

# Aussie News

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Courtesy: David McMahon



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION



ABUJA

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## High Commissioner's Message - May 2012

We're delighted at the recent progress of Australia's engagement with Nigeria and the countries of West and Central Africa .

Some highlights for the first half of 2012 include the recent visits of the Prime Minister's Special Envoy, Ms Joanna Hewitt, to Nigeria in April (including a call on President Jonathan) and The Gambia (where we were hosted by Vice President Njie-Saidy) in mid March. We were also very pleased to facilitate the State Visit of the Gabonese President, H.E. Ali Bongo Ondimba, to Australia from 29 March to 3 April 2012 including bilateral discussions with the Australian Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard MP and the Administrator of the Commonwealth, H.E. Prof. Marie Bashir AC CVO.

There has been excellent progress on the delivery of the Australia Awards program to all the countries of our responsibility, as well as good outcomes on the roll-out of AusAID's Australia-Africa Partnerships Facility, particularly relating to public sector reform and mining. I am pleased to note the High Commissioner's Direct Aid Program and Community Grant Scheme has continued to deliver strong benefits to rural and urban communities in the region.

Trade ties and engagement in the mining sectors have accelerated, including with the attendance of the impressive "Team Australia" at Mining Indaba in February 2012 held in Cape Town.

We have had a busy public diplomacy program with the International Women's Day event in Abuja, Anzac ceremonies in both Abuja and Lagos, and of course the Australia Day event in January 2012.

The Australian Government's increasing engagement with West Africa was underlined by its announcement to establish an Embassy in Dakar, Senegal, following the May 2012 Federal Budget. We are also pushing ahead with our UN Security Council campaign and hope to get the support of all our friends in the region in the forthcoming election to be held in UN New York in October 2012.

On the staffing front, we wish Stuart Mooney and Margaret Newman all the best for their new placements, and I want to personally thank them for their valued contribution to promoting relations with our countries of responsibility (articles on them are featured in this newsletter). We warmly welcome Neil Sanderson, Christopher Watkins and Tom Beamish to our High Commission, and we look forward to working with you and all our other partners and friends in the coming months.

With our best wishes  
*Ian McConville, High Commissioner*



**Stuart Mooney**

Stuart Mooney completed his posting in mid-May to join his wife Ilona in Finland after spending two fulfilling years in Nigeria. We will miss Stuart's energy and dedication to his work, not to mention his involvement in an eclectic mix of extracurricular activities, including his guitar skills. We take this opportunity to wish him fond farewell, safe travels and the very best of futures.

## Farewells and welcomes

We bid a sad farewell to Margaret Newman, our Deputy High Commissioner and Consul for over three years. During that time, Margaret (or *Mama* to her staff) has endeared herself to all her friends and colleagues, and we have all enjoyed her sense of humour and friendship. Margaret has successfully presided over the expansion of the mission from three to four diplomats, as well as the appointment of a new Honorary Consul in Lagos. She has also put a major emphasis on training of local staff, and this has been greatly appreciated by all. She has also coped ably, in her capacity as Consul, with the changes and demands of an altered security environment over the past two years. Margaret will be sorely missed, and we wish her the best in her next assignment.



**Margaret Newman**

Neil is the new Consul and Deputy Head of Mission to replace Margaret Newman. Neil's spouse, Sharon, will join him in early June and his daughter and son, Tessa and Connor will visit him from time to time. Neil has prior West African experience, as the Deputy Head of Mission in the Australian High Commission in Accra. Neil is looking forward to meeting up the Australian community (he has already attended the Lagos Anzac commemoration), and is keen to build up our consular network of wardens across our region in the coming months. We wish Neil a warm welcome and a rewarding posting.



**Neil Sanderson**



**Dr Chris Watkins**

Chris took over from Alison Edey in February 2012. Chris has been an enthusiastic addition to the AHC team and is excited about his new assignment in West Africa. He will share political and economic reporting responsibilities for Nigeria with his colleague, Tom Beamish, and additionally coordinate our development assistance program. He will also assume some financial, administrative, consular and passport functions. He is a welcome addition to the team at the AHC and we are sure you will all enjoy dealing with him as you call on us at the AHC. Chris will have reporting and consular responsibilities with a focus on Niger, the Republic of Congo and Gabon.



