise trade valued at \$3.4 billion in 2008. It is Australia’s second largest market for passenger motor vehicles, worth \$1 billion in 2008.

There are increasing people-to-people contacts between Australia and Saudi Arabia. There are more than 4,000 Australians living and working in Saudi Arabia. Almost 7,000 Saudis are studying at Australian educational institutions and Saudis are increasingly choosing to visit Australia for tourism.

The Minister met with the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, HRH Prince Saud Al-Faisal, other senior leaders and Ministers, including the Minister of Commerce and Industry, HE Mr Zainal Alireza. They exchanged perspectives on bilateral, regional and global issues at a key time in international economic, strategic and security affairs, and the individual and collective responses to the global financial and economic crisis.



Photo taken from www.foreignminister.gov.au

Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith with Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, HRH Prince Saud Al-Faisal

They discussed ways to enhance the relationship between Australia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through increased cooperation in trade and investment, education links and counter-terrorism.

They also agreed on the importance of intensified dialogue and cooperation to address regional and international security challenges, including those between Australia and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The Minister also met Australian and Saudi business people leading bilateral trade and investment relationship, and reinforced Australia’s strong desire for the early conclusion of an Australia- Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Free Trade Agreement.

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). 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.

Governor of Victoria touring UAE

The Dubai based Victorian Government Business Office, has assisted in the visit to the UAE of Professor David de Kretser, Governor of Victoria who conducted high-level business talks amongst a broad range of business professionals including those within the medical, construction and educational fields, and to build upon the strong relationships that already exist between the UAE and the State of Victoria.

The Governor met Dr Hanif Hassan, Minister of Education who said that the UAE is known for its openness towards nations and communication with countries all over the world to benefit from their educational experiences and knowledge in curriculum development.

Dr Hassan also expressed that the ministry seeks to create an educational system that harmonises with the best universal educational standards, prepares pupils for a beneficial and productive life, develops their ability for continuous learning to deal with the era's facts, and to contribute to achieve enduring development for the community.

Professor de Kretser also met with the Ruler of Sharjah, HH. Sheik Dr. Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qassimi along with other distinguished guests and signed a MoU between The University of Sharjah's Academy of Scientific Research on behalf of the Sharjah Medical Excellence Cluster and Baker IDI Institute in Melbourne.



Professor David de Kretser the Governor of Victoria and HH Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qassimi met in Sharjah.

NSW Premier meets UAE Prime Minister on Trade Mission to the UAE

NSW Premier Nathan Rees concluded on 23 April his three-day trade mission to the UAE with a meeting with His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai to promote NSW and discuss investment and jobs creation in NSW.

"I'm determined to secure overseas investment in NSW through the support of the most senior leaders in the UAE," said Mr Rees "We discussed the NSW Trade Office that will open later this year and key developments such as Barangaroo". "These talks open the door for future partnerships between NSW organisations and the Middle East" he said.

The Premier visited the Dubai Campus of the University of Wollongong to meet students and faculty members at the opening of new student facilities.



NSW Premier Nathan Rees with Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

During the three day trade mission, Premier Rees met with members of the Royal family, heads of senior government agencies, business leaders and NSW exporters to strengthen trade ties between NSW and the region. In Abu Dhabi the Premier signed an agreement with Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, for a NSW marketing campaign targeting European tourists.

NEWS FROM THE REGION

Sohar Aluminium smelter inaugurated

The RO\$925 million Sohar Aluminium new-generation smelter, a joint venture between Brazil's Rio Tinto Alcan (20 per cent), Oman Oil Company (40 per cent) and Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Authority (40 per cent) was inaugurated yesterday at the industrial town.

The \$2.4 billion AP36 smelter, which is the first greenfield smelter to be set up in the Middle East in over 30 years, was inaugurated under the auspices of His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq Al Said, adviser to His Majesty the Sultan, in the presence of ministers, undersecretaries and representatives of local and international companies. Maqbool bin Ali Sultan, minister of commerce and industry and chairman of Oman Oil Company (OOC), said, "The Sohar Aluminium project is one of the largest economic investments ever made by the Sultanate's government through the Oman Oil Company." He added that the Sohar Aluminium

project would help create greater employment opportunities in the Sultanate, particularly in the Al Batinah region.

Ahmed bin Salim Al Wahaibi, chairman of Sohar Aluminium and chief executive of OOC, said, "The project has been set up to produce 360,000 tonnes per annum of primary aluminium using the most efficient technology in the industry. Part of the product will be used locally and developed by downstream industries and the rest will be exported."

