

business envoy



Australian businesses honoured at Export Awards

Australia announces commencement
of trade negotiations with
the United Arab Emirates

Deepening two-way trade and
investment links with Southeast Asia

Historic First Nations
international economic meeting

Contents

Minister's Foreword	2
The Australian Export Awards bringing national recognition to business across states and sectors	4
Delivering a more inclusive approach to trade and investment	10
Australia announces trade agreement negotiations with the United Arab Emirates	11
Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040	12
IPEF negotiations in San Francisco	14
APEC: an update on digital trade	15
Australia Awards Short Courses: demonstrating the cutting edge of energy transition	16
Catalysing energy decarbonisation in Laos	16
China International Import Expo signals new era of optimism for Australia-China trade relations	18
Baidam Solutions: training future First Nations cyber leaders	19
An historic week for First Nations economic cooperation	20
Australia's journey towards Net Zero	21
WA promotes high-grade vanadium metal project	22
Practical guidance to help your organisation build a Mutual Recognition Agreement	23
Export Finance Australia hosts the 28th Asian Exim Banks Forum	24
Australia-UK FTA provides pathway to address skills gaps	25
Global Insights	26

Minister's Foreword

Supporting Australia's businesses diversify overseas

As we end 2023, this edition of *Business Envoy* is a celebration of the success of Australian businesses in taking their world-class products and services to global markets, highlighting the Government's role to support these efforts.

I was delighted to announce Care Essentials as the winner of the 2023 Australian Export Awards last month. Care Essentials is a family-owned business that has grown to become a world leading exporter of medical equipment. The quality of finalists this year was exceptional, and they are to be commended for their significant contributions to Australia's economy and the jobs they've helped to create. Collectively they employ over 22,500 people and generated \$12 billion in export earnings.

Trade is a key lever of the Australian economy, and the Albanese Labor Government is focussed on creating new export opportunities for Australian businesses to

assist them to diversify their overseas markets.

Our free trade agreements (FTAs) continue to serve an important role in diversifying Australia's trading relationships. Trade creates well-paid, secure jobs, and increases the living standards for Australians.

On 13 December, the Government announced it will commence negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with the United Arab Emirates, in the new year. A trade deal with the UAE will strengthen our relationship with one of our most important trading and investment partners in the Middle East.



While we weren't able to conclude negotiations on a free trade agreement with the European Union this year, the EU will continue to be an important trading and investment partner.

In November, I travelled to Shanghai, China to attend the sixth China International Import Expo, one of the world's largest trade shows. There was a record number of Australian exhibitors participating in this year's Expo showcasing our world-class goods and services. While in Shanghai, I had the opportunity to engage with senior business leaders from a range of commercial sectors and promote Australian tourism and education services. Trade between Australia and China has delivered significant benefits to both our countries. My visit was another opportunity to advocate for Australian business, including for the full resumption of unimpeded Australian exports to China.

On 16 November, just over a year after negotiations first commenced, I joined my counterparts in San Francisco to announce the substantial conclusion of key agreements under the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF). The Framework is a modern arrangement that supports cooperation and greater economic integration in the Indo-Pacific region. The IPEF outcomes

announced will help support the digital economy, decarbonise our economies, and make our supply chains more resilient. Sustainability and inclusivity are embedded throughout the Framework.

In San Francisco, we also saw significant progress in ensuring First Nations have a seat at the table internationally to discuss their trade and investment interests. I was pleased to be able to co-host an historic APEC Ministerial Dialogue with Indigenous Peoples. It followed the inaugural meeting of the Partnership Council for the Indigenous Peoples Economic and Trade Cooperation Arrangement, of which Australia is a founding member.

In this issue we are continuing to promote an exciting skills exchange initiative under the Australia-United Kingdom FTA, bringing UK professionals for placements with Australian businesses. And from February next year, under the FTA, the UK will lift the age limit from 30 to 35 for Australians applying for a UK working holiday visa under the Youth Mobility scheme. Look out for updates next year on our other key trading partnerships.

The Government is continuing to engage broadly with businesses, civil society, and other stakeholders on our trade policy. I was pleased

to chair the inaugural Trade 2040 Taskforce in November bringing together leaders from across Australia in government, industry, unions, and the community to inform the Government's trade policy agenda. This mix is purposeful – we're putting people with diverse expertise and experience at the centre of our trade policy to make sure Australia is best placed to harness trade opportunities in the decades to come.

We've got an exciting forward work agenda for 2024. The Government remains committed to engaging with business and the broader community as we pursue a trade agenda that delivers for all Australians.

I hope readers have a safe and happy festive season.

Senator The Hon Don Farrell
Minister for Trade and Tourism

Above: Senator the Hon Don Farrell engaging with Chinese trade and investment contacts during the Shanghai CIE

On the cover:

Care Essentials – 61st Australian Export Award and Regional Export winners, celebrating at the awards ceremony at Parliament House on 30 November.

Read about them and all category winners and finalists on page 4



The Australian Export Awards: bringing national recognition to business across states and sectors

61st Australian Export Awards National Finalists

“Promoting export consciousness” was the role cited for the Australian Export Awards program by Trade Minister and Deputy Prime Minister John McEwen, upon its launch in 1963.

Applications were sought Australia-wide from all sections of industry and commerce, and involved the states and territories from the very beginning. The inaugural Australian Export Awards national ceremony was held in Canberra on 27 November that year, and the winners were presented with a pennant to fly over their premises and use in advertising campaigns.

Sixty years on, the awards are still going strong. Since the first national ceremony, the Australian Export Awards have recognised over 2,000 businesses as national finalists including 755 businesses that have gone onto win a national award. Finalists have been assessed on aspects such as the strength of their international growth, and their marketing and financial strategies. Their stories – not just those of the winners, but those of the national finalists – have been a model and inspiration to other Australian exporters.

The Australian Trade and Investment Commission, better known as Austrade, presents the awards in conjunction with the state and territory award program partners.

As a national program, the Australian Export Awards celebrates the achievements of extraordinary Australian exporters,



and the far-reaching impact they have on the nation's economy. The awards process has two stages: firstly with distinction at state award level; then those state finalists progress to national finalists. Each year, a national winner is crowned Australian Exporter of the Year. Category winners are also announced, with all national finalists showcased on the global stage thanks to the reach and influence of Austrade, its state counterparts, and its business and government sponsors. All finalists represent a diverse range of sectors and industries and make a significant contribution to our national economy, creating jobs and opportunities in our cities, regions, and rural areas.

Austrade has supported the Export Awards throughout its iterations as an agency. It now has some 1,200 experts in its 67 offices, in Australia and in established and developing markets. Austrade's work feeds into growing the Australian economy by accelerating the growth of Australian exporters, attracting foreign investment and

stimulating recovery in the visitor economy. This, of course, helps create the conditions for market and export success for Australian businesses.

An important aspect to trade diversification is ensuring that global opportunities are prepared for. Climate change and the green economy, digital transformation, and inclusive trade, along with geopolitical changes, are creating whole new markets with requirements for professionalism and new knowledge. Businesses who export need to be more and more across international standards and rules.

The Australian Government will continue to help world-ready exporting businesses to thrive, with a first principle of consulting and listening to business. The Australian Export Awards categories will continue to shift and adjust to developments and innovation, rewarding the results of foresight, insight, and entrepreneurial spark among businesses of all sizes and types.

Congratulations to the overall winner of the 61st Australian Exporter of the Year, Care Essentials. The prize was awarded by Trade and Tourism Minister Don Farrell at a gala function at Parliament House in Canberra on 30 November.

Based in regional Victoria, the company is a world leading niche exporter of medical devices, most notably locally made warming devices for patients undergoing surgery.

Every state and territory is well represented among the 13 award categories. Just over half are small businesses, and more than a third are led by women, independently or jointly. Read on to learn about all 86

finalists. You can find further details at www.exportawards.gov.au.

The Australian Export Awards Program is made possible through the valued support of state and territory governments, Australia's leading corporations, export facilitators and industry groups, and other Australian Government departments.

Advanced Technologies

Joint WINNER



Audinate (NSW)
Its flagship produce, Dante, is a flexible and scalable solution that allows AV devices to connect to computer networks. Exporting to China, Hong Kong, Germany, the UK and the US.