**Tom Beamish and his partner Jane**

Tom Beamish arrived in Abuja on 18 May to replace Stuart. Tom is looking forward to his new assignment and, in addition to Nigerian political and economic reporting, will be in charge of our public diplomacy agenda (watch this space for our forthcoming Aboriginal Art Exhibition). Tom will also have reporting and consular responsibility for The Gambia, Benin and Cameroon.

## New Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs: Senator the Hon Bob Carr

In March 2012 Senator Bob Carr was appointed by Prime Minister Julia Gillard as Australia's Foreign Minister. He was elected to the Australian Senate to fill a casual Senate vacancy and sworn in to the Senate and Cabinet on March 13, 2012 by Governor-General Quentin Bryce (pictured).

Prior to that, Bob Carr was the longest continuously serving Premier in New South Wales history from 1995 until 2005.

As Premier, he introduced the world's first carbon trading scheme and curbed the clearing of native vegetation as anti-greenhouse measures. He was a member of the International Task Force on Climate

Change convened by Tony Blair, and was made a life member of the Wilderness Society in 2003. He has also received the World Conservation Union International Parks Merit Award for creating 350 new national parks.

Bob Carr has received the Fulbright Distinguished Fellow Award Scholarship. He has served as Honorary Scholar of the Australian American Leadership Dialogue. He is the author of *Thoughtlines* (2002), *What Australia Means to Me* (2003), and *My Reading Life* (2008).

Senator Carr has already shown a strong interest in the humanitarian situation in the Sahel (see article

below), and we look forward to welcoming him to Africa for a visit.



(Photo: Mark Graham)

## Australian assistance to address the escalating food crisis in West Africa



(Photo: CARE/Melanie Brooks)

Senator Bob Carr announced on 30 May 2012 a further allocation of \$10 million to the Sahel response to be provided by UNICEF. This is in addition to support already provided of A\$15 million to the World Food Program (WFP) and UNICEF in Niger, Chad and Mali, and A\$5 million recently allocated to Australian NGOs responding in Niger (including Oxfam, Save the Children, Plan International and CARE). With humanitarian support for the crisis in the Sahel totalling A\$30 million this financial year, Australia is now the fifth largest donor to the crisis.

Senator Carr said in the media release of 19 May, "In the Sahel region of West Africa, up to 16 million people are in need of assistance, including more than one million children at risk of malnutrition. This is a crippling humanitarian crisis which crosses eight national boundaries. The world has a responsibility to help the millions hit hard by the simple lack of food and medical aid."

The Australian Government's efforts to assist Niger in addressing the current food security crisis in Niger have been recognised at the highest levels within the Niger Government. Prime Minister of Niger, H.E. Brigi Rafini, wrote to Prime Minister Julia Gillard in April 2012 applauding the Australian Government's recent contribution to Niger in addressing food shortages across significant segments of the Niger population.

## Australia Day



On 24 January 2012, the Australian High Commission hosted a well-attended Australia Day function at the High Commission's residence. The event was attended by approximately 200 guests, including the Minister of Health, Prof. Onyebuchi Chukwu; Permanent Secretary of MFA, Ambassador Martin Uhomoibhi (pictured above on the dais); Former Foreign Minister Chief Ojo Maduekwe; and Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Mr Ibrahim Lamorde. Other guests included the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, members of the Senate, Heads of Missions and other members of the diplomatic corps, Nigerian government officials, members of various international organisations and the media.

## ANZAC Day

Two Anzac services were held in Nigeria to mark the anniversary of the landing in Gallipoli. The High Commissioner hosted an Anzac Day Dawn service at the residence in Abuja on 25 April, which was attended by members of the diplomatic corps and the Australian and New Zealand communities. Participants included officials of the Nigerian armed forces, and Canadian, British and New Zealand representatives. The Turkish Ambassador delivered a moving reading of Kamal Ataturk's famous speech to the mothers of Australian war dead 'you, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land, they have become our sons as well.' Our thanks go out to all who contributed to the morning.

