



Australia Arab Chamber of Commerce & Industry Inc.

غرفة التجارة والصناعة الأسترالية - العربية

Salaam

AACCI Newsletter

April—May 2008

AACCI NEWS

AUSTRALIA ARAB
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE &
INDUSTRY INC

ABN 61 001 639 452

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Al Jazeera Visits Chamber



From left are: Mike Anderson – Vice Chairman AACCI Victoria Chapter, Syd Giller – National Chairman AACCI, Mr Mahmoud Hussein Aljazairi – Senior Journalist – Al Jazeera, Mr Ahmed Abdelraouf Awad – News Producer – Al Jazeera, Max White – Executive Officer – Victoria Chapter – AACCI and Mr Ziad Al-Ajlouny – News Producer – Al Jazeera.

In late May the Chamber welcomed representatives from the Doha based satellite broadcaster ‘Al Jazeera’

A Senior Journalist along with two News Producers visited the Chamber’s Headquarters in Melbourne as part of a visit arranged by the Council for Australian-Arab Relations and DFAT under its International Media Visits Program. The journalists commenced their formal Australian visit on 26 May 2008. The program included appointments in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne.

The visit by the Al Jazeera representatives will result in exposure for Australia on an influential Middle East-based network with an extensive audience.

The program for the visit of the broadcasters was specifically developed to profile and increase awareness throughout the Middle East region of Australia as a tolerant,

innovative, sophisticated and multi-cultural society, and as a country that is ready and willing to expand its business and trade relationships with the Arab countries.

The visit to the Chamber focused on trade between Australia and the Arab League countries. Discussion covered a diversity of topics from the history of the commercial relationship to recent developments and trends especially in the area of technology.

It was generally recognized by all parties that there was still work required to enhance awareness of Australia among the Arab League countries and what business Australia has to offer. On the other hand there was a need for Australian business people to learn more about bilateral business opportunities within the 22 countries of the Arab League. Al Jazeera is evaluating a number of options for future stories on Australia.

Focus on Qatar

Smart Artz Gallery in South Melbourne was the venue for 35 members and guests to acquire an insight into the future directions of business in Qatar, last 8 April.

Guest presenter was Mr Desmond Holmes, Chairman, Australia New Zealand Business in Qatar (ANZBIQ) and Managing Director, Business Development (Banking & Asset Management), Qatar Financial Centre Authority with the evening sponsored by Qatar Airways.

Highlights of the presentation were:

- Qatar is one of the fastest growing economies in the world.
- Growth is driven by a dynamic and increasingly



Editor
Claudia Sepulveda

diversified economy.

- A world class business environment
- An active and progressive government and a high quality of life at excellent value.
- 2010 projected GDP (PPP Basis) to be at US\$51.8bn.
- Qatar has one of the highest GDP per capita (PPP basis) @ US\$42520 in 2006
- Diversify economy away from reliance on hydrocarbons.

The oil and gas sector dominate the economy representing

- 80% of country's export precepts
- World's largest exporter of LNG
- By 2012 Qatar's share of the global LNG trade expected to be 30%.

Future growth includes

- An estimated \$142b worth of projects planned over the next 6 years
- New Doha International Airport with annual capacity of 50 million passengers
- Planning a 140km light rail system for the capital.
- Announced plans to establish 3 free trade zones.
- 8000 additional hotel rooms over the next 5 years.
- Development of first class resorts and cities.
- Excellent health care with Qatari government committing over \$8 billion in healthcare research and



Mr. Syd Giller AACCI National Chairman and Mr Desmond Holmes, Chairman, Australia New Zealand Business in Qatar (ANZBIQ) address the audience.

initiatives.

- Creating a \$900 million all digital hospital.
- Significant Government focus on education reform.

Financial and business services are the 2nd largest non oil activities with the sector almost tripled in size since 2004. Qatar Financial Centre is the heart of Qatar's dynamic economic growth which sees Qatar quickly growing into a financial hub. With its burgeoning economy Desmond strongly pointed out that Qatar is easy to do business with.

