

**TRADE AND INVESTMENT MISSION TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND INDIA
THE HONOURABLE JOHN AJAKA MLC
MINISTER FOR AGEING
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY SERVICES
MINISTER FOR THE ILLAWARRA
25 OCTOBER TO 1 NOVEMBER 2014**

POST MISSION REPORT

MISSION PURPOSE

In his capacity as Minister for the Illawarra, Minister Ajaka participated in a mission to the United Arab Emirates and India, with objectives of:

- Attracting trade and investment to NSW and the Illawarra region.
- Promote the Illawarra as a leader in tertiary education and information technology.
- Join the University of Wollongong's business development delegation to the UAE and India.
- Strengthen trade and investment relationships between NSW, the UAE and India.
- Build on intergovernmental relationships between NSW and the UAE.

MISSION DESCRIPTION

The United Arab Emirates is Australia's largest Middle East trading partner. NSW exports comprise \$265.8 million of bilateral trade between NSW and UAE of \$337 million. Minister Ajaka's mission was to explore the potential for trade in services and investment in the Illawarra region, including with the University of Wollongong (UOW), and for intergovernmental collaboration on areas of mutual interest.

India is Australia's fourth largest export market, and the tenth largest international tourist source for NSW, with 4,000 Indian students enrolled in NSW educational institutions. India also features an Information and Communication Technology sector that seeks international opportunities. The Minister's mission in India is to highlight opportunities in NSW and the Illawarra region for tertiary education students, to promote the region as a leading Information Technology and services centre.

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

KEY OUTCOMES

1. **Build on longstanding government relationships and grow our partnerships with the UAE**

The Minister met with senior government officials, including:

- **His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum**
Chairman and CEO, The Emirates Group

Matters of the aviation industry and opportunities for tourism and business markets in NSW were discussed.

- **His Excellency Dr Saeed Al Hassani**
Undersecretary, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Abu Dhabi

The University of Wollongong discussed their commitment to the UAE and opportunities for students from the UAE to study at the UOW campus in Wollongong, NSW.

- **His Excellency Mattar Mohammed Al Tayer**
Chairman of the Board and Executive Director, Roads and Transport Authority, Dubai

Mr Mohammad Obaid Al Mulla

Director, Roads and Transport Authority, Dubai

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was exchanged on behalf of NSW Roads and Maritime Services and the Roads and Transport Authority of Dubai. The MOU establishes cooperation and knowledge exchange on matters including road safety initiatives and expertise in traffic management for major events. Discussions also included the introduction of transport facilities for people with disability in Dubai.

2. Attract investment, trade and business opportunities to NSW and the Illawarra

The Minister met with business leaders, including:

- **Mr Dino Varkey**
Group CEO and Board Member, GEMS Education

The meeting included Mr Dean Gilchrist, Managing Director of SPORTSPRO International who runs a NSW based physical education and training academy whose objective is to deliver tailored physical education programs to schools. Mr Gilchrist is furthering his business internationally with a focus on the Middle East and India. GEMS is a major provider of privately run junior and middle schools and the meeting was instrumental in advancing Mr Gilchrist's objectives for business development in the Middle East.

- **Dr Amer Sharif**
Managing Director, Dubai Healthcare City

The development of a strategic partnership between University of Wollongong and Dubai Healthcare City was discussed. Discussions also centred on the partnership between the University of Wollongong in Dubai and TAHPI (Total Alliance Health Partners International).

- **Dr Ram Behin**
TAHPI (Total Alliance Health Partners International)

Previous recipients of the NSW Premier's Export Awards, with offices in Dubai opened by the Deputy Premier in April 2014. At the meeting, an agreement was signed for the University of Wollongong in Dubai and TAHPI to partner in delivering educational courses in Dubai. The courses are short, certificate-based and focus on health planning and hospital management.

- **Mr Khalid Soliman**
Group Chief Executive Officer, Galadari Brothers Company

Galadari Brothers Company acquired the Baskin Robbins operations in Australia about a year ago and opened its first corporate store in Australia in October 2014. The company also owns the Khaleej Times, an English language newspaper based in Dubai. Students from the University of Wollongong in Dubai are able to gain practical experience in editing the Education page and to benefit from internship programs within the organisation.

