

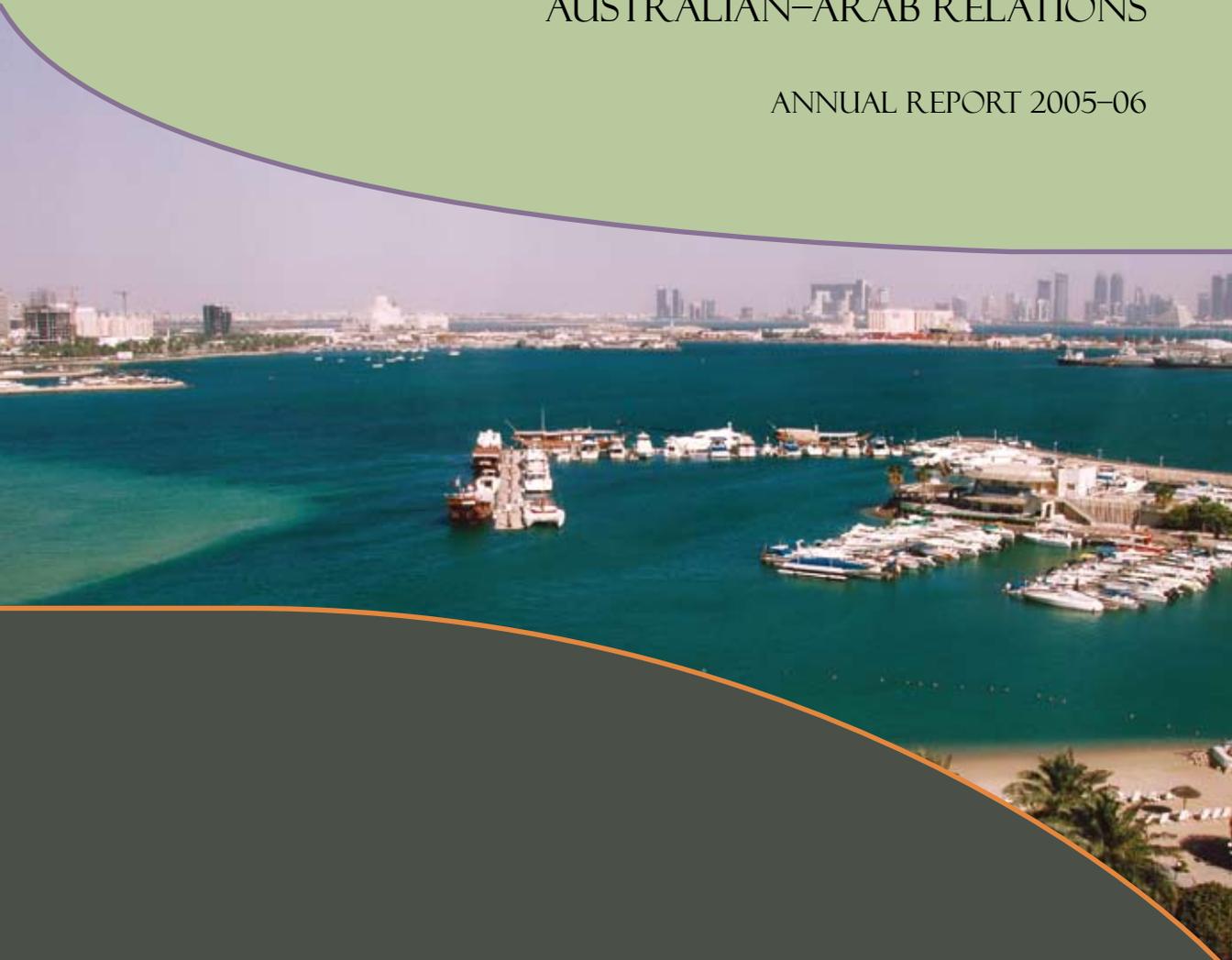


Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

COUNCIL FOR
AUSTRALIAN-ARAB RELATIONS

ANNUAL REPORT 2005-06



Council for Australian-Arab Relations

مجلس العلاقات الأسترالية العربية

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Minister for Foreign Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

The Hon. Warren Truss, MP
Minister for Trade
Deputy Leader of The Nationals
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ministers

I am very pleased to submit to you the Council for Australian–Arab
Relations (CAAR) Annual Report for the period 1 July 2005 to
30 June 2006.

Yours sincerely



Pru Goward
CAAR Chair
15 March 2007

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Introduction



The Council for Australian–Arab Relations was established by the Australian Government in January 2003 to strengthen ties between Australia and Arab countries.

