



Australian Government  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Council for Australian-Arab Relations  
مجلس العلاقات الأسترالية العربية

## COUNCIL FOR AUSTRALIAN-ARAB RELATIONS

### ANNUAL REPORT 2003-04

strengthening Australian-Arab relations



# Annual Report

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## **Introduction**

The Council for Australian-Arab Relations was established by the Australian Government in December 2002 to strengthen ties between Australia and Arab countries.

The Council comprises 14 members drawn from a wide cross-section of the Australian community. The Council Chairman is Mr Brendan Stewart, Chairman of AWB Limited.

The Council is supported by a Secretariat located in the Middle East Section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Canberra.

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## Chairman's Message

I am very pleased to report that, in the relatively short time since it was established in December 2002, the Council for Australian-Arab Relations (CAAR) has begun to implement a broad and innovative program of work in support of its mandate “*to strengthen Australian-Arab relations*”.

Our activities have included a Media Visitors Program, under which two Australian journalists visited a number of Arab countries to explore Australia's commercial, cultural, foreign and trade policy links with the Arab world; a Young Professionals Exchange Program, which is designed to give young Arab and Australian business people and university students the chance to pursue individually tailored learning opportunities in Australia and selected Arab countries; a Business Speakers' program; and the development of a Teachers' Resource Kit (“*Explore Australia*”) for use in Arab schools, to be trialled in Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar.

I twice visited the region as CAAR Chairman in 2003–04. In October 2003, I travelled to Egypt, Morocco, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon; and in May 2004, I visited the UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Jordan and Kuwait. These visits helped promote Council objectives and identify potential partners for future activities.

I thank the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Dr Ashton Calvert, for the Department's continuing support for the Council, including its financial support.

And I thank Council members, the Secretariat and Australia's diplomatic missions in Arab countries for their efforts this past year and look forward to continuing and building on this year's achievements in 2004–05.



Brendan Stewart  
Chairman

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## Council Overview

The Council for Australian-Arab Relations (CAAR) currently comprises a Chairman and 13 members, appointed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, with the agreement of the Minister for Trade. Council members are drawn from business, government and the academic community. The Chairman and members are appointed for a period of three years and serve on a part-time basis.

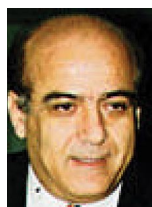
### CAAR Membership as at 30 June 2004

#### Chairman

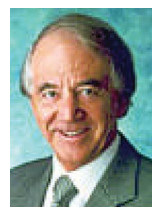


Mr Brendan Stewart, Chairman, AWB Limited (appointed Chairman for three years from 21 February 2003)

#### Members



Mr Joseph Assaf, Chairman, Ethnic Communications Pty Ltd (appointed as a member for three years from 21 February 2003)



Mr John Conomos, Executive Chairman, Toyota Motor Corporation Australia Limited (appointed as a member for three years from 21 February 2003)



Mr Syd Giller, National Counsellor of the Australia Arab Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. (appointed as a member for three years from 21 February 2003)



Ms Pru Goward, Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (appointed for three years from 5 May 2003)



Mr Tom Harley, President Corporate Development, BHP Billiton (appointed as a member for three years from 21 February 2003)



Mr Gary Helou, Chief Executive Officer, SunRice (appointed as a member for three years from 21 February 2003)



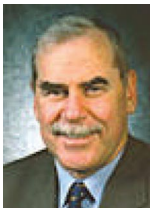
Dr Fiona Hill, Director, Almanar Consultancy (appointed for three years from 5 May 2003)



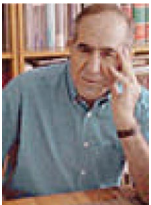
Mr Roland Jabbour, Chairman, Australian Arabic Council (appointed as a member for three years from 21 February 2003)



Dr Agu Kantsler, Director New Ventures, Woodside Petroleum Ltd (appointed as a member for three years from 21 February 2003)



Mr Tom Phillips, President and CEO, Mitsubishi Motors Australia (appointed as a member for three years from 21 February 2003)



Professor Ahmad Shboul AM, Chair, Department of Arabic & Islamic Studies, School of European, Asian and Middle Eastern Languages and Studies, University of Sydney (appointed as a member for three years from 21 February 2003)



Mr Murray McLean OAM, Deputy Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (ex-officio appointment)





Mr Peter O'Byrne, Managing Director, Austrade (ex-officio appointment)

## **CAAR Mission Statement**

To promote between the peoples of Australia and the Arab world mutual interests and a greater understanding and acceptance of each other's cultures, values, beliefs and diversity.