AVI (WA)
AVI designs, develops and manufactures specialised communication systems and critical components for military, mining, security and space applications.

Chemwatch (Vic)
Chemwatch creates safer workplaces with its comprehensive software solutions for managing chemicals hazards.

Gymaware (ACT)
Velocity Based Training (VBT) solutions including the laser-based device for tracking strength training activities.

Healthcare Logic

(QLD)
SystemView hospital analytics platform creates a common language between staff, executives and health departments to diagnose and solve challenges. Exporting to Ireland, UK, NZ, Canada and UAE.

Pasture-io (Tas)
Helps farmers optimise their pasture growth and livestock performance to enhance farm sustainability and profits. Exporting to Africa, Europe, NZ and the Americas.

Joint WINNER



Prophecy International (SA)
A software success story, providing data integration, analytics and business process automation solutions. Customer base spans North America, Europe and the Asia-Pacific.

Agribusiness, food and beverages

Agtrade (Qld)
A livestock, genetics and food security group developing sustainable export markets for some of Australia's great agricultural resources. Exporting to Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam among others.

Almondco Australia (SA)
Supporting the almond-growing community, processing almond products and exporting to 28 countries including China, India, South Africa, Vietnam, UAE and US

Fremantle Octopus (WA)
Sustainably wild-caught octopus exported to leading restaurants and retailers around the world.

Pacific Sea Urchin Australia (Vic)
Sea urchins are a pest, and exporting sea urchin roe to China, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Europe is doing the environment a service.

Rum Jungle Meat Exports (NT)
The only export-accredited buffalo processor in Australia, processing wild-caught, feral buffalo. Exporting Halal-accredited meat to Halal markets around the world.

WINNER



Sunrice (NSW)
One of Australia's iconic brands, Sunrice is committed to innovative practices in R&D, to maintain Australia's global reputation as a leader in rice products.

True South Seafood (Tas)
A shellfish supplier targeting high-end consumers worldwide with abalone and sea urchin products exported to Europe, Malaysia, Singapore, UAE, UK, US and Vietnam.

Creative industries

Cizzy Bridal (WA)
Affordable bridal wear found in 170 stores worldwide.

EventsAir (Qld)
An all-in-one cloud management platform to power events around the world. The solution of choice for professional conference organisers.



Global Indigenous Management (Vic)

First Nations content for fashion runways, arts and cultural events along with music and film projects. Exporting to Canada, Malaysia, NZ, the Philippines, Samoa and the US.

WINNER



Humanitix (NSW)

A ticket booking platform donating its booking fee profits to children's educational charities, and focused on event accessibility. Exporting to Canada, Fiji, NZ, Singapore, UK and US.

Rising Sun Pictures (SA)

Computer-generated visual effects for feature films and streaming platforms. Partnering with the University of South Australia on accredited university courses.

Terrapin (Tas)

Creates engaging and innovative works for family audiences, exporting performance and installations to theatres and festivals in China, Japan, UK and US.

Ecommerce

Apxium (SA)

An automated financial technology toolkit for accounting firms around the world. Loan administration and risk is also automated. Main clients are large firms in North America and the UK.

Homart Pharmaceuticals (NSW)

Manufactures and markets supplements, skincare products, dairy powder products and pet supplements to markets largely in Asia and the Middle East. The COVID-19 pandemic meant a strategic focus shift to online.

Homebodii (Qld)

Redefining loungewear and sleepwear and collaborating with global brands to captivate a consumer base of celebrities, stylists and influencers. Key export markets are the UAE, UK and US.

Lash Therapy Australia

Created during COVID-19 lockdown by three best friends, this eyelash growth business has grown to now exporting to 140 countries.

WINNER



Scoot Boots (Tas)

Hoof boots for horses, taking equine shoeing into the 21st century. Horses around the world recovering from hoof pathologies or transitioning from iron shoes use them.

Zhivago (WA)

Cruelty-free, luxury womenswear using eco-conscious materials and packaging. Stocked by luxury retailers in Europe, South America, UAE, UK and US.

Emerging Exporters

AusNorth Trading (NT)

A fresh food exporter with a strong focus on NT fruit, vegetables and seafood, capitalising on recent cold storage facilities developed at Darwin Airport.

Booby Tape International (Vic)

The inventor of Booby Tape, designed to lift breasts and hold them in place without a bra. Exporting to more than 60 countries including Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, South Africa.

WINNER



Chronosoft (Qld)

Incident management, risk mitigation and control room operations solutions across many sectors. Establishing a global reputation with plans to expand into markets beyond NZ, UK and US.

Fleet Space Technologies (SA)

"On a mission" to connect Earth, Moon and Mars. The company is revolutionising the mineral exploration, defence and space exploration sectors with technology and connectivity solutions. Key markets include Canada, Ghana, Pakistan and the US.

Geonon (Tas)

Working at the intersection of climate resilience and technology, with artificial intelligence changing the landscape of climate risk assessment. Exporting to key market Thailand and with plans to set up in an innovation hub in Europe.

Infinity Avionics (ACT)

Space-based sensing and processing solutions for spacecraft, including space asset monitoring, space robotics, earth observation, and rover applications. Broadening its customer base beyond Europe, Japan, Lithuania, Taiwan and the US.

Lánluas Consulting

Intelligent business planning, accounting automation and cloud migration solutions helping government, education, community services and corporate organisations.

Premier Metals (WA)

Scrap metal recycling making a meaningful contribution to natural resources conservation. Exporting to India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, UAE and Vietnam.

International Education and Training

Adelaide Consulting Group (SA)

Delivering high-quality training and certification programs in IT service management, cyber security and project management. Exporting to the Asia-Pacific, India, UAE, UK and US.

Alana Kaye College (NT)

Delivers vocational education and training (VET) to a global student cohort. Its international student cohort hails from over 40 countries.

Edith Cowan University (WA)

An established leader in the delivery of quality teaching, its eight schools collectively deliver courses to more than 30,000 students from over 100 countries, such as Bhutan, China, India, Kenya and Sri Lanka.

Melbourne Polytechnic (Vic)

Targets students who are interested in quality Australian training. Commonwealth-accredited courses, and boutique offerings developed by the institute. Recently developed a new partnership with Vietnam.

TAFE Queensland (Qld)

Delivers training to more than 125,000 students in over 60 Queensland locations each year. This includes more than 7,000 international students.

WINNER



UOW Global Enterprises (NSW)

University of Wollongong Global Enterprises offers 200 programs to more than 14,000 students each year. Key export markets include China, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam.

International Health

Avance Clinical CRO (SA)

A contract research organisation for biotech with a proven track record in Australia, New Zealand and North America. Specialises in top-tier clinical trials that yield globally accepted data.

Better Breathing Sport (NSW)

Its oscillating positive expiratory pressure device mimics 15 to 35 mini coughs through resistance and vibration, helping optimise lung function. The devices are sold in more 30 countries.

Linear Clinical Research (WA)

Delivers clinical trials, bridging the gap between the laboratory bench and the bedside. Clients are biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies in China, Denmark, France, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, UK and US.

WINNER



SDI Limited (Vic)

A world leader in specialist dental materials including tooth fillings and tooth whitening products. Export markets include Brazil, Germany, Korea, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Spain, UK, Canada and the US.

Clicksmart (Qld)

Flagship device is the world's first single-handed scalpel blade remover. These devices ensure users stay safe and comply with infection control and workplace regulations. Supplied through a network of 120 distribution partners in over 50 countries.

Manufacturing and Advanced Materials

AW Bell (Vic)

Leading supplier of casting solutions, specialising in investment casting and sand casting. Exporting to Canada, Germany, India, UK and US.

Currawong Engineering (Tas)

Makes and exports engine powertrain systems and electronics for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). Key markets include the US, Estonia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Poland, Taiwan, Turkey, and Vietnam.

Frosty Boy Global (Qld)

Powder-based flavour solutions spanning desserts, beverages, bakery goods, savoury foods, and nutrition products. Exporting to 65 countries including India, Korea, Malaysia, the Middle East, the Philippines, the US and Vietnam.