As at 30 June 2006, the Council comprises 10 members drawn from a cross-section of the Australian community. The Council Chair is Ms Pru Goward, Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner. Ms Goward was appointed to the Council in May 2003, and appointed Chair in May 2006.

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

Chair's message



I am proud to have been appointed Chair of the Council for Australian–Arab Relations in May 2006.

I am also very pleased that Ministers have agreed that the Council, which was established by the government in 2003 for an initial period, should be made permanent. This is a reflection of the good work undertaken by my fellow members of the Council in the first three years of its existence.

The inaugural members of the Council were appointed for a period of three years. Following the completion of that first term, the Council has undergone a change of membership. As the newly appointed Chair of the Council, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor, Mr Brendan Stewart, for his work as Chair over the past three years. During the year the Council farewelled Mr Tom Phillips, Mr Gary Helou, Mr Tom Harley and Associate Professor Ahmed Shboul. These members made valuable contributions to the work of the Council, and I, and my fellow Councillors, thank them for their efforts and wish them well.

As at 30 June 2006, the Council comprised ten members. The Council welcomed Mr Abduljalil Albaf, General Manager of Clubcafé, and Dr Glen Simpson, Chief Executive Officer of Coffey International Development.

This past year has seen the successful completion of the 'Explore Australia' teachers' resource kit, with launches held in April 2006 in Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The kit will be a valuable resource for students and will increase knowledge about Australia in those countries.

A delegation of CAAR members travelled to the Middle East and North Africa in April 2006. Besides the launches of the 'Explore Australia' teachers' resource kit, and introductory visits to Tunisia and Algeria, the visit was successful in raising awareness of the Council and making important connections with government and business people for future cooperation.

Following on from previous years' activities, a third successful Young Professionals Exchange Program was undertaken in February and March 2006. This program continued to promote relations between Australia and the Arab countries by providing young professionals with an opportunity to develop their area of professional expertise enriched through a different cultural perspective. The Council intends to continue this program in future years due to the positive response it has received from past participants.

The Council made a financial contribution to Deakin University's flexible Arabic online language training project, which will see Arabic language learning available to

a broader section of the Australian community via the Internet. CAAR believes this will improve relations between Australian and Arab peoples and promote a greater understanding of each other's cultures.

I look forward to the Council continuing the valuable work it has been undertaking since its establishment in 2003.

Pru Goward, Chair

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
- ▶ complement the work of existing organisations through strategic partnerships.

Council overview



The Council for Australian–Arab Relations (CAAR) currently comprises a Chair and nine 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 Chair and members are appointed for a period of three years and serve on a part-time basis.

CAAR membership as at 30 June 2006

Chair



Ms Pru Goward, Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (appointed as Chair for three years from 10 May 2006)

Members



Mr Abduljalil Albaf, General Manager, Clubcafé (appointed as a member for three years from 2 June 2006)



Mr Joseph Assaf, Chairman, Ethnic Communications Pty Ltd (reappointed as a member for three years from 7 March 2006)



Mr Syd Giller, National Chairman of the Australia Arab Chamber of Commerce and Industry (reappointed as a member for three years from 7 March 2006)



Dr Fiona Hill, owner and manager, Almanar Consultancy (reappointed as a member for three years from 10 May 2006)



Mr Roland Jabbour,
Chairman, Australian Arabic
Council (reappointed as a
member for three years from
7 March 2006)



Dr Agu Kantsler, Director
Exploration and New
Ventures, Woodside
Energy Ltd (reappointed
as a member for three
years from 10 May 2006)



Dr Glen Simpson, CEO,
Coffey International
Development (appointed
as a member for three years
from 2 June 2006)



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



Mr David Ritchie AO, Deputy
Secretary, Department of
Foreign Affairs and Trade
(ex officio appointment)

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.
- ▶ 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 2005–06



Publicity, Promotion and Media

DELEGATION VISIT TO ARAB COUNTRIES

CAAR delegation visit to Arab countries

The delegation, comprising CAAR members Roland Jabbour and Syd Giller and CAAR Secretariat members Catharine O’Ryan and Janet Teys, visited the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Tunisia and Algeria from 28 March to 10 April 2006.

The purpose of the visit was twofold. The ‘Explore Australia’ teachers’ resource kit was launched in the UAE, Qatar and Kuwait, and workshops on its use were conducted for teachers and administrators. In visiting Algeria and Tunisia for the first time, as part of the Council’s intention to visit each of the Arab League countries, CAAR was able to establish valuable links with those governments and other national organisations.