The construction of the smelter began at the end of 2005 and it produced its first hot metal in June, 2008. It reached full capacity on February 19 this year. Al Wahaibi said Sohar Aluminium has worked on the training and development of Omani nationals both within and outside the Sultanate to work for the company. He added that 679 Omani youths have been absorbed by the company.

The Times of Oman

ME intra-regional trade up 28 per cent

Intra-regional trade in the Middle East has grown 28 per cent between 2000 and 2007 and now represents 19.3 per cent of all trade in the region, according to an Economic Note released by Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC). The report, analysing World Trade Organisation trade data recently released covering the years through 2007, also revealed that Middle East trade was increasingly shifting toward Asia and away from the United States and was showing increased diversification toward non-oil products such as chemicals, travel and tourism.

Intra Middle East trade increased from 15.1 per cent of total external trade in 2000 to 19.3 per cent in 2007 but is still significantly below intra-regional trade levels in other regions such as the European Union (71.2 per cent) and Asia (57.4 per cent). This increase in intra-regional trade in the Middle East was led by a doubling in trade of agricultural products, an almost five-fold increase in fuel and mining products and a four-fold jump in manufactured good.

Given the shift in trade towards Asia, the report also said it is increasingly important for regional economies to negotiate free-trade agreements (FTAs) with emerging markets such as China and India, rather than focus on bilateral FTAs with developed countries. The Economic Note added that the GCC Single Market initiated in 2008 and the expected launch of the Gulf Monetary Union in 2010 will help the GCC

strengthen regional trade and increase its influence on the global trade map.

The study identifies the lack of an integrated transport infrastructure, burdensome customs procedures, non-tariff barriers to trade and lack of product diversification as the main barriers to regional Middle East trade.

The growth in trade in services was highlighted by the analysis, which concluded that travel and tourism was the "best performing trade sector" for the region and an increasingly important source of trade diversification. By contrast, the large dependence on agricultural imports exposes the region to the rise in commodity prices, such as that witnessed in 2007 and 2008 that contributed to record inflation rates across the GCC.

In terms of trade with the rest of the world, the Economic Note reported that manufactured imports from Asia, as a share of total world imports to the Middle East, grew from 29.3 per cent in 2000 to 33.9 per cent in 2007, capturing the lead position from the European Union, whose share declined from 39.2 per cent in 2000 to 31.5 per cent in 2007. A similar shift happened in agricultural imports as well. Not surprisingly, hydrocarbons led exports from the GCC, while chemicals were by and large the second largest revenue earner. Other leading GCC exports included pharmaceuticals, aluminium, iron and steel. **TradeArabia News Service**

Dubai top city in the world in 2008 for FDI

UAE continues to dominate the region in terms of foreign direct investment. In a special report published by the Financial Times on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Dubai has for the first time been classified as the top destination city in the world surpassing the likes of London and Shanghai.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) continues to lead the way in the Middle East and Africa accounting for 50 percent of total projects in the region. Dubai is one of the seven emirates of the UAE.

In its position as the top destination city for FDI for 2008, Dubai attracted a total of 342 projects, had \$21bn of capital investment and created over 58,000 new jobs. The UAE was once again the leading destination for FDI in the region with 480 projects, capital expenditure of \$35bn and the creation of over 87,000 new jobs in 2008. For the Middle East as a whole, sources show that the total number of FDI projects amounted to 969, with capital expenditure of \$154bn, creating over

237,000 jobs.

Commenting on the report, H.E. Dr. Omar Bin Sulaiman, Governor of the Dubai International Financial Centre and Vice Chairman of the Central Bank of the UAE, said: "This report is a testament to the strategy of both the UAE and Dubai under the directives of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai; a strategy of openness and diversification.

The number of projects initiated, the capital investment and jobs created in the UAE are proof of the economic strength of the country. It is a remarkable achievement by Dubai to become the leading city in the world for foreign direct investment and we are committed to continuing to demonstrate the benefit of investing in Dubai and the UAE" he said – Emirates News Agency, **WAM**

Oman economy grows 44pc to \$60bn in 2008

Non-Opec oil producer Oman's economy grew 44 percent at current prices in 2008 to 23.05 billion rials (\$59.87 billion) due to a surge in oil prices, official data showed in May.

The value of crude oil output at market rates rose to 10.81 billion rials (AUD 1 = 0.923 Oman Rials) last year from 6.52 billion rials in 2007, Oman's Ministry of National Economy said in a monthly report on its website. Oil prices rallied to a peak near \$150 a barrel last summer before collapsing by around \$100 since. The services sector expanded 22.5 percent to 7.55 billion rials, the ministry said. Oman has yet to release constant price GDP data for 2008. Its central bank governor said in March Oman's real GDP growth rate would fall to 1 to 3 percent this year from 6-8 percent last year. **Reuters**

Oman continues to remain attractive to investors

Report: Oman 2009, published by the Oxford Business Group (OBG), was released yesterday. It is the fifth edition of the series being published by the Group. Oman's plans to diversify and liberalise its economy have been mapped out in the report along with investment and business opportunities in the Sultanate.