Gelflex (WA)

Uses automated robotic engineering processes to manufacture contact lenses. Exporting to 35 countries, including India, Israel, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Pharmako Biotechnologies (NSW)

Advanced delivery systems for nutrients and medicines, improving absorption at microscopic and sub-microscopic levels. Exporting to Canada, China, Europe, Asia and the US.

WINNER



REDARC Electronics (SA)

An electronics company powering mobility, discovery and exploration through mobile, off-grid energy and safety management solutions. Shipping products to more than 50 countries, with staff located in five overseas locations.

SPEE3D (NT)

Metal 3D printers and integrated solutions. Clients in the aerospace, defence, automotive and medical sectors. Exporting to Asia, Europe and the US.

Professional Services

Global Study Partners (NSW)

A two-sided international student recruitment platform offering students access to more than 51,000 courses at over 1,000 institutions globally. Exporting to India, Vietnam, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Colombia, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria and Pakistan.

INCITIAS (Vic)

Engineering and commercial services provider facilitating energy transition projects for a global client base. Exporting to Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, the Philippines and Singapore.

KBA Global Education & Migration (NT)

Provides education and migration consultation for international students, with support and guidance so that students can achieve their educational goals. The Philippines and Nepal are key markets.

WINNER



Medical Rescue (Qld)

The busiest international air ambulance service in Australia, providing international aeromedical evacuation services for the Indo-Pacific region. Has expanded operations into the Middle East.

Teron Labs (ACT)

A formally accredited information security testing facility based in Canberra. Vendors from across the globe seek Teron Labs' expertise in testing and evaluation of their information security products.

The Little Bar Cart (WA)

Uniquely designed mobile bar carts service any kind of event, including weddings, corporate and private events. Targeting luxury hotel brands in North America, Asia, Europe and the UAE.



Regional Exporter

Asia Pacific Aircraft Storage (NT)

Provides dedicated aircraft storage, maintenance and part-out services to the region and beyond, in optimum (dry air) conditions. Markets include Hong Kong, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore and the US

WINNER



Care Essentials (Vic)

Flagship product is the Cocoon Warming System, used during surgery to prevent and treat hypothermia and maintain normal body temperature. Exporting to more than 70 countries.

CBH Group

A grain growers' cooperative based in Western Australia (WA). It is the largest grain exporter in Australia, controlled by around 3,500 WA grain-growing businesses. Exporting to China, Mexico, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines and Saudi Arabia.

Leatherwood Bespoke Rosin (NSW)

Australia's only manufacturer of rosin for orchestral stringed instruments. Rosin is a form of resin that helps create friction between the bow hair and strings. Exporting to Austria, China, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, the UK and the US.

Mort and Co (Qld)

The largest Australian-owned lot feeder in the country. It turns over more than 230,000 cattle a year and exports to China, Korea, Taiwan, UAE and the US.

Tasmanian Quality Meats (Tas)

Exports from the heart of Tasmanian lamb country, producing lamb, mutton, offal, skins and veal for a global market. Exporting to the US, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Mexico, Canada and Hong Kong.

Viterra (SA)

One of the largest buyers and exporters of Australian wheat, barley, canola, pulses, sorghum and cotton. Maintains a bulk vessel chartering fleet of 200. Exporting to more than 50 global destinations.

Resources and Energy

Ardexa (ACT)

Secure software services for the Internet of Things (IoT), working with leading companies in renewable energy, Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), water management and transport. Exporting to Austria, France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, the UK and the US.

DSI Underground (NSW)

One of Australia's largest manufacturers of specialist strata reinforcement and support products. Its products help keep the soft and hard rock underground mining and tunnelling sectors safer. Exporting to Botswana, Ghana, Indonesia, NZ, US.

Duratray International (Vic)

World leader in high-efficiency, customised dump bodies for the mining industry's trucks and haulage equipment. There are more than 2,000 Duratray dump bodies operating globally. Exporting to 35 countries including China, Mexico, Canada, US, UK, PNG and South Africa.

Motium (WA)

Expert in the design and manufacture of rugged technologies for business requiring robust and reliable products that will work in harsh environments. Exporting to four continents.

WINNER



Phibion (Qld)

Making tailing dam storage facilities safer, smaller and more sustainable, and helps communities reclaim mined land. Export markets include Bolivia, Brazil, China and Jamaica.

Wilco Technologies (SA)

Ground support for the mining industry, with solutions eliminating risks for miners. A long-term exporter to Indonesia, the company has established a strong presence in Canada and is establishing in South Africa and Botswana.

Small Business

Aceit Sportswear (NSW)

Custom apparel, sportswear merchandise, including design-it-yourself software for clients. Well established supplier to UK bowls clubs, along with its exports to Europe.

Bixelab (ACT)

Helps companies comply with domestic and international standards for their identity and biometric solutions. Offers biometric testing, compliance assessment and certification. Exporting to the UK, Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, the US and NZ.

Clean and Pure (WA)

Natural beauty and skincare products made from low-irritant, non-toxic, Australian-sourced ingredients. Exporting to China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Macau, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the US.

Genics (Qld)

Highly sensitive and effective early pathogen detection and disease prevention solutions for the prawn (shrimp) industry. Clientele in 43 countries including Ecuador, Europe, India, Indonesia and Vietnam.

Ikuntji Artists (NT)

An art centre established by women, with eight artists now represented in international galleries, and an online business selling to the world. Exporting to Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Singapore, Switzerland, UAE, the UK and the US.

Molecule2Market (Vic)

Advancing Australia's contribution to the clinical research and development of innovative medical treatments. Exporting across the US and Asia-Pacific region as well as Europe.

WINNER



MyVenue (SA)

Fast, reliable and rapidly scalable point-of-sale (POS) solutions for sports, entertainment and hospitality venues. Used by more than 70 stadiums, arenas, convention centres, zoos, hotels and cafes across the globe.

Smitten Merino (Tas)

Designs and manufactures clothing and sleepwear from merino wool sourced in Tasmania. Exporting to Canada, UK, US and countries across Northern Europe.

Sustainability

A.H. Beard (NSW)

Quality mattresses and sleep products, made with a commitment to sustainability. The company will soon export a sustainable mattress solution to the world's two largest bedding markets, China and the US.

Air Water Global (SA)

Applying cutting-edge quantum biotechnologies to clean and purify the atmosphere, surfaces and water, eliminating fungi, mould, bacteria, viruses and gases without using chemicals. Exporting to the EU, UK and US.

FLINTpro (ACT)

A software platform that streamlines greenhouse gas accounting for the land sector, integrating the most reliable data from remote sensing, models and ground sources. Export markets include Canada, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, the Philippines and the US.

WINNER



Paradigm Foods (Qld)

Bespoke, quality and sustainable beef and lamb brands exporting to more than 26 markets, including China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, UAE and the US.

Smartstream Technology (WA)

Uses advanced technologies to produce a highly developed range of wastewater and stormwater products. Exporting to Fiji, Indonesia, New Zealand and North America.