## **CAAR Objectives**

In carrying out its mission, the Council aims to:

- Broaden awareness and understanding of each other's history, culture, society and areas of excellence;
- Promote greater understanding of mutual foreign policy interests;
- Encourage activities that generate economic benefits for Australia and Arab countries;
- Promote Australia's image in the Arab world as a culturally diverse nation of creative and innovative achievement in technology, industry, agriculture, education, the arts and sport;
- Identify opportunities for enhanced collaboration between Australia and Arab countries;
- Establish a strategic framework and long-term plan to foster and promote relations between Australia and Arab countries; and
- Complement the work of existing organisations through strategic partnerships.

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## CAAR Activities

The Council's activities fall into four broad categories:

### Publicity, Promotion and Media

- To promote Australian achievements, joint ventures and success stories of Australia in Arab countries, and of Arab countries in Australia.
- To raise awareness in Arab countries of contemporary Australian society, traditions and capabilities.
- To promote to Australians the importance of the relationship between Australia and Arab countries.
- To promote the work of CAAR in Australia and Arab countries.

### Business and Commercial

- To promote awareness of the potential of Arab markets among Australian business people.
- To promote in Arab countries an awareness of trade and investment, and tourism opportunities in Australia.
- To promote bilateral trade opportunities between Australia and Arab countries.
- To identify opportunities for employment and support the placement of Australians with Arabic language and business skills.
- To enhance awareness of Australian capabilities as a supplier of sophisticated services, including but not limited to education, information technology and tourism, in addition to traditional commodities.

### Education

- To promote within Australia an informed understanding of Arab society and politics.
- To promote and facilitate collaboration between universities and research organisations in Australia and Arab countries.
- To promote Arabic language in Australia.

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- To promote Australian studies in Arab countries.
  - To develop a cadre of Australian graduates with Arabic language skills and a practical understanding of business practice and culture in Arab countries.
  - To encourage Australian students to develop a long-term interest in Australian-Arab relations.

## **Cultural**

- To foster greater awareness in Arab countries of contemporary life in Australia and in Australia of contemporary life in Arab countries by supporting and promoting cultural, heritage and sporting activities.
- To deepen understanding of the traditions, values and beliefs of contemporary Australian and Arab societies.
- To complement the marketing activities of Australian companies and organisations.
- To promote cross-cultural relations.

## **Activities 2003–04**

### **Publicity, Promotion and Media**

#### **Chairman’s visits to Arab countries**

In October 2003, the Chairman, accompanied by Mr Joseph Assaf, CAAR Member, visited Egypt, Morocco, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon.

In May 2004, the Chairman visited the UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Jordan and Kuwait. He was on this occasion accompanied by Dr Fiona Hill, CAAR Member.

On each of these visits, the Chairman met with a range of Government Ministers, senior officials, business people and representatives of educational and cultural institutions. The visits were very well received and successful in promoting the Council and its objectives, and in identifying potential partners for future activities.

#### ***‘Tales of Two Cities’ pilot television episode***

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Dubai-based company Mzone is producing an international 13-part television series provisionally entitled ‘*Tales of Two Cities*’ which will compare one city in Australia with one city in an Arab country in each weekly episode. In 2003–04 CAAR sponsored the pilot episode, which looks at Dubai and the Gold Coast as ‘twin-centres’ of investment and tourism. The pilot has been produced and is currently being assessed by the Council’s Publicity, Promotion and Media sub-committee.

## CAAR Media Exchange Program

The CAAR Media Exchange Program aims to facilitate visits in both directions by Australian and Arab journalists keen to explore Australia’s commercial, cultural, foreign and trade policy links with Arab countries.

In 2003–04, the Council sponsored a visit by the Beirut-based correspondent of *Al Hayat* newspaper Mr Jad El Hage. Mr El Hage’s visit was designed to promote a deeper understanding of Australia in Arab countries. The visit gave Mr El Hage an opportunity to report on a range of topics including the aims, objectives, origins and background of the Council; Australia as a multicultural society in which people enjoy equal opportunity; Australia as a destination for business and tourism; and democracy in Australia, including its political and education systems. Mr El Hage followed-up his visit with a series of very positive articles in *Al Hayat* about Australia and CAAR.

The Council also sponsored two Australian journalists to visit a number of Arab countries. In June 2004 Mr Robert Bolton, Opinions Editor of the Australian Financial Review (AFR), visited Libya, while Mr Will Rayner, Editor of the Stock Journal visited the UAE, Kuwait, Egypt and Syria. Post-visit articles have been published in the AFR and Stock Journal.



*Mr Will Rayner, Editor Stock Journal on CAAR sponsored media visit to Egypt.*

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## Business and Commercial

### ***‘Doing Business with: the UAE; Saudi Arabia; and Qatar’ trade study reports***

CAAR is producing a number of reports which are designed to help Australian small and medium business enterprises (SMEs) do business in the Arab world. The reports will be published and available on the CAAR website in 2004–05.