A week later, our Honorary Consul, Alan Davies, and his spouse Ekeba hosted an Anzac Day function for our growing Australian community in Lagos with over fifty people in attendance. Dave McPherson arranged a moving service in remembrance of those who have served Australia in times of war. Warren Crossing ably represented the New Zealanders in song and presence. Special thanks go to the hosts of the event.

## International Women's Day

In recognition of International Women's Day, the High Commissioner and his wife, Libby, were delighted to host a gathering of distinguished Nigerian and expatriate women. We were honoured that the Nigerian Minister of State I for Foreign Affairs, Prof. Viola Onwuliri, attended on behalf of the First Lady H.E. Dame Patience Jonathan. Other special guests of honour included Mrs Perpetua Uhomoibi, Spouse of the current Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Mrs Ajoke Murtala Muhammed, spouse of former Head of State, the Late General Murtala Muhammed, and Madam Hajiya Fatima Ibrahim Shema, spouse of the Katsina State Governor (all pictured around the Australia Day cake). The First Lady's speech noted the close relations between Australia and Nigeria, cemented during the Guest of Government visit by President Jonathan and Dame Patience to Perth in October 2011.

The First Lady underlined, nevertheless, that much needed to be done to improve the social, economic and political standing of Nigerian women and girls. The First Lady is an inspiration to women with her tireless work through her "Women for Change Initiative".





## Guest of Government Visit: Gabonese President Bongo Ondimba in Australia



**President Bongo Ondimba with his family, Australian High Commissioner Ian McConville and Gabonese officials at Taronga Zoo in Sydney**



The State Visit to Australia of the President of the Republic of Gabon, Ali Bongo Ondimba, and the First Lady, Sylvia Bongo, from 29 March to 3 April provided an excellent opportunity to strengthen the bilateral relationship. A key focus of the visit was the call on Prime Minister Gillard on 29 March at Kiribilli House, Sydney, as well as the State Lunch hosted by the Administrator, H.E. Professor Marie Bashir, at Government House in Canberra. Courtesy calls here also made on the Governor of Western Australia, the Hon Malcolm McCusker AC CVO QC and the Hon Tom Bathurst, Lieutenant Governor of New South Wales. Four senior level Ministers accompanied the President's party, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Emmanuel Issoze-Ngondet; the Minister of Agriculture, Julien Nkoghé Békale; the Minister for Mines, Régis Immongault; and the Minister of Investment Promotion, Magloire Ngambia. Gabon is Australia's third largest trading partner in Africa and there is significant interest from Australian companies in investing in the Gabonese mining sector. The President visited BHP's mining operations at Newman and Port Headland in the Pilbara region during the Western Australian segment of the visit. The Gabonese President also was the Guest of Honour at the Australia Africa Business Council breakfast meeting attended by representatives of over 80 Australian companies. The First Lady was also a very popular visitor, and conducted a busy program including calls on local charities, an Aboriginal Centre in Perth, and a meeting in Sydney with the Australian Global Ambassador for Women and Girls, Penny Williams. One highlight for the Gabon delegation was a visit to the world famous Taronga Zoo in Mosman, Sydney.



**From left: Prof. Marie Bashir, President Bongo Ondimba, First Lady Sylvia Bongo, Senator Harry Jenkins and Sir Nicholas Shehadie at Canberra airport**



**President Ondimba and the First Lady (in blue) with the Hon Tom Bathurst (red tie), his spouse (far right), High Commissioner McConville and Noel Campbell (Chief of Staff to the Governor of New South Wales)**



**Indonesian nurse thanks Australian Army medical staff for post-tsunami assistance in Banda Aceh, Indonesia.**

*(Photo: Australia Defence Force)*

**For further information on Australia's Security Council candidacy, please visit [www.australia-unsc.gov.au](http://www.australia-unsc.gov.au)**