SR Portables (Vic)

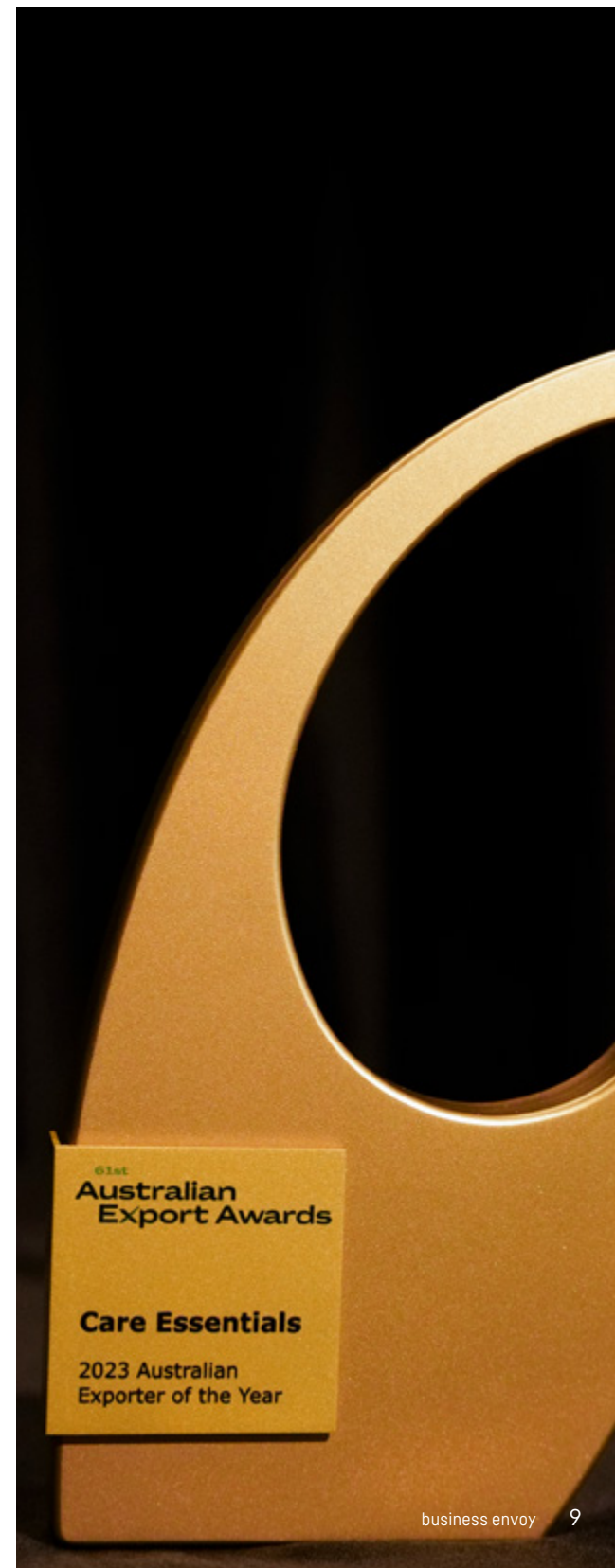
A global leader in energy storage products. Its lithium solar generators range from hand-held to grid-connected products. Users can generate energy anywhere, anytime. Exporting to Bangladesh, Canada, France, India, Kenya, Lebanon, North America, the Pacific Islands, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, UAE and the UK.

Tassal Operations (Tas)

A vertically integrated salmon, seaweed and prawn farmer in Australia, committed to meeting the growing market and customer demand for healthy, sustainable and nutritious food. Exporting to Bangladesh, Brunei, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam and the US.

Above: David Koch, Host of the Australian Export Awards ceremony.

Images by Sean Davey



Delivering a more inclusive approach to trade and investment



Minister for Trade and Tourism, Senator the Hon Don Farrell, chaired the inaugural Trade 2040 Taskforce meeting in Adelaide on 2 November 2023.

The Taskforce brings together government, industry, unions, and community representatives to serve as a key consultation body to progress the government's trade policy agenda.

The inaugural Taskforce meeting focussed on trade diversification, the transition to net zero, Australia's ambitions to become a renewable energy superpower, supply chain resilience and economic security. By bringing together experts from across sectors, the Australian Government aims to work collectively to ensure Australia is best placed to harness trade opportunities globally and to ensure that the benefits of trade are shared by all Australians.

The Taskforce builds on and strengthens the existing consultative processes on Australia's trade policy, strategies, and free trade agreements.

It follows Minister Farrell's second meeting of the Ministerial Council on Trade and Investment (MCTI) with his state and territory

counterparts in Sydney on 20 October 2023.

Established as part of National Cabinet, MCTI provides an opportunity for more coordinated engagement across jurisdictions on Australia's international trade and investment agenda.

Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers agreed to national principles underpinning trade promotion and investment attraction and a calendar of coordinated events. Jurisdictions also agreed to work with the First Nations business sector to develop a *Statement of Intent* about how government will work together to improve trade and investment outcomes for First Nations Australians.

Further information on the Ministerial Council on Trade and Investment is available here: trademinister.gov.au/minister/don-farrell/media-release/communique-second-meeting-ministerial-council-trade-and-investment

Further information on the Trade 2040 Taskforce: dfat.gov.au/trade/trade-and-investment/trade-2040-taskforce

Following a referral from Senator the Hon Don Farrell, Minister for Trade and Tourism, Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Trade and Investment Growth is inquiring into the Australian Government's approach to negotiating trade and investment agreements. Further information on the inquiry is available at aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Joint_Standing_Committee_on_Trade_and_Investment_Growth/Approachtotrade

Above: Associate Secretary, DFAT, Tim Yeend and Minister for Trade and Tourism, Senator the Hon Don Farrell with Trade 2040 Taskforce members [L to R on table: Steven Murphy, Craig Clifford, Craig Emerson, Flavia Tata Nardini, Kate Marks, Ambassador Justin Mohamed, Cathryn Tilmouth, Swati Dave and Paul Fraser]. [Taskforce members not in picture: Michelle Deshong, Michele O'Neil, Meg O'Neill and Fiona Simson].

Australia will commence negotiations on a trade agreement with the United Arab Emirates

The Government has announced its decision to commence negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) – a bilateral free trade agreement – with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the new year.

The UAE is Australia's largest trade and investment partner in the Middle East and a key gateway to the region and beyond, with two-way goods and services trade valued at \$9.26 billion in 2022.

An ambitious Australia-UAE CEPA will reduce or remove tariffs and other barriers that disadvantage our traders. It will promote services trade, including for our education providers and professional services, and opportunities for investment. It will also lay the groundwork for a closer economic partnership that is needed to address shared challenges such as the transition to more sustainable energy.

We welcome written submissions from all interested stakeholders at the DFAT website here: dfat.gov.au/trade/agreements/trade-agreements/ftas-under-consideration/australia-uae-comprehensive-economic-partnership-agreement-cepa.

These are essential for ensuring the Government is informed on interests across business and the broader community and we get the best agreement for Australia.

Further information on the announcement is available at: trademinister.gov.au/minister/don-farrell/media-release/australia-united-arab-emirates-trade-agreement



Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040

Nicholas Moore AO

Since the September launch of his report *Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040*, Special Envoy for Southeast Asia Nicholas Moore AO has continued advocacy to deepen two-way trade and investment links with Southeast Asia.

This month he will visit Malaysia and Thailand to meet with key government and business leaders to discuss our shared growth prospects and opportunities ahead.

At the report's launch, Prime Minister Albanese described the report as a strategy for the most significant upgrade of Australia's economic engagement with ASEAN for a generation.

Favourable demographics, industrialisation, urbanisation and technological advances will transform Southeast Asia into an economic powerhouse in the coming decades. Australia is well-placed with the capabilities, goods, services and capital that can drive mutually beneficial and long-term growth.

A key finding in the report was that there is more Australia can be doing on trade and investment with Southeast Asia. While Australia's trade with the region has grown in nominal terms over the past 20 years, Southeast Asia's share of Australia's total trade has remained constant at around 14 per cent – this is despite the economic growth in the region over this period.

In 2022, Australia's investment stocks in Southeast Asia represented only 3.4 per cent of Australia's total investment overseas. In the past decade, Australia's foreign direct investment in the region has stagnated, while some other countries have substantially increased their investment.

The report examines 10 priority sectors that offer the most potential for growth: agriculture and food, resources, green energy transition, infrastructure, education and skills, visitor economy, healthcare, digital economy, professional and financial services, and creative industries.

In total, the report presents 75 cross-cutting and sector-specific recommendations for government consideration. These will take time to assess and implement.

Mr Moore undertook extensive consultations to inform his report. He met with more than 750 individuals across Southeast Asia and Australia; received around 200 written submissions through a public consultation process; and visited all ASEAN countries (except Myanmar).

Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to

2040

A report for the Australian Government
by Nicholas Moore AO

www.dfat.gov.au/southeastasiaeconomicstrategy



Mr Moore identified four categories of required actions he considered necessary to realise the commercial potential between Australia and Southeast Asia:

- raise awareness – to address a lack of knowledge of markets, sectors, and declining regional literacy in Australia
- remove blockages – to address tariff and non-tariff barriers, including through mutual recognition of qualifications and standards harmonisation, managing risks and enhancing mobility
- build capability – to ensure Australia and the region have the skills and capability to pursue opportunities and address economic challenges
- deepen investment – to promote economic growth and prosperity.