Round Table with Saudi Arabian Ambassador



From left to right: Dr Tony Brightling, Operations Manager -Elders International Australia Limited; David Elia, Director-Trios Pty Ltd; Colin Abbott, Director - Melbourne Pharmaceutical Company Pty Ltd; HE Mr Hassan Talat Nazer, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Andrew Thomson, Chairman Gulf & Asian Mining Ltd Consultant- Minter Ellison & Portfolio Partners Fund Management; Denis Clancy, Managing Director -Amskan Holdings Pty Ltd; Ian Mathews, Managing Director -GASCO Pty Ltd; Dr Fouad Abo, Senior Principal Global Leader Contamination Assessment & Remediation -GHD Pty Ltd; Syd Giller, National Chairman -AACCI.

On a recent visit to Victoria the Saudi Arabian Ambassador, HE Mr Hassan Talat Nazer, attended a 'round table' conference held in the Chamber's Melbourne boardroom.

The event provided a unique opportunity for the Ambassador to familiarise himself with the various business activities of Chamber members with the Kingdom. Each member delivered a brief company overview and covered their current and future Saudi Arabian activities.

The Ambassador briefed members on a number of issues and developments covering visas requirements, tariff duties, legalisation of documents and product specifications which will further assist in enhancing trade between Australia and the Kingdom.

The Ambassador also expressed a keen interest for the Chamber to initiate a trade delegation to the Kingdom which would further enhance trading relationships and provide a vehicle for Australian companies to meet prospective business partners.

It is hoped that the Chamber will organise additional 'round table' conferences with Ambassadors which will provide members with an opportunity to discuss matters of mutual interest in a frank and open atmosphere.

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.

AACCI National Chairman Hosts Private Dinner for Trade Minister and GCC Country Representatives



AACCI National Chairman, Syd Giller, hosted a private dinner in Canberra on 28 April 2008 for Australia's Trade Minister, The Hon Simon Crean MP, and the Ambassadors of the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, together with the Melbourne-based Consul-General of Oman. Also in attendance were senior officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and AACCI's Executive Director. Discussion focused on Australian-GCC trade and economic relations.

Those attending the dinner included, from left to right, HE Ambassador Jamal al-Ghunaim of Kuwait, HE Ambassador Hassan Nazer of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, The Hon Simon Crean MP, HE Ambassador Dr Saeed Mohammed Al Shamsi of UAE, Dr. Mr Hamed al-Hajri Consul-General of Oman, and the Host, Mr Syd Giller. (Photo courtesy of Samira Baqatada, UAE Embassy, Canberra)

The Syrian Embassy Raises Funds for ACT Cancer Council

The Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic in Canberra held the 13th Friends of Syria dinner on Wednesday 19 March 2008. In a new departure for the Embassy's 'Friends of Syria' functions, the dinner was held in conjunction with the ACT Cancer Council and was aimed at raising funds for the Council.

This generous initiative follows the Syrian Embassy's notable achievement in winning first place among other embassies in contributing blood under the Canberra Times Corporate Blood Challenge of 2007 and the first quarter of 2008.

During the dinner drawings by Syrian children were sold in a good-humoured auction that attracted some spirited bidding amongst the guests. The Embassy also distributed some Damascene rosaries and calendars from Syria.

The Syrian Ambassador, Mr. Tammam Sulaiman, and his wife, Mrs. Isis Saeed (the mastermind of the idea), expressed their gratitude to all who participated in the auction. The dinner raised a total of \$9,640.40 for the ACT Cancer Council.



Syrian Ambassador H.E. Tammam Sulaiman and his wife, Mrs Isis Saeed, with dinner guest Mr Ross Burns, author and a former Australian Ambassador to Syria (pictured right) and Mr Robert Newton, AACCI Executive Director.

International Careers Evening



Gerard Heib, AACCI SA Management Committee member and Dr Minerva Nasser-Eddine AACCI SA Chairperson at AACCI stand.

The University of Adelaide's International Careers Evening took place on Monday 19 May. AACCI SA was invited to exhibit and profile the Chambers to students.

Adelaide uni students have over the years let the University know that they want information about how to build up their work-ready skills for careers around the world, other than through paid employment - and the University has acted on this by building a program that will help them to find out what they want to know.

Each exhibitor in the mini-expo had a booth in the Eclipse space. There were a total of 12 exhibitors and over 180 students came through on the night. The AACCI booth had both curious and interested students seeking more information about the Chamber, our services, and mostly seeking information about internships with the Chamber or members.