## UNSC bid



- ⇒ Australia: A Strong Record and a Vision for the Future
- ⇒ Beyond Keeping the Peace: involved in global efforts to build and restore peace for more than 60 years
- ⇒ Distinguished record of promoting global disarmament and non-proliferation
- ⇒ Climate Change: Shaping a Strong Global Outcome
- ⇒ Working Towards a Sustainable Future
- ⇒ Disasters: Responding, Rebuilding, Reducing Risk
- ⇒ Working to Promote Stability and Growth
- ⇒ Empowering Women: committed to advancing gender equality both at home and abroad
- ⇒ Committed to the Millennium Development Goals and Beyond: Water and Sanitation, Economic growth, Food Security, Health, Education, Scholarships
- ⇒ Committed to International Law to prevent conflict and restore peace and security
- ⇒ Seeking Human Rights for All
- ⇒ Committed to Effective Global Cooperation
- ⇒ Open and Inclusive: Interfaith Dialogue; Faith and Tolerance; A welcoming home
- ⇒ Reconciliation with First Peoples

**Australia looks forward to the support of its regional friends in the forthcoming election in October 2012 in UN New York.**

**Making a Difference for the Small and Medium Countries of the World**

## ECOWAS accreditation

On 31 January, High Commissioner Ian McConville was accredited as the Permanent Representative of the Government of Australia to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). During the official accreditation ceremony, the High Commissioner discussed with the then President of the ECOWAS Commission, Victor Gbeho, ways in which Australia and ECOWAS are working together to further increase engagement and address the challenges facing the region. This collaboration includes Australia's \$2 million contribution to the ECOWAS disaster risk reduction initiative in 2011-12. This accreditation is a significant step in Australia's efforts to strengthen its relationship with West Africa, and demonstrates firmly the ongoing commitment of Australia and ECOWAS to engage on issues of mutual concern.



**High Commissioner Ian McConville presenting his credentials to (then) President of the ECOWAS Commission, Victor Gbeho, in Abuja on 31 January 2012**

# Australian Development Cooperation



## School desks & Medical Supplies for Ussa, Taraba State

On 16 February 2012, Third Secretary Chris Watkins and Admin/Consular Officer Latonia Dabiri-Mpamugo had the pleasure of commissioning two aid projects in the East of Taraba state, in the community of Ussa, near the Cameroon border. The first project provided school desks, manufactured locally, to three schools which until now have had little or no furniture for students. The second project provided for the renovation of and equipment for a maternal health centre, in line with Australia's particular support for maternal health projects in sub-Saharan Africa.

## School desks for Gbalu, Niger State

On 23 February 2012, Chris Watkins, Research Officer Mirella Mahlstein Ajibade and Emmanuel Affon travelled to Gbalu in Niger State, where Australia has donated school desks to a school which services six communities. Australia has previously donated a hand pump bore-hole to the community, and the beneficiaries put on a magnificent welcome, including traditional dancing and demonstrations of learning by local school children.



Blueprint  
Australian envoy commissions  
water project in Ijabisia



During her official visit to Nigeria, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy, Ms Joanna Hewitt, commissioned a water project in Ijabisia, FCT, on 17 April 2012. Special Envoy Hewitt was accompanied by the Australian High Commissioner Mr Ian McConville and his spouse Libby McCutchan. Our thanks go to all the journalists who joined to cover the ceremony.

## Renovation of Medical Centre in Agojeju-Odo, Kogi State

In Kogi State, approximately 200km from Abuja, High Commissioner Ian McConville and Spouse Libby McCutchan opened a Medical Centre on 14 May 2012. The clinic had been renovated and refurbished through funds from the Direct Aid Program (DAP). The Odo Community expressed their joy and received the high-level guests with a ceremony including a kola nut presentation and dancing.





## Direct Aid Program & Australia Africa Community Grant Scheme

Each year, the Australian High Commission in Abuja provides direct funding to grassroots organisations to support development projects in communities throughout Nigeria and to our other countries of accreditation.

We currently have three grants programs: the Human Rights Small Grants Scheme (HRSGS) managed by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) in consultation with DFAT and Australia's network of Overseas Diplomatic Posts; the small grants Direct Aid Program (DAP) intended for grassroots community groups, small NGOs and individuals involved in not-for-profit development activities; and the AusAID managed Australia Africa Community Grant Scheme (AACGS) providing funding to larger

NGOs whose activities contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and directly address inequality.