The report seeks to ensure Australia and Southeast Asia are jointly positioned to maximise the potential of our economic ties, from now until 2040, and beyond.

The report is available at dfat.gov.au/southeastasiaeconomicstrategy

As an initial response to the recommendations, Prime Minister Albanese announced three initiatives to help Australia translate Southeast Asia's potential into enduring growth. These go the heart of the report, and represent a first step to advance Australia's ambition to significantly expand commercial links with the region.

Investment deals teams

Delivered jointly by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Austrade and Export Finance Australia, will help increase Australian investment in Southeast Asia



Southeast Asia Business Exchange Program

Led by Austrade to support increased two-way trade between Australia and Southeast Asia

Includes targeted business missions to Southeast Asia in priority sectors, a Southeast Asia trade and investment promotion campaign in Australia and a survey of diaspora business interests in Australia to support new entrants into Southeast Asian markets



Placements and internships pilot program for young professionals

Will help build enduring links between Australian and Southeast Asian businesses



In 2024, ASEAN and Australia will celebrate 50 years of partnership. To commemorate this milestone, a Special Commemorative Summit will be held in Melbourne in March 2024.

IPEF negotiations in San Francisco: forward steps

IPEF

In San Francisco in November, Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) partners reached the substantial conclusion of negotiations on a set of ‘first-of-their kind’ IPEF agreements. IPEF will support Australia’s trade diversification agenda and drive greater employment and inclusive economic growth for all Australians by keeping our supply chains agile, supporting the region’s net-zero transition, and combating corruption and tax evasion.



A previously agreed world-first IPEF Supply Chain Trade and Tourism Agreement, signed by Minister Farrell and IPEF counterparts in San Francisco, will equip Australia and the region to prepare for and respond to future supply chain shocks, and to recover more quickly through flexible planning and forecasting. The IPEF Supply Chain Agreement will accelerate the diversification and production of critical goods, capitalising on Australia’s unique export capabilities.

An IPEF Critical Minerals Dialogue was agreed and will strengthen collaboration in critical minerals supply chains. For Australia, this means using our critical minerals to assist the region in transitioning to clean energy, supporting resilient and sustainable supply chains, and building Australia’s capacity and standing as a renewable energy superpower.

The IPEF Clean Economy Agreement will be the first comprehensive regional agreement on the net zero transition. It will cover a “just transition” on energy, transport, demand-side measures, sustainable finance, technologies, sustainable land, water and oceans management. The IPEF Clean Economy Agreement is the first of its kind to recognise the relationship of Indigenous Peoples to the clean economy, promoting full, effective and meaningful participation.

The IPEF Fair Economy Agreement will be one of the most advanced and comprehensive anti-corruption agreements since the UN Convention Against Corruption was agreed 20 years ago. It will enhance the rule of law and fight corruption and tax evasion, levelling the playing and opening up new investment opportunities for Australian businesses.

Work is ongoing for IPEF’s progressive Trade Agreement, which will elevate and align standards in new and emerging areas, driving trade and investment flows for Australian businesses. A first-of-its kind Inclusivity Chapter will bring Australia’s women, persons with disabilities and Indigenous Peoples into the regional economy. Australian producers and exporters will benefit from more streamlined trading arrangements, reducing the impact of economically damaging non-tariff barriers.

For more information: trademinister.gov.au/minister/don-farrell/media-release/new-regional-agreements-boost-trade-indo-pacific

APEC: an update on digital trade

During the Apec Economic Leaders’ Week in San Francisco in November 2023, the Committee on Trade and Investment and the Digital Economy Steering Group issued a statement encouraging more WTO members to participate in the Joint Statement Initiative (JSI) on e-commerce. The JSI negotiations are an effort to address gaps in global trade rules.



The effects of COVID-19 highlighted and expanded the importance of the digital economy, of accelerating the digital transformation, of bridging digital divides, and heightened the need for global rules governing digital trade.

A recent Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) report on the economic impact of adopting digital trade rules found that intra-regional digital trade contributed USD 2.1 trillion to economies in the APEC region, equivalent to approximately 4.1 percent of regional GDP, and supported more than 60 million jobs in 2018.

For more than 30 years, APEC has had a proud tradition of supporting the work of the World Trade Organization (WTO). APEC expressed its support

for the negotiations underway among 90 WTO members on the Joint Statement Initiative on e-commerce, and encouraged participants to accelerate discussions towards an outcome for the digital economy that is balanced, inclusive and meaningful.

Australia co-convenes the JSI, with Japan and Singapore, and seeks a timely, ambitious outcome – one that puts in place modern digital trade rules for the benefit of workers, consumers and businesses.

For information on the latest APEC activities see

apec2023sf.org

pm.gov.au/media/apec-economic-leaders-meeting



APEC 2023
UNITED STATES

Australia Awards Short Courses: Demonstrating the cutting edge of energy transition

Catalysing energy decarbonisation in Laos

Julian Chin
Chief Coordinating Officer
Mekong Eight Group Ltd.



Julian Chin is principal coordinator of the Mekong Eight Group and participant in the ANU short course. Mekong Eight has been supporting development partners in Laos since 2013, and actively advises the Lao Government on matters pertaining to the energy transition. The group acts as the conduit for funnelling global best practices in engineering, design and project management into the Lao developmental sector.

Australia's universities are showcasing Australian climate change expertise through Australia Awards Short Courses that aim to assist with transitioning the electricity grid to renewable energy.

There is strong desire from international students to learn from Australia's experience. Students undertaking these courses can see first-hand the transition taking place in Australia and meet the companies and technology innovators who are leading this work.

Australian universities take the opportunity to highlight innovative technologies being developed by Australian firms or deployed in Australia by foreign investors. These include firms like NOJA Power, which exports equipment to 105 countries, and Power Ledger which uses blockchain technology to track, trade and trace every kilowatt hour of energy.

Foreign Investors like Neoen, the developer of the original "Big Battery", the Hornsdale Power Reserve in South Australia, say that Australia is at the cutting edge of the energy transition. What they learn here is deployed globally.

Since mid-2021, more than 260 students from Africa, Asia, South America and the Pacific have studied an Australia Awards Climate Change Short Course in Grid Integration of Renewable Energy at the Australian National University.

These short courses have now expanded to cover a wide range of climate change topics from adaptation and resilience through to disaster risk reduction and sustainable mining.

The number of institutions delivering the courses has grown too, and now includes Curtin University, Griffith University and the University of Queensland.

Australian academia and government institutions have long been collaborating through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to address the climate change needs in ASEAN. Home to eight per cent of the world's population (680 million), the ASEAN bloc is on course for a surge in energy demand. To this end, DFAT has been actively driving a number of peer2peer forums aimed at catalysing energy decarbonisation - through enabling greater renewables adoption into the power systems of the region.

In October 2022, DFAT arranged for a series of short courses on climate change held in Vientiane, Laos. Led by the Australian National University (ANU), with support from energy related government institutes, the courses were designed to support ASEAN governments and regulators bolster the human capital required to address the long-term evolution of the regional energy grid.

Laos is highly strategic to the evolution of energy in ASEAN. Positioning itself as the "Battery of Asia" on account of its unparalleled hydropower resources, the landlocked nation successfully executed the first transboundary energy trade in ASEAN (2018-2021), despatching 300 megawatts of renewable energy into Singapore via cross-border interconnections through Thailand and Malaysia.

However, as Laos' energy mix remains heavily weighted on hydropower, the Government of the day is actively pursuing solar and wind resources to be developed in situ.

After decades of regulatory reform, the energy landscape in Laos and greater Indochina is poised for an explosion of development in renewable energy generators, transmission and distribution infrastructure. There is substantial opportunity for deployment of ancillary services required of highly networked energy system. Australia and the innovations from its private sector are superbly positioned to work with ASEAN on this new paradigm of energy interconnectivity.