If your business is interested in taking on an intern please contact Sandy Ellis on 08 8300 0087 or email: sa@austarab.com.au

Export Opportunities in the Middle East Seminar Series Queensland



Mr Mike Farrar, AACCI Queensland Chapter's Chairman addresses the audience at the seminar.

On 1 May at the Treasury Hotel in Brisbane, Trade Queensland (the export marketing arm of the State Government) conducted another seminar in a series of seminars on export opportunities in the Middle East.

This was another opportunity for current and potential Queensland exporters to the Middle East to meet with peers and other executives with specialist expertise in marketing to a broad spectrum of Middle East countries.

The presentation was underpinned by sponsorship, support and input from the key stakeholders in these endeavours by the Queensland Chapter of the Australia Arab Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Etihad Airways.

AACCI Queensland Chapter's Chairman Mr Mike Farrar addressed the seminar outlining AACCI's role in the development of Australia's commercial

engagement with the Arab countries and urging non members at the seminar to consider joining the Chamber.

The seminar took place with the active participation of the Ambassadors of Iraq, Syria and Kuwait and the Honorary Consul of Lebanon in Queensland.

In all, over 100 people attended the event, which also saw the announcement of the retirement of the Queensland Government's Special Middle East Representative, Hon Mike Ahern, and the presenting of his replacement, Mr Loftus Harris AM.

The Chamber's profile was further enhanced after the seminar, when Mike Farrar hosted a dinner for key industry executives, public sector representatives and the diplomatic corps. AACCI's Executive Director attended both events.



Saudi Arabia Focus Breakfast



Mr Ismail Farag, Business Development Manager from Austrade Office in Riyadh, addresses the audience in Melbourne.

The Victorian Chapter hosted a breakfast in May to hear of business opportunities and developments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from Ismail Farag, Business Development Manager from the Austrade Office in Riyadh.

Held at the Liquid Restaurant in Melbourne, Docklands over 30 members and guests heard Ismail speak on business sectors covering food, where Ismail is the Austrade's Industry Sector Team Leader for Middle East & North Africa, Health and Education.

In his talk Ismail was able to cover developments in the health sector including the Kingdom's rules and regulations on pharmaceutical registration and distribution, education, where we now see

a substantial increase in the number of Saudi Arabian students studying at Australian learning institutions, as well as some broad issues in relation to food production in the Kingdom.

Arab Bank Australia

AACCI Oman Friendship Award Winner Announced

Over 300 Omani students are currently studying at various Victorian Learning institutions around the state.

Recognizing the need to support Omani students the Oman Consul General, HE Mr Hamed Al-Hajri and the Consulate General staff were instrumental in establishing an Oman Students Society headquartered in Victoria.

To promote the Omani culture the Student Society organized the First Omani Exhibition at Federation Square in Melbourne over the weekend to where visitors experienced Omani hospitality, as well as seeing first hand Omani costumes, jewellery, pottery and crafts and experiencing Omani song and dance.

In his address at the official opening of the exhibition AACCI National Chairman, Mr Syd Giller, announced the formation of the special AACCI award available to members of the Oman Student Society of Victoria, to acknowledge the role the Society plays in supporting Omani students undertaking studies in Victoria and the Society's activities in promoting Omani culture and awareness within the local community.

To be nominated for the award candidates must have



Lord Mayor of Melbourne Cr. John So (second from left) and the Omani Consul General, Mr Hamed Al-Hairi (third from left) at Federation Square Melbourne.

demonstrated over the last 12 months an outstanding contribution to the effective operation of the Society, encouraged relations between Omani and Australian students through sporting activities, cultural events, travelling, promoted Omani culture and fostered friendship between the two countries and people.

The Chamber was pleased to present in 2008 the inaugural 'AACCI Oman Friendship Award' at the Oman students graduation held at RMIT University, Mohammed Saif Al Saidi was announced as the winner of the AACCI Oman Friendship Award for 2008. Mohammed who is currently studying engineering at RMIT is an active member of many social and academic associations including Engineering Australia, Engineers without Borders Australia, Student Union, and the Islamic Student Society in RMIT, just to mention a few.