We are pleased to note that our DAP budget has increased to A\$260,000 for the 2011-12 financial year, with an additional A\$75,000 one off supplement. With these funds, the High Commission was able to support a total of 28 projects in Nigeria, the Republic of Niger, the Republic of Congo, Cameroon and Benin.

With this year's AACGS resources, the Accra-based AusAID office was able to fund a total of five projects in our countries of accreditation – two in Cameroon, two in The Gambia and one in the Republic of Niger.

The Australian High Commission in Abuja is always looking for worthwhile projects to support and welcomes funding applications from Benin, Cameroon, the Republic of Congo, Gabon, The Gambia, Niger and Nigeria. The AACGS is now fully managed by AusAID, but we still accept proposals which we will pass on to the relevant contact officer in Accra.

**Contact:**  
**DAP Committee**  
**Australian High Commission**  
**Oakland Centre**  
**48 Aguiyi Ironsi Street**  
**Maitama, Abuja - Nigeria**  
**Email: [ahc.abuja@dfat.gov.au](mailto:ahc.abuja@dfat.gov.au)**  
**Tel: +234 (0)803 307 3519**

### DAP project evaluation



During their visit to Gbalu in Niger State (see previous page) DAP committee members Chris Watkins and Mirella Mahlstein Ajibade were able to inspect a water project that was previously funded through DAP. The team was delighted to find the hand water pump in perfect working condition two years after its inception.

### Assistance to Congo-Brazzaville



The Australian Government was quick to join other members of the international community to express its sadness at the disastrous explosion in Brazzaville in the Republic of Congo on 4 March 2012 in the main arms depot. This tragedy resulted in the loss of life of at least 200 people and the injuring and displacement of thousands more.

The Australian Government has recently agreed to fund with a US\$228,000 grant a program run by the UN assisting with capacity building, physical security and stockpile management, weapons marking, community safety and small arms control in the Republic of Congo.

## High Commissioner's visit to Cameroon: 16-23 February 2012



**High Commissioner McConville with Cameroonian Foreign Minister Moukoko Mbonjo**

The High Commissioner's visit to Cameroon from 16-23 February involved a busy program focused on mining, sports outreach and development assistance. One of the high points was the High Commissioner's bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister, Philemon Yang, who had recently attended CHOGM in Perth in October 2011, as well as a separate meeting with the new Foreign Minister, H.E. Pierre Moukoko Mbonjo in Yaoundé on 22 February. The High Commissioner also officiated at the Australian Government funded launch of the APISEV and Coeur d'Afrique football program which involved a joint Press Conference with Cameroon's Ambassador for Sport, Roger Milla (a Cameroonian football legend) and the irrepressible Australian (with Cameroon heritage) Simon Bell.

Given Australia's broadening mining links with Cameroon, the High Commissioner was delighted his visit coincided with a Sundance Resources Delegation. The High Commissioner had useful talks with the new Minister for Mines, Industry and Technological Development, Emmanuel Bonde and the Secretary of State to the Minister of Mines, Dr Fuh Calistus Gentry on 21 February to discuss Australia's support in capacity building (provision of three short course mining awards to Cameroon in 2011, as well as Cameroon participation in mining study tours to Australia). The High Commissioner also inaugurated a water supply Direct Aid project at Buea (near the base of Mt Cameroon) and then presided at the launch of the celebrated Race of Hope dash up Mt Cameroon, with Roger Milla and the Minister for Youth and Civic Education. The High Commissioner subsequently donned on his runners, and made it up and down the mountain as part of the race, involving an ascent of 2500 metres, and a corresponding descent over a gruelling 39km, to arrive at the finish line in 154th place. For the record, the High Commissioner's time was over 8 hours, almost double that of the first place getters!!