Qatar

The launch of the ‘Explore Australia’ kit in Qatar by Australian Ambassador Mr Jeremy Bruer was attended by Ministry of Education officials, teachers, students, Australian and local business representatives, and local media.

Kuwait

The official launch by CAAR of the ‘Explore Australia’ kit in Kuwait was attended by Australian Ambassador Dr Ralph King, Education Ministry officials, teachers from private schools, and the media.

The CAAR delegation also met with the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

(Left to right)
Mr Syd Giller, CAAR Member;
Mr Roland Jabbour, CAAR Member;
Dr Ralph King, Australian Ambassador
to Kuwait; Mr Tim Gurry, Ryebuck
Media; Ms Catharine O’Ryan,
Manager, CAAR Secretariat;
Mr Jonathan Faulkner, Second
Secretary, Australian Embassy; in
Kuwait at the launch of the ‘Explore
Australia’ Teachers’ Resource Kit



United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The official launch by Australian Ambassador Mr Jeremy Bruer of the 'Explore Australia' kit in Abu Dhabi was attended by the UAE Minister for Education, HE Dr Hanif Hassan Ali, ministry officials, teachers, school administrators, business representatives and local media.

The CAAR delegation also met with the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The meeting highlighted the close links between Australia and the UAE and provided opportunities to further develop relations between the two countries.

Tunisia

In CAAR's first visit to Tunisia, the delegation met with officials from the National Heritage Institute, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Centre for Export Promotion Exchange (CEPEX), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Culture. Interlocutors were pleased to have the opportunity to meet with the delegation and learn about CAAR's activities of the Council. They welcomed opportunities to establish relations with their Australian counterparts with a view to participating in joint projects and facilitating visits to and from Australia.



CAAR member Syd Giller with Mr Mohamed Ben Mami, Director of the Tunisian National Heritage Institute

Algeria

In its first visit to Algeria, the delegation was joined in Algeria by Mr Jeff Roach, Counsellor Policy/Public Affairs, Australian Embassy, Paris; and Mr Lounes Batata, former Austrade Business Development Manager, Paris. Meetings were held with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Ministry of Professional Training and Development; the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Commerce; and the Algerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The delegation hosted a lunch for PDG International Trading Principal (ITP) and attended a dinner hosted by BHP Billiton.

Discussions with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce and the Algerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry covered issues including CAAR's activities, areas for expanding trade relations between Algeria and Australia beyond the mining sector, Algeria's accession to the WTO, increasing Algerian investment in Australia, and areas for Australian companies and universities to share their expertise.

Senior officials in the Ministry of Professional Training and Development and the Ministry of Education were keen to hear about CAAR's activities, especially the Young Professionals Exchange Program and the 'Explore Australia' teachers' resource kit. Discussions focused on the Australian primary and secondary education systems as well as distance education, teacher training and vocational training.

Business and commercial

No targeted activities were undertaken through the Business and Commercial Sub-Committee during the 2005–06 financial year.

Education

'EXPLORE AUSTRALIA' TEACHERS' RESOURCE KIT



<http://www.ausarabexplore.info/>
CAAR launches 'Explore Australia' in the Middle East

During April 2006, the Council launched the 'Explore Australia' teachers' resource kit in Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The kit provides information and resources on Australia and is designed to supplement the existing curriculum in each of the countries. The kit comprises a teachers' guide, video, interactive CD-ROM, student activities booklet and Internet site.

The launches were accompanied by in-service training workshops across five cities and were enthusiastically received by the participating teachers and academic supervisors. Many praised the Australian initiative, calling it a 'unique product' for the region, and applauded the Australian Government's efforts to enhance relations through education. A total of 3000 kits have been produced and forwarded to education ministries for distribution in the three participating countries.

The official launches were very successful, with local media covering each individual launch in Doha, Kuwait City and Abu Dhabi with enthusiasm. The launches also drew large numbers of education ministry officials, teachers and Australian and local business representatives. The UAE launch was attended by the Minister for

Education, HE Dr Hanif Hassan, who discussed with Ambassador Bruer his keenness to bolster already burgeoning Australian-UAE relations in the field of education. Kuwait's Minister for Education, Dr Adil Tabtabaie, also welcomed the launch, considering the kits a valuable contribution to Kuwaiti curricula.