Speaking on the occasion, Mohammed Nasser Al Khasibi, secretary-general, Ministry of National Economy, outlined the opportunities available for foreign investors. "When investors seek out countries for foreign direct investments, they are commonly attracted foremost to a nation's stability followed by its investment, legal and financial framework. "In this sense, the Sultanate of Oman continues to remain an attractive place for investors," he said.

Addressing some of the challenges facing the Sultanate, Al Khasibi added: "His Majesty the Sultan's government continues to keep a vigilant eye on local, regional and global economies and is committed to shepherding the country through volatile times."

Oliver Cornock, regional editor for the Gulf region, OBG, who also made a presentation on the occasion, highlighted Oman's

enviable position. "The Sultanate has made considerable strides on the path towards economic diversification and embraced the role the private sector has to play. Coupled with an increasingly business-friendly regulatory environment, this means that when the global outlook picks up, Oman will find itself in a solid position to attract foreign investment," he said.

His Highness Sayyid Faisal bin Turki Al Said, CEO of Oman Brand Management Unit (OBMU), stressed the importance of conveying a strong national brand identity to help usher in more inward investment and tourists. "I believe that only developing and communicating a strong national brand identity can help speed up development by attracting foreign investors and tourists.

Available in print form and online, The Report: Oman 2009 has been published in partnership with OBMU as well as three local research partners — Abu Timam Grant Thornton for accountancy, Al Madina Financial and Investment Services for capital markets, Al Busaidy, Mansoor Jamal & Co. for legal affairs. **The Times of Oman**

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS

Cityscape Dubai 2009

Venue: Dubai International Exhibition Centre
Sheik Zayed Rd
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Date: 5-8 Oct 2009
Industry: Building & Construction

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Sustainable Cities Mission to Abu Dhabi and Dubai

Venue: Sustainable Cities Mission to Abu Dhabi and Dubai
Abu Dhabi and Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Date: 31 May 2009 - 3 Jun 2009
Industry: Building & Construction

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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/>

NSW Chapter	
Hamdan and Associates	www.hamdan.com.au
Numan International Pty Ltd	
VIC Chapter	
Bibtech Pty Ltd	www.bibtech.com.au
Connect Language Services	www.languageservices.com.au
Department of Primary Industries Victoria	www.dpi.vic.gov.au/agribusiness
Study Group Australia	www.studygroup.com
WA Chapter	
Greg Rowe and Associates	www.greg-rowe.com
NRW Holdings	www.nrw.com.au
OEM Group Pty Ltd	www.oemgroup.com.au
Winchester Global Pty Ltd	www.oilfiltration.org

AACCI MEMBER PROFILE

Recently joined WA Chapter member **Prema Organics** importers, exports and distributes natural and certified organic food and products for Australian and worldwide markets.

The company promotes GMO free and chemical free food products. Including organic orange juice, organic honey and the "Vegetarian Choice" vegetarian meat substitute range of meats and pasties. From strawberries to free range eggs, most of their organic produce comes from their farm situated just 2km from the centre of the Town of Narrogin WA. This unique farm has achieved the top biodynamic status recognition from the Biodynamic Research Institute for all products produced. The brand itself is pure and uncontaminated by any chemicals, poisons or toxins of any kind. On the farm Prema Organics have around 2,500 fruit trees and vines, 17,000 windbreak trees, environmental friendly wind and solar power generation and independent water resources.



For more information visit Prema Organics website on <http://www.premaorganics.com/>

Coface Australia

AACCI Member Coface Australia is part of Coface Group, a world leading provider of credit management services including: Credit Insurance, Company Information (Credit Reports and Opinions), Receivables Management and Receivables Finance. Thanks to the worldwide local service delivered in 100 countries (through partners and subsidiaries), Coface has a strong global presence, including a strong footprint throughout the Middle East.

Coface has established partnerships with various chambers across the world for the benefit of its members. A good example of this is a recent partnership between Coface Emirates and the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry by which the chamber is now assisting its members to help recover bad debts in conjunction with Coface Emirates.

AACCI members experiencing bad debt recovery issues in the region or anywhere across the world are welcome to contact Coface Australia's representative Rodolfo Duque for a free, non obligation consultation on 02 8235 8618, Mobile 0447 470 512, or Email rodolfo_duque@coface.com.au



Visit our website
www.austarab.com.au