DFAT's Vientiane post supporting energy initiatives

The Australia Awards short course attended by Julian Chin in Laos was funded through the Partnership for Infrastructure (P4I) program, delivered by ANU. This activity is part of Australian Government support to Laos to build the capacity of government officials and the private sector to accelerate the energy transition. The Australian Embassy, in collaboration with ANU's P4I team, has led the new energy cooperation, Laos-Australia Sustainable Energy Partnership (LASEP), to support the Lao Government's energy priorities, including stability, reliability and profitability, and Laos' economic development.



Examples of Australian cutting-edge innovation: The Australian Capital Territory has achieved 100 per cent renewable electricity. South Australia is the first jurisdiction in the world to average 70 per cent wind and solar PV, while achieving 100 per cent wind and 100 per cent solar at different times. Tasmania is 100 per cent self-sufficient in renewable electricity and was the first Australian jurisdiction to achieve net zero emissions. The Northern Territory will host one of the world's biggest solar farms with the proposed 20-gigawatt solar farm near Tennant Creek and an 800 kilometre overhead transmission line to Darwin.

China International Import Expo signals new era of optimism for Australia-China trade relations



Trade between Australia and China has delivered significant benefits for both countries.

China is Australia's largest trading partner, with two-way goods and services trade at \$299 billion in 2022 and accounting for approximately 25 per cent of Australia's total goods and services exports to the world.

Sustained bilateral engagement has gradually stabilised our trade relationship and has led to several positive trade developments this year.

With the relationship on a more positive trajectory, we have seen renewed optimism for Australian exporters, as evidenced by record attendance at this year's China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai from 5-10 November.

CIIE provided a perfect opportunity to strengthen the Australia-China trading relationship, cemented by the first visit of an Australian Prime Minister to China in seven years. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese was joined by Minister for Trade and Tourism, Don Farrell, with the visit receiving widespread positive media coverage both in China and in Australia.

China and Australia have highly complementary economies, that benefit from strong trade and investment ties. During the visit, Prime Minister Albanese and his counterpart President Xi Jinping welcomed the continuing stabilisation of our bilateral relationship.

The China International Import Expo is one of the world's largest trade shows, and one of the most important platforms for Australian businesses to showcase their goods and services.

Those on the ground described a new era of optimism for Australian exporters looking to re-enter the market, or explore opportunities in China for the first time.

Australia has established an outstanding reputation for its high-quality agricultural produce including meat, seafood, dairy, and a growing range of premium packaged foods and beverages to meet the needs of sophisticated Chinese consumers.

A record 244 Australian companies exhibited at CIIE this year. The event was live-streamed to half a million Chinese consumers, with business outcomes as a direct result of the Expo likely to contribute to further growth in trade over the coming year.

Baidam Solutions: training future First Nations cyber leaders

Baidam Solutions Pty Ltd has taken the Australian cyber security industry by storm since it was established in 2018. The Brisbane-based, Indigenous owned ICT security consultancy provides expertise spanning hardware installations, software licensing and security services.



Baidam has just been recognised as one of Australia's 50 fastest growing technology companies, listed in Deloitte's Tech Fast 50 list for 2023.

Since start-up, Baidam has expanded its workforce and nationwide reach into New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia. It now services federal and state governments, and private enterprises including Qantas, ANZ Bank, Origin Energy, NRMA, AGL, Rio Tinto, BHP, Flight Centre and Wesfarmers.

This year, the multi-award-winning company opened a new First Nations Security Operations Centre (SOC) in Brisbane, the first of its kind anywhere in the world. The SOC provides a space for First Nations people to lead and solve Australia's cyber security issues, while training and providing pathways for Australia's future First Nations cyber leaders. It's called the 'Gundan' meaning 'shield', a term gifted by the Traditional Custodians of Brisbane, the Turrbal and Jagera Peoples.

Baidam is now looking to expand operations internationally and has started exploring offshore markets, with early opportunities for engagement emerging in the Pacific. This has seen Baidam participating in international forums such as the Indigenous Business Sector Group at the Australia-New Zealand Leadership Forum in Wellington, New Zealand in July, and at the World Indigenous Business Forum in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea in October. Baidam is also establishing business partnerships with organisations such as Purple Team Australia, to support the workforce growth that will be needed for expansion.

The Baidam Initiative

Baidam provides a strong social return on investment through the Baidam Initiative. Under the initiative, the consultancy dedicates 52 per cent of profits back to First Nations community outcomes, with a focus on building pathways to high-value IT jobs for First Nations People.

The company has established pathways for accreditation and employment opportunities within its usual business activities, as well as providing funding support and scholarships for First Nations students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). There is a shortfall of cyber skills in Australia, and Baidam's work seeks to address this while simultaneously supporting opportunities for First Nations employment. It's a win-win model.

For further information on Baidam Solutions and the services provided see baidam.com.au.

Opening the Gundan, the First Nations Security Operations Centre, with Minister for Home Affairs and Cyber Security the Hon Clare O'Neil MP (centre) and Baidam Solutions co-founders, Jack Reis (left) and Pip Jenkinson (right).

An Historic Week for First Nations Economic Cooperation

The Indigenous Peoples Economic and Trade Cooperation Arrangement (IPETCA) is a ground-breaking initiative aimed at supporting the economic empowerment of Indigenous Peoples through international trade and investment.



Leah Armstrong

Co-Founder, Chairperson and Board Member, First Australians Capital

Ms Armstrong is Torres Strait Islander and a senior professional with over 25 years' business and not for profit experience. Leah has led the establishment and growth of some of the premier national Indigenous economic organisations. Currently, Leah is leading First Australians Capital and innovating how Indigenous enterprises access capital and support. Leah currently serves on several Boards including a Trustee of The Nature Conservancy (Australia), Reserve Bank of Australia – Chairperson First Nations Advisory Group, Philanthropy Australia (PA) – member of the First Nations Governance Committee and Co-Chair of the First Nation Funders Network.

Damien Barnes

Managing Director, Yimba Legal & Consulting

Mr Barnes is the founder and Managing Director of YIMBA Legal & Consulting. He is a Director of the Supply Nation Board, Chair of Westpac's Indigenous Advisory Council, Member of Westpac's Stakeholder Advisory Council, Chair of Nguluway Design Inc Pty Ltd, a Director of The Aboriginal Housing Office NSW and a Member of UTS' Indigenous Industry 2 Advisory Group, in the Faculty of Design. Damien is a Bidjara man from central QLD with family connection to Woorabinda.



Delegations from founding-member economies New Zealand, Canada, Chinese Taipei and Australia convened for the inaugural IPETCA Partnership Council meeting in San Francisco on 13 November 2023.

The Partnership Council comprises two Indigenous representatives and two government officials from each economy. The Indigenous-led governance arrangements are what makes the IPETCA unique. The arrangement supports the direct participation and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples on matters that affect their communities.

Australia's inaugural Indigenous representatives on the IPETCA Partnership Council, Chairperson of First Australians Capital Ms Leah Armstrong and Managing Director of Yimba Legal and Consulting Mr Damien Barnes, said they were pleased with the outcomes of the first meeting. The Council agreed to prioritise Indigenous interests in

the areas of emerging business support (including finance), climate mitigation and adaptation, and renewable energy.

“The San Francisco meeting was an important opportunity to connect with Indigenous business leaders from other economies,” said Ms Armstrong. “The Council provides advice to governments on areas where collective efforts will have greatest impact.”

The inaugural IPETCA Partnership Council meeting was one of a series of Indigenous trade events that made for an historic week in San Francisco.

Senator the Hon Don Farrell, Minister for Trade and Tourism co-hosted with his counterparts from the United States, Canada and New Zealand a Ministerial Indigenous Trade Dialogue as part of the official APEC program. The first of its kind at ministerial level, the Dialogue included a panel of Indigenous leaders from participating economies, allowing for an authentic exchange on the

challenges and opportunities for Indigenous Peoples in accessing the global trading system.

Australian Ambassador for First Nations People, Mr Justin Mohamed, said he was pleased that the concept of an Indigenous Peoples dialogue on trade was gaining traction. He spoke on the importance of getting meaningful engagement right and on the need for taking a holistic approach to improving outcomes for Indigenous People.