Presented with his award by the Chambers' National Chairman, Syd Giller, Mohammed along with a companion, will undertake a 2 day AACCI sponsored visit to Canberra covering airfares and accommodation.



Presented with his award Mohammed Saif Al Saidi (centre) with Oman Consul General, Mr Hamed Al-Hajri (left) and AACCI National Chairman, Mr Syd Giller (right).

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS

MENA-EX 2009:

Capitalise on the growing mining sector in the Gulf region

Apply before: 4 July 2008

MENA-EX 2009 is Saudi Arabia's leading international exhibition for mineral exploration and applications. The 1st exhibition in 2008 had 2,824 attendees including 2,057 trade visitors. Over 80 per cent of exhibitors rebooked for 2009.

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4th Saudi Water and Power Forum 2008

1-4 November 2008

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

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20th Saudi Build Exhibition 2008

Apply before: 15 July

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Australian Government
 Australian Trade Commission

NEWS FROM THE REGION

Dubai's non-Oil Foreign Trade Grows 46pc

Dubai's non-oil foreign trade volume jumped 46 per cent in the first quarter of 2008, reaching \$58.3 billion, against \$39.9 billion during the same period in 2007, a report said. Dubai's exports recorded a phenomenal growth, soaring by 79 percent, while re-exports went up by 73.5 per cent and imports grew by 49.7 percent during the period, the Khaleej Times report said.

Dubai's direct non-oil foreign trade, excluding free zones and customs warehouses, amounted to \$39.2 billion during the first quarter of 2008, against \$24.9 billion for the same period in 2007, showing an increase of \$14.2 billion, the report said quoting Dubai World's Statistics Department.

The robust growth in Dubai's direct non-oil foreign trade will continue in the three remaining quarters of the

current year, said Nassim Al Mehairi, acting head of the department.

India topped the list of Dubai's direct import destination in the first quarter of 2008 with a share of 13.14 percent of total imports worth \$3.43 billion. China came second with \$2.91 billion, followed by Switzerland with \$1.96 billion. India, China and Switzerland together accounted for 31.8 per cent (\$8.30 billion) of Dubai's total imports, while imports from other countries accounted for 68.2 per cent (\$17.75 billion).

As for Dubai's exports, India again topped the list with 45.7 per cent, of the total exports worth \$1.23 billion during the first quarter of 2008, followed by Switzerland, with 13.5 percent (\$381 million) of direct exports. *Trade Arabia News*

Qatar Must Act on Peg Says Adviser

Qatar needs to act over its peg to the dollar, the economic adviser to the country's ruler said, even as the inflation rose to a near record of 14.75 per cent.

"Things are not getting better, action should be taken," Ibrahim Al-Ibrahim told Reuters from the Qatari capital, Doha, when asked about possibly dropping the peg. The government "is trying to do it but there are many constraints," he said. The main obstacle is whether Qatar should act alone or with its Gulf Arab partners, Ibrahim said.

Inflation is climbing, driven more by commodity and food prices, rather than rents, Ibrahim said. The annual inflation in Qatar rose for a third quarter running in March to 14.75 percent, the country's state

Planning Council said, amid a surge in food and commodity prices, and rents.

The Consumer Price Index reached 166.87 points at March 31, the council said on its website, without giving year-earlier data. The index was at 145.42 points on March 31 last year, according to earlier Planning Council figures. Inflation at the end of December was 13.74 percent. The last time it was higher was on March 31 last year when it was 14.81 percent.

As in other Gulf Arab oil producers, Qatar's economy is booming due to a near seven-fold surge in oil prices in the last six years, while it is having to lower interest rates because of its currency peg to the dollar. This is fuelling speculation that the country might drop the link in favour of a basket of currencies. *Reuters*

Food Prices Threat to Gulf Says UN

Bahrain and the Gulf are unlikely to be able to prevent the devastating effects of rising food prices, said a UN World Food Programme official. The organisation's Cairo-based deputy regional director for the Middle East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe Philip Ward said the soaring cost of living had already pushed millions into poverty and sparked riots.

He said while the Gulf countries had benefited from increased oil revenues, those with high food import costs

were most at risk of encountering problems. 'Worldwide 100 million people are at risk of poverty as a result of high food prices,' Ward told delegates attending the UN Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc) annual ministerial review meeting on Sustainable Urbanisation.