**High Commissioner McConville with Roger Milla (right) and Simon Bell (in red)**



**From left to right: High Commissioner Ian McConville receiving ancestral blessings from the Chiefs of Bonavada Community; inaugurating the water supply project at Buea; and posing with two other runners after the Mt Cameroon Race of Hope**

## Australian visitors

### Dr Peter Howarth: 5-9 December 2011



Dr Peter Howarth, Director, Policy Planning Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, visited Lagos and Abuja in December 2011 for a busy bilateral program including calls on the Minister for Trade and Investment, Olusegun Aganga (*pictured*), and the MFA.

**Picture (from left): Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission Engr. Mustafa Bello, Dr Peter Howarth, Trade Minister Olusegun Aganga and High Commissioner McConville**

### The Hon Tim Holding: 14-20 December 2011



**High Commissioner McConville and Tim Holding with the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Senator Matthew Nwagwu, and Senate Leader Victor Ndoma-Egba**

The Hon Tim Holding MP, Shadow Treasury and Shadow Minister for Industry, Victorian State Parliament, conducted a one week visit to Nigeria in December 2011. The Hon Tim Holding, along with the High Commissioner, was warmly received by his Nigerian counterparts in Abuja. A highlight of the visit by the Honourable Member was to the Drill Ranch at Afi, in Cross River State, where Tim was able to view an Australian Government funded Chimpanzee enclosure, along with the High Commissioner and his family, in the breathtaking setting of the Afi Mountain Sanctuary near the border with Cameroon.

## Visit to The Gambia of the Prime Minister's Special Envoy, Ms Joanna Hewitt



**High Commissioner McConville and Special Envoy Hewitt with women beneficiaries developing skills in honey harvesting and vegetable and fruit jam production**

The Prime Minister's Special Envoy to the Gambia, Ms Joanna Hewitt, undertook a productive visit to The Gambia from 12-14 March, accompanied by the High Commissioner. Ms Hewitt was warmly received by the Vice President, Aja Dr Isatou Njie-Saidy, and the then Foreign Minister, Dr Mamadou Tangara (now Minister for Higher Education). The Vice President and the Foreign Minister have recently visited Australia in the context of the CHOGM meeting held in Perth in October 2011. The Gambia and Australia work closely together across the mining and governance sectors, and Australia is delighted to have offered 21 long term awards to Gambian public servants over the period 2010-2012, as well as a number of short course awards for study in Australia. One of the highlights for Ms Hewitt was a visit to the Siffoe Kaffo Farmyard where the Australian Government has donated US\$69,000 to a Community Grants Scheme project.

## Special Envoy Joanna Hewitt's visit to Nigeria



R-L: President Goodluck Jonathan with special envoy of the Australian Prime Minister, Joanna Hewitt, during special envoy's official visit to the president, at the State House, yesterday in Abuja. Photo: Joe Oroye



Ms Hewitt's visit to Nigeria from 14-17 April 2012 provided an excellent follow up to President Jonathan's Guest of Government visit to Australia in conjunction with the Perth CHOGM meeting in October 2011. Ms Hewitt commenced the program with the launch, along with the Attorney General of the Federation, the

Hon Mohammad Bello Adoke SAN, of the Australian Federal Police sponsored Regional Meeting on Transnational Crime (see article below). She then paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister, Olugbenga Ashiru, and Permanent Secretary of MFA, Martin Uhomobhi, before undertaking substantive discussions with President

Goodluck Ebele Jonathan at the State House, Aso Villa (pictured left). Ms Hewitt's program also included the inauguration of a community borehole at the Ijabusu village, which is located in the Federal Capital Territory, approximately two hours drive from Abuja. There was significant media interest in the visit (pictured right).

## EFCC / AFP Regional Training

On 16-18 April the Australian Federal Police (AFP) sponsored the West African Regional Engagement Meeting in Abuja, Nigeria. The meeting was hosted by the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the AFP. Law enforcement officers from Nigeria, United Kingdom, Dutch Police, US FBI, Côte D'Ivoire, Togo,

Benin, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Niger, Sierra Leone, Cameroon and Senegal, as well as Australian police officers based in Pretoria and Australia, participated in the event. The Special Envoy of the Australian Prime Minister, Ms Joanna Hewitt, officially opened the meeting, joined by Mr Mohammed Bello Adoke, the Nigerian Attorney-

General and Minister of Justice, Mr Ibrahim Lamorde, Executive Chairman of the EFCC, and High Commissioner McConville. Following the meeting, a formal Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the EFCC and the AFP to increase law enforcement cooperation between Nigeria, West Africa and Australia.