### **Visit by Saudi Health Officials**

This year the Council funded the visit to Australia of a delegation of health officials from Saudi Arabia. The purpose of the visit was to introduce the officials to the Australian health industry and to demonstrate Australia’s capabilities in specialist medical training.



*Dr Khalid Al-Hazmi, Director of Training and Scholarships, Saudi Arabian Ministry of Health, Dr Hussein Al-Freihi, Secretary General, Saudi Council for Health Specialities, Mr David Wright, CEO RACGP, Dr Obaid Bin Obaid MD, Consultant Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery and Dr Fiona Hill, CAAR member.*

## Education

### ***‘Explore Australia’ Teachers’ Resource Kit***

CAAR engaged Ryebuck Media Ltd to develop and implement a Teachers’ Resource Kit ‘*Explore Australia*’ for introduction into the curriculum of secondary schools in selected Arab countries. The kits are intended to supplement the existing curriculum and will

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comprise a Teachers' Guide, video, interactive CD-ROM, Student Activities Booklet and Internet site.

The kits will be designed to break down some of the stereotypes that may exist in Arab countries about Australia, and to encourage Arab students to 'explore' Australia and discover for themselves some of the similarities and differences.

CAAR will trial the kits in 2004–05 initially in Kuwait, the UAE and Qatar in collaboration with educational authorities and secondary schools in those countries.

## **CAAR (Medical) Exchange Award**

CAAR signed an agreement with The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) for the administration of the CAAR (Medical) Scholarship Exchange Award. The Scholarship Exchange supports a program of academic visits in general practice and family medicine to and from selected Arab countries and is intended, more broadly, to promote institutional links between schools, universities and professional medical colleges and societies in Australia and the Arab world.

The first exchanges under the Award (Dr Johnny Khoury from Summer Hill NSW, to the UAE and Lebanon, and Dr Mousa Samhan Raji Alanazi from Saudi Arabia) will take place in 2004-05.

## **Cultural**

### **CAAR Young Professionals Exchange Program**

CAAR engaged the Australian Agency for Education and Training (AAET) to manage the CAAR Young Professionals Exchange Program. The program provides opportunities for young Arab professionals and/or university students to learn more about contemporary Australian society and business.

The program will see a first group of participants from Arab countries arrive in Australia later in 2004. CAAR intends to conduct a similar program in 2005 for young Australians to observe contemporary Arab society and business.

## **Secretariat and Meetings**

The Council is supported by a Secretariat which is located in the Middle East Section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Canberra. The Secretariat implements Council decisions and administers Council programs and activities. Enquiries concerning the Council should be directed to the Secretariat.

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As at 30 June 2004, the Secretariat comprised:

Mr Peter Hooton  
Director  
Middle East Section

Ms Catharine O’Ryan  
Manager  
CAAR Secretariat

Ms Petrina McFarlane  
Desk Officer  
CAAR Secretariat

For enquiries about Council matters please contact the Secretariat:

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Middle East Section  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
RG Casey Building  
John McEwen Crescent  
BARTON ACT 0221

Telephone: (02) 6261 2090

Facsimile: (02) 6261 2640

Email: [caar@dfat.gov.au](mailto:caar@dfat.gov.au)

## **Public Information**

The Secretariat maintains a web page on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade web site: [www.dfat.gov.au/caar](http://www.dfat.gov.au/caar)

## **Meetings**

During 2003–04, the Council met on three occasions:

- 21 August 2003 in Canberra
- 5 February 2004 in Sydney
- 6 May 2004 in Melbourne

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## Appendix A

### Council for Australian-Arab Relations

#### Financial Statement 2003–04

<b>Publicity, Promotion and Media</b>	
Chairman's visits to Arab countries	\$38,454.48
' <i>Tales of Two Cities</i> ' pilot television episode	\$48,791.12
CAAR Media Exchange Program	\$34,445.46
<b><i>Subtotal</i></b>	<b>\$121,691.06</b>
<b>Business and Commercial</b>	
' <i>Doing Business with...</i> ' trade study reports	\$29,665.51
Visit by Saudi Health Officials	\$31,528.05
<b><i>Subtotal</i></b>	<b>\$61,193.56</b>
<b>Education</b>	
' <i>Explore Australia</i> ' Teachers' Resource Kit	\$74,913.70
CAAR Medical Exchange Award	\$40,000.00
<b><i>Subtotal</i></b>	<b>\$114,913.70</b>
<b>Cultural</b>	
Young Professionals Exchange Program	\$31,348.00
<b><i>Subtotal</i></b>	<b>\$31,348.00</b>
<b>Administration</b>	
Council Meetings	\$17,499.98
Federal/State launches	\$12,736.51
General administration (travel, official entertainment, stationery etc)	\$15,796.04
Publications	\$8,180.00
Sitting Fees	\$16,540.00
<b><i>Subtotal</i></b>	<b>\$70,752.53</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$399,898.85</b>





