



## Premier of Western Australia

Our Ref: 60-55859

The Hon Senator Don Farrell  
Minister for Trade and Tourism  
PO Box 6100  
Senate  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

**MINISTER FOR TRADE AND TOURISM**  
DFAT AUSTRALIA

- Reply by Minister within one/two weeks  
 Reply by Adviser/CoS .....

Date  
Received 25 SEP 2023

- No further action  
 Information only  
 Referral to .....

Comments .....

Dear Minister *Don,*

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the development of the Australia-United Arab Emirates (UAE) Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). I acknowledge the Australian Government's effort to include states and territories in this process and look forward to further opportunities to contribute to this Free Trade Agreement under a 'Team Australia' approach. I make this submission on behalf of the Western Australian Government.

The UAE is Western Australia's 15th largest trading partner, with \$2.2 billion of goods traded in 2022-23. Alumina accounted for 50 per cent of the State's exports to the UAE in 2022-23, followed by canola seeds (26%), non-monetary gold (4%), barley (4%), meat (mainly sheep, 3%), gold coin (2%), vegetables (mainly carrots and turnips, 1%) and wheat (1%).

The UAE and Western Australia share similar ambitions to diversify and decarbonise its economy, and there are a range of areas where there is existing and potential collaboration. Western Australia's relationship with the UAE can help the State to progress its economic diversification objectives, as outlined in the State's economic diversification framework, *Diversify WA*. *Diversify WA* provides a blueprint for collaboration between government, industry and the community to create secure, quality jobs, grow and diversify the economy and attract investment.

The Western Australian Government operates a network of investment and trade offices in the State's key trading regions. The Invest and Trade Western Australia global network acts as a 'front door' for investors and exporters, facilitating investment into the State and assisting local industry to access new export markets. In recognition of the importance of the UAE as a gateway into the region, the Western Australian Government established an investment and trade office in Dubai in 2002, which has supported bilateral trade and investment between the UAE and Western Australian businesses. Ms Nashid Chowdhury, Investment and Trade Commissioner for India-Gulf, leads this office with support from three locally engaged staff.

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The Western Australian Government plays a critical role in attracting and supporting foreign trade and investment. I value the opportunity to provide a local perspective on the success of Western Australia's relationship with the UAE, and emerging opportunities afforded by the negotiation of the CEPA.

### **Successes**

The UAE is seen as a commercial hub, and has recently hosted leading international trade shows such as Gulfood, Arab Health, IDEX and the MENA Mining Conference, as well as mega events such as World Expo and COP28, which have received strong interest from Western Australian companies. For example, 30 Western Australian food and beverage companies participated at Gulfood in February 2023 under the Western Australia pavilion and other category sections.

Western Australia and the UAE maintain an important trading relationship in the primary industries sector. The UAE, with its open market access and ease of doing business, acts as a regional food transshipment hub and gateway for agricultural exports into the broader Gulf region, with 60 per cent of imported food re-exported to neighbouring countries.

Western Australia has experienced strong growth in exports of agricultural, fisheries and forestry products to the UAE, with exports totalling \$762 million in 2022-23, above the 5-year average of \$369 million, in part due to growth in canola seed exports.

Fresh produce exports have benefited from air freight availability, with regular direct flights linking the UAE with Perth.

Western Australia and the UAE's energy sectors are in the midst of a transition towards cleaner energy sources, with the UAE's Energy Strategy 2050 aiming to increase the contribution of clean energy in the total energy mix to 50 per cent and reduce the carbon footprint of power generation by 70 per cent, both by 2050. Partnerships are already emerging in this space, with examples such as Masdar, a UAE company who in 2020 made its first investment in Australia after acquiring a stake in the country's second utility-scale waste-to-energy facility, East Rockingham Waste to Energy.

### **Opportunities**

The proposed CEPA is an opportunity to further enhance bilateral relationships with the UAE to support Australia's economic and market diversification, by developing a strong and sustainable pipeline of investment and trade opportunities across a broad range of industries.

#### International education

Enhancing Western Australia's international education relationship with the UAE can further support sector recovery and growth following disruptions to international travel caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Two Western Australian universities already have a presence in the UAE with campuses in Dubai (Murdoch University and Curtin University). Both campuses have strong research capabilities and undergraduate and postgraduate specialisations in agriculture, food security, management and commerce, engineering, health, and information technology, among others. In July 2023, Phoenix Academy in Western Australia hosted 55 students from the UAE Military School in Al Dhaid who

are studying a combination of English language, STEM and leadership studies as part of their six-week visit to Perth. CEPA provides the opportunity to build upon these existing relationships and encourage international students to study in Western Australia.

### Space industries

Space industries is a priority sector under the *Diversify WA* framework. The UAE Space Agency is undertaking a number of ambitious initiatives, including Moon and Mars rover missions and a deep space probe mission to the asteroid belt. There are significant opportunities for bilateral trade and collaboration with the UAE's space industries, leveraging Western Australia's world-leading capabilities in remote operations, automation and ultra-low bandwidth satellite communications to support the UAE's space exploration missions.

### Primary industries

CEPA negotiations could further support the UAE's National Food Security Strategy, which focuses on facilitating global food trade, diversifying food import sources and identifying alternative supply schemes. In particular, consideration of the 5 per cent tariff currently applied to a number of primary industries goods, and further increases in shelf-life limits for red meat, could be considered during negotiations.

Western Australia is well positioned to continue supplying key food items targeted under the UAE's National Food Security Strategy, including grains, pulses, fruit and vegetables – many of which are available counter-seasonally to produce originating from the northern hemisphere.

### Decarbonisation

Western Australia and the UAE currently share a strong energy relationship. As the UAE and Australia move towards a low carbon future together, it will be important to support further collaboration and cooperation in renewable energy. There is scope to build cooperation on climate technology and renewable energy, with more technology-focused research collaboration, to support the food security partnership.

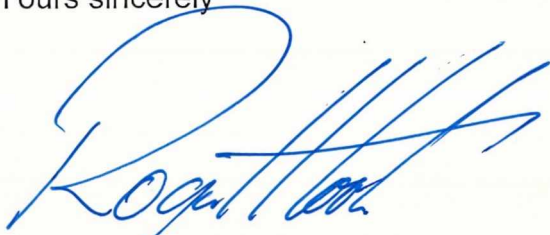
As this transition occurs, there will be opportunities for Western Australian businesses to seek partnerships within the Gulf region, particularly in the areas of battery minerals, renewable technologies, and hydrogen. To this end, Western Australia welcomes investment proposals by the UAE based companies, sovereign funds, green financing sources into the following areas:

- renewable hydrogen production and export projects, facilities and related infrastructure;
- infrastructure for renewable hydrogen refuelling stations
- green ammonia, steel and metal processing facilities that use renewable hydrogen as fuel/feedstock; and
- Western Australian based manufacturing of components for the renewable hydrogen industry such as electrolyzers, wind turbines and fuel cells.

There are also further collaboration opportunities with the UAE, particularly given the UAE's position as a regional hub. Opportunities may also arise through increased investment and people-to-people links.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the negotiation of the CEPA. I look forward to Western Australia continuing its involvement in supporting the implementation and operation of free trade agreements.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Roger Cook', written in a cursive style.

ROGER COOK MLA  
**PREMIER**

19 SEP 2023