Federal Agent Richard Stanford APM during the signing of the MoU, flanked by High Commissioner McConville and EFCC Chairman Ibrahim Lamorde

## Australia-Nigeria Trade and Investment Council



Following the signature on 27 October 2011 by President Jonathan and Prime Minister Julia Gillard of the MOU establishing the Australia-Nigeria Trade and Investment Council (ANTIC), there has been steady interest in moving ANTIC to the next stage of its development. A gathering of interested parties, including Nigerian Co-Chair Pascal Dozie, took place at the Residence of the new Australian Honorary Consul in Lagos, Alan Davies, in December 2011. This was followed up by a visit of Mr Hugh Morgan AC, CEO of First Charnock Australia and Australian Co-Chair of ANTIC (pictured on the left with High Commissioner McConville), in May 2012 to Abuja. We look forward to hearing of outcomes from these visits.

### Austrade: a new Trade Commissioner for West Africa

We are delighted to welcome the appointment of Gordon Chakaodza as Austrade's new Trade Commissioner for West Africa. Gordon will be based in Accra and is very keen to build up Australian trade ties with Nigeria and the countries of the region. We look forward to an early visit to Lagos to build up interest in ANTIC and the promotion of trade and investment ties between our two countries.

## Governor Fashola at the Commonwealth Lawyers Association Regional Law Conference

On 19 - 22 April, Australia hosted the Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA) Regional Law Conference in Sydney. Lagos State Governor Fashola gave a widely publicised and well-received keynote address at the opening ceremony. Nigeria was very well represented at the conference, with over 100 delegates participating. The current President of the CLA Council is a leading Nigerian lawyer, Ms Boma Ozobia, with whom the High Commission continues to work closely to help strengthen Australia's relationship with Nigeria's legal community.



**Governor Babatunde Fashola (fifth from left) and the Lagos State delegation in Sydney, Australia. [Picture: Courtesy of Eko Water Buses Ltd.]**

### Lagos State Governor Fashola's visit to Brisbane: 19 April 2012

On 19 April Lagos State Governor Babatunde Fashola travelled to Brisbane, Australia, and met with the Treasurer of Queensland, other senior representatives of the Government of Queensland, and the Chief Executive Officer of Aluminium Boats Australia to advance commercial discussions regarding the large-scale manufacture in Australia and export to Nigeria of ferries (the consortium includes Canadian and US partners). This is an exciting project which addresses directly the acute transportation needs of Lagos. The Australian High Commission is delighted to support the expansion of trade and investment ties between Lagos and Brisbane, and we wish this project every success.

## Regional Diplomacy Training Courses

In 2011 the Australian Government set up the Australia-Africa Partnerships Facility (AAPF) to provide short term technical support to development requests from African partner governments and institutions in niche areas where Australia has expertise. The AAPF works predominantly in mining sector governance, agriculture and food security, and public policy.

Through the AAPF and in collaboration with UniQuest Pty Limited, the Australian Government delivers a series of Diplomacy Training Courses for 32 African countries in the course of 2012. These courses provide participants with a range of tools that increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their Foreign Service practice.



**Mr Erick Jean-Marie Zinsou of the Beninese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in one of the interactive sessions**

Classes draw on, and enhance participant's existing skills in the areas of leadership, communications, and in policy making and delivery for diplomatic contexts.

The first of these Regional Diplomacy Training Courses in 2012 was held in February in Accra, Ghana, with officials

from six African countries, including Nigeria. For the second diplomacy course for francophone African countries in Brisbane in April 2012, the Australian High Commission was able to facilitate the participation of five officials each from the Gabon and Benin Ministries of Foreign Affairs. The Republics of Congo and Niger were among the ten francophone African countries participating in the course organised in Pretoria, South Africa, from 28 May to 22 June 2012. Another Diplomacy Training is scheduled to take place in Lagos, Nigeria, in July 2012, targeting a total of thirty officials from Nigeria, The Gambia and Cameroon. Nairobi, Kenya, will host the last Diplomacy Training in August 2012.