While in San Francisco, Ambassador Mohamed also convened side meetings with United States government agencies and Native American community and business leaders to advance Indigenous trade opportunities and advocate for action on Indigenous intellectual property rights.

These discussions closely followed the bilateral visit to Washington in October 2023 by Prime Minister Albanese and the announcement of a Joint Leaders Statement with US President Biden which committed to grow two-way economic opportunities for Indigenous Peoples.

For more information on IPETCA, visit: niaa.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/indigenous-peoples-economic-and-trade-cooperation-arrangement-ipetca

Above: Delegates at the IPETCA Partnership Council meeting in San Francisco.

Left: Damien Barnes and Leah Armstrong at the APEC Ministerial Dialogue.

Australia's journey towards Net Zero.

Australia means business on climate. We are making change domestically, building support regionally, and championing action globally.

The Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Hon Chris Bowen MP, and Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Senator the Hon Jenny McAllister, attended the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 30 November to 12 December.

Australia's Pavilion at COP28 – at the world's biggest clean energy trade fair – connected Australian industry to international investors and new global markets. At the Pavilion attendees learnt about Australia's green economy and net zero capabilities, as well as opportunities for trade and investment partnerships. For instance, Australia's Green Economy Prospectus provides a snapshot of Australian expertise and capabilities that are transforming our nation. It highlights the industries where Australian exports of goods and services can help our partners succeed in achieving net zero and a green economy. More information can be found here:

globalaustralia.gov.au/industries/green-economy/prospectus.

During COP28, Australia signed up to the Statement on International Public Support for the Clean Energy Transition Partnership (CETP). Australia joined at least 39 countries and institutions, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Fiji, to align international investment



strategies with net zero priorities. Australia is also supporting COP28 host UAE's signature initiative to triple global renewable energy generation capacity and double global average annual energy efficiency improvements by 2030, in the knowledge that renewables are now the cleanest and cheapest form of energy.

These actions reinforce our commitment to build a global net zero economy, while working to align global finance commitments with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

The Australian Government has made a firm commitment to drive Australia's transition to net zero. Australia has enshrined in law its targets of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 43 per cent from 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero by 2050.

Australia has committed over \$40 billion to transform our economy and support our ambition to become a major renewable energy exporter, particularly to our region, including:

- transforming Australia's electricity supply to run mainly on renewables
- supporting the development of new, clean energy industries
- supporting the decarbonisation of existing industries and transport network.

On 28 November, the Government released the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy, delivering on an election commitment to demonstrate leadership by reducing the Australian Public Service's own emissions to net zero by 2030.

WA's high-grade vanadium metal project: "low-risk, high-profit"

Mollie Tracey
Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA Communications (CCIWA)

Vanadium batteries are shaping up to be an important piece of the renewable energy transition puzzle. Australian Vanadium Limited's (AVL) project in Western Australia's mid-west region is well placed to meet growing demand.

Vanadium is primarily used for making metal alloys for high-strength steel production for space vehicles, military aircraft, nuclear reactors etc. It is also critical for vanadium flow batteries (VFBs) for renewable energy storage.

The Australian Vanadium Project (AVP) plans to target markets for both applications. It began development in 2015 and is aiming to commence construction next year, with production targeted for late 2025 or early 2026. The project will create just over 1000 jobs during construction and about 300 during operation.

The project, which involves an open-pit mine near Meekatharra and a processing plant near Geraldton, is profiled on the WA Investments website, which has helped to raise \$500+ million of capital.

A low-risk, high-profit project

AVL CEO Graham Arvidson says it is one of the most advanced vanadium projects being developed in the world.

"The Australian Vanadium Project is located in a tier-1 [low-risk] mining jurisdiction and has a high-grade vanadium resource, suitable for industry-standard processing.

"The project benefits from a supportive regulatory environment and access to well-established infrastructure, including transportation networks and skilled labour.

"We are mindful of skills shortages impacting the construction industry and major projects, and welcome developments in skilled visa migration and the work being undertaken by schools, universities and industry to attract people into the industry."

Merger to unlock material synergies

The company secured a \$49 million grant from the Australian Government in May 2023 to support the project. In September it announced a proposed \$217 million merger with Technology Metals Australia, which would consolidate two adjoining projects across one orebody, unlocking material synergies.

Project to deliver mine and processing

The AVP will potentially produce 11,200 tonnes of vanadium pentoxide over a mine life of at least 25 years. It is also aiming to produce an iron-titanium co-product and, at a separate manufacturing facility, vanadium electrolyte.

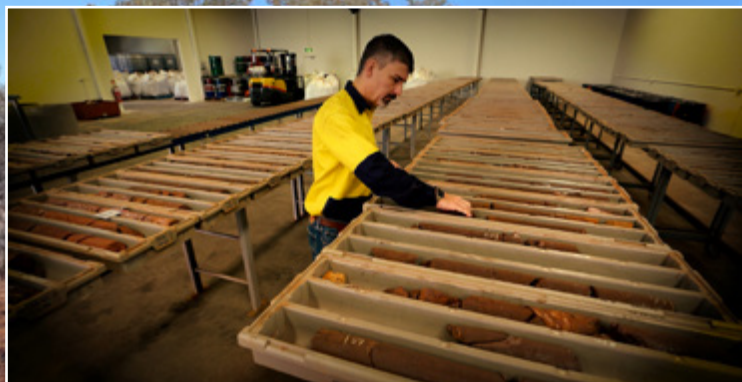
Arvidson says there is potential to increase production and/or the mine life beyond the initial 25 years.

"AVL's 'pit-to-battery' strategy offers Australian downstream processing and manufacturing potential, with associated job creation," he says.

"The vanadium flow batteries are a long duration energy storage technology which is robust, non-flammable and scalable. It is one of the solutions required to enable the renewable energy transition."

This image: Geologist Gemma Lee and CEO Graham Arvidson at the project site.

Below left: Australian Vanadium Limited Chief Operating Officer Todd Richardson examining AVL core.



Practical guidance to help your organisation build a Mutual Recognition Agreement



Professional services peak bodies and regulators seeking practical guidance on the development and implementation of mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) can now turn to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Mutual Recognition Agreements Toolkit.

MRAs support mobility for professional services across the APEC region. Negotiated between professional associations, accreditation bodies and regulators, they streamline professional practice requirements between Australia and counterpart countries. Where MRAs are agreed it is easier for professionals to practise in each other's jurisdictions based on their existing qualifications and licensing. They save time and money through streamlining, enhancing and benefiting APEC economies.

The APEC MRA Toolkit, led and funded by Australia, places information and guidance on the streamlining of the recognition of professional qualifications and licensing processes at your fingertips. It also includes ideas on the use of the digital environment to increase efficiency and transparency.

The APEC MRA Toolkit is based upon the analysis of existing MRAs across APEC forum economies and provides practical guidance around the following topics:

- Understanding mutual recognition: key concepts and definitions
- Approaching MRAs: common barriers and how to overcome them
- Preparing for a MRA: factors to consider in the home economy
- Assessing equivalency of standards: key principles and best practices
- Choosing an instrument: different kinds of agreement
- Building a MRA: the common elements of a MRA
- Negotiating a MRA: process and pointers
- Implementing and reviewing an MRA

The APEC MRA Toolkit is available at:
apec.org/publications/2023/10/mutual-recognition-agreements-toolkit

Professionals from APEC economies who want to find out whether their profession has mutual recognition or similar agreements with licensing bodies overseas can now access an online inventory of all known agreements on the recognition of qualifications and licensing of professionals and skilled service providers.

The APEC Inventory of Mutual Recognition Agreements for Professional Qualifications and Licensure contains details of more than 210 agreements and is regularly updated, making it the most comprehensive database of MRAs across the Asia-Pacific region. The Inventory can be found at aasc.knack.com/mra-inventory



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

Export Finance Australia hosts the 28th Asian Exim Banks Forum

From 20 to 23 November 2023, Australia's export credit agency, Export Finance Australia, hosted the annual Asian Exim Banks Forum (AEBF). AEBF brings together some of the region's largest government-owned export credit agencies (ECAs) which account for approximately AUD 400 billion in financing provided every year, supporting regional trade and investment.