Ward expects food prices to eventually fall and stabilise, but says they will be much higher than they were before the first substantial price rises began in 2004. -*TradeArabia News Service*

Saudi Aluminium Project to Cost \$7.5bn

Saudi Arabian Mining Co (Maaden) said an aluminium venture that is developing with Rio Tinto will cost \$530 million more than expected, or 28.24 billion riyals (\$7.53 billion), because of higher prices.

The companies may also expand the project's planned capacity, adding to costs further, state-owned Maaden said in a statement received late on Wednesday. A delay in awarding contracts for the construction of an electricity generating plant to power the project will not affect the overall schedule, it said. The company, which is looking to raise 9.25 billion riyals in July in the Middle East's biggest mining IPO, said in April last year that the project would cost 26.25 billion riyals.

Across the oil-exporting Gulf, companies have been raising their forecasts for the cost of projects, leading to delays and, in some case, cancellations. The region is booming on record oil prices, fuelling demand for contractors, labour and materials, compounded by higher global prices for goods such as steel.

The project involves building a 1,400 megawatt oil fired plant, an alumina refinery with capacity of 1.4 million tonnes per year and an aluminium smelter with capacity of 720,000 per tonnes year, according to Maaden's April 2007 statement, when it agreed to develop the project with Alcan. Rio Tinto subsequently bought Alcan. Reuters

Bahrain to Own Rice Farms in Thailand

Bahrain plans to have its own rice plantation in Thailand to overcome a shortage in supplies and skyrocketing prices. The move follows an agreement signed with a major Thai exporter to maintain rice supplies and stabilise prices in Bahrain.

The government also hopes to form a joint public or private sector company to meet the country's demand for

basic food products, said Industry and Commerce Minister Dr Hassan Fakhro.

The minister signed the deal with Rice Miller Association during a five-day visit to Thailand last week, aimed at strengthening trade and investment links between both countries. TradeArabia News Service

Gulf Leaders do not See Need for De-peg: Paulson

US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson said on Sunday leaders of Gulf oil producers have told him that abandoning their currency pegs to the dollar will not solve their vexing inflation problems.

Paulson, said leaders in the region have 'quite an awareness that the peg does not influence inflation to a significant degree'. They recognize that inflation is the overriding issue. Ending the peg is not the solution to the inflation problem. Paulson reiterated, however that currency policy decisions were sovereign matters and said he could not rule out any moves by Gulf states to abandon the peg.

In Doha, he said Qatar is free to drop its peg to the US dollar. 'This is a sovereign decision,' Paulson told reporters after meeting the country's prime minister and central bank governor. 'It has to do with the economic issues here.'

An economic adviser to Qatar's ruler had said the Gulf state needs to drop its peg to the dollar because its economy is surging while the US economy is slowing, London-based MEED had reported. Ibrahim al-Ibrahim was quoted as saying: 'We have to delink ... It does not make sense to stay linked to a currency that is declining while our economy is growing ... at a time when our currency should be going up, it is going down.'

Paulson said Gulf Arab policies of pegging to the dollar 'have worked well and have served the region well for a long time.'

Paulson said inflation in the region was relatively high, although monetary policy was not the only driver. Higher global food costs were also fuelling consumer price rises, he said. A strong dollar is in the interest of the United States and its value will ultimately reflect the United States' long-term fundamentals, Paulson said. Reuters

ANZ Opens in Dubai

ANZ has opened a representative office in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates in a move to meet the rising client demand in the Middle East.

Australian and New Zealand trade flows have grown significantly with the Middle East in recent years, while global capital is flooding the region.

ANZ chief executive officer Mike Smith said the Middle East had emerged as one of the centres of global economic activity over the past decade. "Trade and investment flows are growing as are the numbers of Australians and New Zealanders investing, living and working in the region."

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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 | |
|--|--|
| BCA Performance Pty Ltd | www.bcaperformance.com |
| Blackstone Waterhouse Lawyers | www.blackstonewaterhouse.com.au |
| Citadel Resource Group Ltd (adb group) | www.citadelrg.com.au |
| Emirates Hotels (Australia Pty Ltd) | www.emirateshotelsresorts.com |
| International Technology Specialists Pty Ltd | |
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