3. Promote Illawarra education services and student exchanges between NSW and UAE

The Minister met with and participated in the following events and functions with the University of Wollongong (UOW) and University of Wollongong in Dubai (UOWD)

- **Adam Gilchrist Sports Award Presentation**
 - The sports award marks an extension to UOWD's range of grants that reward academic excellence. The award, open to both undergraduate and postgraduate students, provides the recipient with a 50 per cent waiver on UOWD tuition fees throughout their chosen degree.

- **UOW Fellowship / Alumni Awards**
 - The inaugural UOWD Alumni Awards were launched at the gala dinner. The Minister delivered the keynote address. The University Fellowship confers the highest recognition for service to UOW and the Community.

- **UOWD Postgraduate Graduation Ceremony**
 - Minister Ajaka gave the keynote address at the graduation ceremony, focussing on the outstanding work of UOW and UOWD, the Illawarra region, and the relationship between UOWD and the NSW Government.

- **UOWD Advisory Council meeting**
 - Minister Ajaka attended a meeting of the UOWD Advisory Council, which is a committee of the Board of the University of Wollongong in Dubai, which provides guidance and advice to the board on matters including strategic plans, policies, academic programs and opportunities for growth.

ABU DHABI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

KEY OUTCOMES

1. Build on longstanding government relationships and grow partnerships with the UAE

The Minister met with senior government officials including:

- **His Highness Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan**
Minister of Culture, Youth and Social Development

Promotion of NSW tertiary education sector opportunities for NSW companies to deliver sports education programs within the United Arab Emirates were discussed.

2. Attract investment, trade and business opportunities to NSW and the Illawarra

The Minister met with business leaders, including:

- **Ms Ellecia Saffron**
Chairman, Australian Business Group, Abu Dhabi
- Members of the Australian Business Group

The Australian Business group is an organisation to promote trade and business activities between Australia and Abu Dhabi. A luncheon was held for representatives of Australian businesses and UAE businesses interested in doing business in Australia.

3. Promote sporting and cultural links between NSW and UAE

- **Mr David East**
Chief Executive, Emirates Cricket Board & Abu Dhabi Cricket Club

Discussions were held on sport being a conduit for understanding and cooperation between distinct cultures. Topics also included sport stadiums and the challenges of hosting major events, and collaboration opportunities with the University of Wollongong.

4. Receive an update on regional strategies

The Minister met with Australian Government officials, including:

- **His Excellency Mr Pablo Kang**
Australian Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates

BANGALORE, INDIA

KEY OUTCOMES

1. Promote NSW and the Illawarra as a leading Information Technology and services centre

The Minister met with business leaders, together with the University of Wollongong delegation, including:

- **N S Parthasarathy**
President & Chief Operating Officer, Mindtree Ltd.
- **Mr Anoop George**
General Manager & Country Head – Aust. & NZ, Mindtree Ltd.
- **Mr Ananda Rao Ladi**
Senior Vice President & Head – APAC, Mindtree Ltd.

A tour was conducted of the offices of Mindtree, an IT business that employs 13,000 staff in 14 countries, including an office in Sydney. Opportunities to invest in the Illawarra region were discussed.

2. Promote Illawarra education services and student exchanges between NSW and India

The Minister participated in promotional activities with the University of Wollongong, including:

- **UOW Bradman Scholarship Press Conference**
With Adam Gilchrist AM, and Prof. Paul Wellings CBE

The scholarship, named in honour of the world's greatest-ever cricketer, Sir Donald Bradman, is for an Indian student to study in Australia at UOW. The University has combined with the Bradman Foundation, a charitable trust established in 1987 with the blessing of Sir Donald Bradman to promote cricket as a cultural and sporting force, to offer its first international scholarship for undergraduate study at one of Australia's leading universities.

DELEGATION

The Honourable John Ajaka MLC
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Disability Services
Minister for the Illawarra

Accompanied by:

Mr Adam Zarth
Chief of Staff to Minister Ajaka

Based in United Arab Emirates:

Mr Moin Anwar
NSW Trade and Investment Commissioner for UAE

Based in India:

Mr Rohit Manchandra
NSW Trade and Investment Commissioner for India

University of Wollongong Delegation:

Professor Paul Wellings CBE
Vice Chancellor of the University of Wollongong

Mr Adam Gilchrist AM
University of Wollongong Brand Ambassador

Mr Canio Fierravanti
Director Government Relations, University of Wollongong

Mr Craig Peden
Director - Corporate Relations, University of Wollongong

Note: All costs of the University of Wollongong delegation were met by the University of Wollongong.