After two years of cooperation in the development of the kits, the reception upon their production was most gratifying. 'Explore Australia' has helped strengthen ties between CAAR and the governments of Qatar, Kuwait and the UAE, now keen to explore possibilities for similar projects in the future.

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY FLEXIBLE ARABIC ONLINE LANGUAGE TRAINING PROJECT

The Council made a grant payment of \$41,410 to Deakin University for the development of flexible Arabic online language training. The money will go towards the development of online Arabic units to be offered to university students and the broader community in 2007. The learning experience will be interactive, providing participating students with immediate feedback on their work.

Left to right: Mr. Abdel-Hakeem Kasem, Senior Lecturer, School of International and Political Studies, Deakin University; Syd Giller, CAAR member; Professor Joan Beaumont, Dean, Faculty of Arts; and Professor Gary Smith, Head, School of International and Political Studies, Deakin University



Cultural

CAAR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS EXCHANGE PROGRAM

The third phase of the CAAR Young Professionals Exchange Program took place between 11 February and 3 March 2006. Two health professionals from Saudi Arabia participated in the exchange – Mr Abdulaziz Al Furaidan, nurse, Ministry of Health; and Mr Abdulrahman Al Nuwaisiri, pharmacist, Ministry of Health.

Both Mr Al Furaidan and Mr Al Nuwaisiri spent time at the teaching hospitals of La Trobe University, Victoria; Griffith University, Queensland; and the University of Sydney, New South Wales. As all the hospitals have specialist areas in Nursing and Pharmacy, the participants were able to gain valuable experience in Australia from their time at the universities.

At La Trobe University Mr Al Furaidan and Mr Al Nuwaisiri visited the Bendigo and Bundoora campuses where they met staff from the faculties of nursing, pharmacy, physiotherapy and biochemistry. At Griffith University on the Gold Coast they toured the local hospital facilities, the Medical School, the Research Centre for Clinical Innovation, the schools of nursing, dentistry and oral health, and pharmacy.

At the University of Sydney, their program included visits to the Pathology Museum, the Central Clinical School, the Faculty of Health Sciences, the Office of Teaching and Learning in Medicine, and the Faculty of Midwifery and Nursing. They spent time with Saudi students undertaking a Foundation Program at the university and visited the Royal North Shore Hospital, where they met the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and toured the Simulation Centre.



Mr Al Furaidan and Mr Al Nuwaisiri at Darling Harbour, Sydney, NSW

Administrative overview

The Council is supported by a Secretariat 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.

CAAR Secretariat

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

As at 30 June 2006, the Secretariat comprised:

Ms Catharine O’Ryan	Ms Janet Teys
Manager	Desk Officer
CAAR Secretariat	CAAR Secretariat

PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Secretariat maintains a webpage on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website: www.dfat.gov.au/caar.

SPONSORSHIP

The Council did not receive any sponsorship during 2005–06.

MEETINGS

During 2005–06, the Council met on three occasions:

- ▶ 25 August 2005 in Sydney
- ▶ 17 November 2005 in Melbourne
- ▶ 10 June 2006 in Canberra.

REMUNERATION

Eligible members receive a ‘Category 2’ daily fee for Council business at rates determined under the *Remuneration Tribunal Act 1973*, for part-time holders of public offices. Members are also entitled to reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred on Council business.

Appendix A

Council for Australian–Arab Relations (CAAR) Financial Statement 2005–06

ACTIVITIES/EXPENSES	COST (excl GST)
Publicity, Promotion and Media	
CAAR delegation visit to the Middle East – April 2006	\$34 259.34
Sub-total	\$34 259.34
Business and Commercial	
No activities undertaken in 2005–06	
Sub-total	\$0.00
Education	
'Explore Australia' teachers' resource kit	\$333 071.55
Deakin University flexible Arabic online language training project	\$41 410.00
Sub-total	\$374 481.55
Cultural	
Young Professionals Exchange Program	\$14 112.95
Sub-total	\$14 112.95
Administration	
Council meetings	\$11 478.14
Annual Report 2004–05	\$12 817.00
Promotional brochure and strategic plan 2006–09 – initial payment	\$4 999.99
Hyatt function – August 2006 – security deposit	\$4 389.67
Advertising	\$3 563.55
CAAR website maintenance	\$265.00
General administration (travel, official entertainment, stationery etc)	\$10 161.45
Sitting fees (2005–06 sitting fees paid in 2006–07)	\$0
Sub-total	\$47 674.80
TOTAL expenditure	\$470 528.64
Budget allocation	\$500 000.00