International delegates across 14 ECAs met in Sydney to discuss the latest trends in export finance. Alongside the annual meeting, Export Finance Australia also brought together delegates, government, and industry leaders to discuss global challenges such as the energy transition and data and artificial intelligence in financial services.

Delegates also heard from the Minister for Trade and Tourism, Don Farrell, on lifting investment to address contemporary strategic challenges.

AEBF provided a unique opportunity for Export Finance Australia to demonstrate its commitment to working with partners across the region through its mandates. They include:

- overseas infrastructure development that delivers benefits to Australia, with major projects financed in renewable energy, telecommunications and electric vehicles;
- critical minerals, with approvals in place for over \$1.6 billion in projects that will support the global energy transition; and
- small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with Export Finance Australia supporting SMEs to take on global opportunities and grow through direct support and partnerships with other lenders, including major Australian banks.

Export Finance Australia's relationships with its international counterparts mean it can identify new ways to support exporters, crowd in international finance to support Australian projects, and identify new financing opportunities overseas in sectors such as infrastructure.

These relationships will grow further through the Australian Government's new investment deal teams, which will soon see Export Finance Australia employees located in Southeast Asia to explore and accelerate investment opportunities in clean energy, infrastructure and other important capital projects involving Australian companies in the region.

More information on Export Finance Australia can be found at: exportfinance.gov.au



**28TH Asian Exim
Banks Forum**
Sydney, Australia

Australia-UK FTA provides businesses a pathway to address skills gaps



The Australia-UK Free Trade Agreement (A-UKFTA) is creating new opportunities for professionals from the UK to live and work in Australia. The Innovation and Early Careers Skills Exchange Pilot (IECSEP) is a key mobility initiative that will strengthen business ties through the movement of UK professionals to Australia.

IECSEP provides two new streamlined visa pathways for eligible UK citizens to build international skills and networks while living and working in Australia.

Under the Early Careers stream, tertiary-qualified applicants aged 21 to 45 can work for an Australian employer for up to one year. This is a great opportunity for Australian businesses to access UK professionals, through graduate rotations, intra-corporate transfers, and secondment opportunities.

Under the Innovation stream, highly experienced and skilled UK citizens with demonstrated contributions to innovation can live and work in Australia for up to three years. This pathway has no age limitation and provides a longer timeframe for skilled innovators to deliver projects and develop commercial opportunities for their Australian employers.

Both streams are also open to UK citizens starting new roles in Australia, as well as UK citizens who are currently working in Australia and can meet the participation criteria.

If you want to know more or want to apply, visit dfat.gov.au/aukfta



Global Insights

Dispatches from the diplomatic network and state and territory offices



Osaka: Opportunities are open to partner at Australia's Pavilion at Expo 2025

Trade Minister Don Farrell visited the Expo Association during his visit to Osaka, Japan for the G7 Trade Ministers' Meeting at the end of October 2023.

Manatsu Ichinoki, Deputy Secretary General of the Expo Association, welcomed Minister Farrell and showed him the site of Australia's pavilion for Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai.

Australia is looking forward to a great event to further strengthen economic ties with Japan and maximise trade and investment outcomes across priority sectors.

Australia Pavilion partnership opportunities are open. They provide Australian businesses with a unique opportunity to expand their networks and deepen connections with Japan and the region. Visit expoaustralia.gov.au.

Abuja: Study in Australia Fair makes strong return to Nigeria

In early November 2023, the Australian High Commission in Abuja organised a series of events and seminars in Lagos, Nigeria, culminating in 'Study in Australia Fair' 2023. The event was designed to promote Australian tertiary education opportunities to prospective Nigerian students, stakeholders, and educational institutions.

The events were well received by Australian university representatives and student agents, renewed interest in the market returning since the COVID-19 pandemic. The last Australian education fair held in Nigeria was in 2019.

The event attracted several hundred high-quality prospective students who were able to meet with student agents and university

representatives to discuss their study options in Australia. There were 12 Australian universities directly represented, and five student agencies or pathway providers also in attendance. The event was supported by the Australian Alumni Association of Nigeria, who ran sessions with prospective students.

While Australia is presently a niche destination for Nigerian students, there are opportunities to expand Australia's presence. Nigeria has a young and fast-growing population, as well as a rapidly expanding middle class that is hungry for overseas education opportunities. Now is a great time to cement

Australia's reputation as an education destination of choice in West Africa.

Further Australian education promotion opportunities are planned for Africa in 2024.

Lisbon: Australia and Portugal sign a milestone tax agreement

Australia's Ambassador to Portugal, Indra McCormick and Portugal's Secretary of State for Tax Affairs, Nuno Santos Félix, signed a new tax agreement on 30 November in Lisbon. The treaty represents an important milestone in removing tax barriers, facilitating trade and investment between our two countries, and further strengthening our people-to-people links.

We have seen growing momentum in the bilateral economic relationship in recent years, with two-way investment having more than doubled since 2017 (to €700 million euro per year), and bilateral trade increasing by 55 per cent (to €423 million). Australian companies have interests across Portugal, including in the mining, green energy, hospitality, and tourism sectors, and we are witnessing growing demand for Portuguese products in Australia.

The announcement in 2021 to commence tax treaty negotiations with Portugal reflects the Australian Government's desire to ensure this trend continues and commitment to making it easier for Australian and Portuguese companies to do business.

The new tax treaty will modernise the tax arrangements between Australia and Portugal and help improve the integrity of each of our country's tax systems. It will do so by reducing withholding tax rates on dividends, interest and royalties, which will reduce tax barriers to investment and the cost to business of accessing foreign capital and technology.

Importantly, the new treaty is in line with the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS)



recommendations made by the G20 and the OECD, demonstrating the Government's ongoing commitment to tackling tax avoidance practices and to ensure that Multinationals Pay Their Fair Share of Tax.

Adelaide: Charting the course with Australia's Lobster Industry

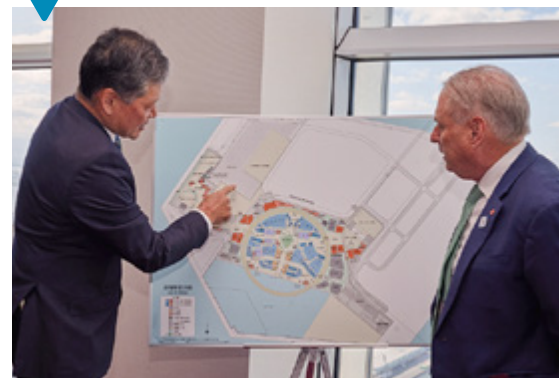
Rock lobster fishing has long been a mainstay of South Australia's economy, generating 1,300 direct and indirect jobs. It contributed \$161 million to the SA economy in 2021 - some 30 percent of gross state seafood product. The industry took a hit Australia-wide throughout COVID - and also following measures by China that disrupted Australian lobster exports from November 2019.

To ease pressures, the South Australian Government recently announced flexible quota arrangements enabling longer Southern Rock Lobster fishing seasons, which better aligns the timing of supply with export market demand. In 2022-23 the State Government reduced licence fees by 50 per cent, to lower operating costs.

DFAT's South Australia State Office has continued to provide advice to industry participants on the Government's approach to trade disputes with China. Nationwide industry consultations also play an important role in delivering a blueprint for the future of lobster production and export across Australia, by shining a light on best practice case studies,

ideas to improve industry efficiency, governance, ESG practices and innovation, and enhancing the industry's capacity to pursue unified approaches to common challenges.

The Federal Government anticipates ongoing partnership with the Australian lobster industry to hear industry voices, support strengthened understanding of political and geostrategic factors impacting the economic landscape and promote positive trade outcomes.



business envoy

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade acknowledges the traditional owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, water and community.

We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders past, present and emerging.

Acknowledgements

Business Envoy, published quarterly, provides the latest insights into Australia's open trade and investment agenda. It has updates on Australian Government policy, industry news, and expert analysis of the latest global market trends and events.

The magazine features news from the Australian Government's global diplomatic network, DFAT's state and territory offices, government agencies working with DFAT on trade and investment, as well as industry, non-profit and academic bodies.

Business Envoy is produced in the Trade and Investment Group of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

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