ESTIMATED COSTS AND DETAILS OF TRAVEL

Minister	The Hon. John Ajaka MLC
Portfolio	Minister for the Illawarra
Countries visited	United Arab Emirates India
Cities visited	Dubai Abu Dhabi Bangalore
Date of Travel	Departed 25 October 2014 Returned 1 November 2014
Number of accompanying	
(a) Ministerial Staff	(a) One
(b) Government Officials	(b) Nil
(c) Other Delegation	(c) Nil
(d) Media Delegation	(d) Nil
Accompanied by spouse in an official capacity	No
Airfares	
(a) Minister and Ministerial Staff	(a) \$17,855.28
(b) Government Officials	(b) N/A
Accommodation and meals	
(a) Minister and Ministerial Staff	(a) \$7,989.08
(b) Government Officials	(b) N/A
Ministerial hosted hospitality expenses	N/A
Official meetings and hospitality expenses	N/A
Includes Minister, Ministerial Staff & Government Officials, Emirati and Indian business representatives	
Official gift presentation expenses	
(a) Minister and Ministerial Staff	(a) \$225
(b) Government Officials	(b) N/A
Reconnaissance expenses (including accommodation, ground transport, meals and incidental expenses)	N/A
Other expenses	
(a) Ground and surface transport	(a) Nil
(b) Other miscellaneous (including travel documents)	(b) \$396
TOTAL ESTIMATED TRAVEL COSTS	\$26,465.36

APPENDIX

- **Letter from Professor Paul Wellings CBE**
Vice Chancellor, University of Wollongong

5 November 2014

The Hon John Ajaka MLC
Minister for Ageing, Disability Services and Minister for the Illawarra
Parliament House
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister 

On behalf of the University of Wollongong (UOW), I am writing to sincerely thank you for being part of the UOW business development delegation to the United Arab Emirates (UAE)/India last week which also included our Brand Ambassador, Adam Gilchrist AM.

The trip by every measure was extremely successful. We were able to effectively engage with key stakeholders at the most senior levels of government and business. Within this context, you were able to provide a highly respected and valued contribution. Your presence also enabled us to secure important meetings at prominent ministerial levels particularly in the UAE.

At all times you publicly acknowledged the importance of UOW to the Illawarra region and on numerous occasions describing it as 'the jewel in the crown'. In doing so, you were able to advocate the longstanding tradition of support that UOW has enjoyed from successive NSW Governments. Equally, you were also able to articulate the strategic importance of the NSW relationship both from a UAE and Indian perspective.

As you are well aware, The University of Wollongong in Dubai (UOWD) is proud to be NSW's longest and largest presence in Dubai. Established in 1993, UOWD is now recognised as an integral part of Dubai. As an independent UAE institution of higher education, UOWD currently has over 3,500 students representing over 100 nationalities. Our alumni continue to grow and total over 7,000 many of whom hold prominent and influential positions within the UAE. The keynote addresses which you delivered with real sincerity and warmth at the UOWD graduation ceremony and high profile UOWD alumni dinner were certainly well received and appreciated by all those who attended.

In terms of business development, major opportunities have now emerged in key sectors such as transport, infrastructure and health. Of particular note was the real value add you provided in the meeting with a leading Indian based IT company in Bangalore. This has now resulted in the company giving serious consideration to the establishment of a Development Centre at the University's Innovation Campus thereby creating a much needed new source of investment and employment for the Illawarra region. Complementing this was your effective articulation of the importance and value of the NSW/India relationship at a packed press conference in Bangalore to announce the recipient of the annual UOW Bradman Foundation Scholarship.

Professor Paul Wellings CBE
Vice-Chancellor

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As a proud Australian of Lebanese origin and your ability to speak Arabic also ensured that many of our interactions were conducted in a more relaxed and engaging environment.

Thank you again for your significant contribution.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Wellings', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Professor Paul Wellings CBE
Vice-Chancellor

Cc: The Hon Mike Baird MP, Premier of NSW