## Mining Study Tours

The Australian Government organises several mining governance study tours through AAPF in 2012, available to officials and representatives from civil society and the private sector from up to 42 countries in Africa.

The program started with a Local Small and Medium Enterprise Procurement Study Tour held in South Africa and Western Australia in March 2012. The purpose was to identify good practice, issues and opportunities to increase the level of capability and competitiveness of SMEs providing goods and services in regions where mining companies have presence. Four Nigerian participants benefited from the study tour, including Engr. N.O. Ajari and Engr. Charles Uka from the Ministry of Mines and Steel Development, Mr Oyebode Joseph Olugbemi representing the Nigerian Chamber of Commerce, and Mr Sunday Awoyemi of KCM Mining Limited (all pictured).

**"I offer our most sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Australian Government, for giving us the recognition to participate in this programme and for their support in making the local procurement study tour to South Africa and Australia a successful one."** - Sunday Awoyemi, Geologist/Procurement Officer, KCM Mining Limited

A second mining governance study tour was held in May 2012, specifically targeting francophone African countries. The tour provided an overview of the mining regulatory and operational framework in Australia, including community relations, environmental issues and regional development. Gabon sent two representatives from the Ministry of Industry and Mines, while five participants came from the Republic of Niger, including three officials from the Ministry of Mines and Industrial Development, and one official each from the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Hydraulics and Environment.



# Mining Development

## Mining scoping tour

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) arranged for a mining scoping mission to Abuja/Nigeria in late February/early March 2012. For two weeks, the team of consultants undertook the scoping of all aspects of the mining industry in Nigeria, met with officials from the Nigerian Government as well as with officials from mining related institutions and companies. The aim of the mission was to identify issues relating to the sector and advise on how best Australia could support the Nigerian Government.



High Commissioner McConville (*middle*) with Isabell von Oertzen (Australia-Africa Partnerships Facility AAPF), Samuel Sarpong (AusAID Program Manager) and Third Secretary Chris Watkins, calling on MFA Permanent Secretary Martin Uhomoibhi to discuss cooperation through the AAPF.

## KCM Mining Limited

KCM Mining Limited, is an Australian-owned mining resource company currently operating in Nigeria and West Africa. KCM Director for Nigeria and sub-Saharan Region Mr Kevin Joseph, explained that along with their owners, Emegio, KCM Mining Limited has commenced, at its main site in Kogi State, the exploration drilling phase of their program, which to date is proving to be very interesting and exceeding initial expectations. KCM Mining Limited is set to complete the drilling program, along with plans to deliver a firm development program and leases by the end of the third quarter of 2012.

KCM Mining Limited is very mindful of its impact in the local communities and continues developing its local content drive, and that of the Federal Government mining parastatals.



**6-9 February 2012  
Cape Town, South Africa**



The Australian Government presence at African Mining Indaba 2012 from 6-9 February was the largest ever, comprising over 30 officials and involving representatives from four Government agencies. We hosted two prominent networking lounges and included participation by 54 Australian companies in the formal Team Australia presence. A highlight of the conference was the Ministers and Ambassadors luncheon which included attendance by 13 mining ministers from Africa, including from Nigeria, Niger, Gabon and the Republic of Congo who were guests of the High Commissioner (*pictured giving a speech at the luncheon*).

## Regional Workshop on Mutual Legal Assistance



*Courtesy of the Australian Attorney-General's Department*

The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department, in cooperation with the Republic of Ghana's Ministry of Justice and Attorney-General's office, organised a regional workshop on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters (22 to 24 November 2011) in Accra. The purpose of the workshop was to improve mutual legal assistance between the participating countries and with other countries around the world against the background of the importance of mutual legal assistance in the fight against transnational crime. The workshop participants included delegates from Australia, Ghana, Cameroon, The Gambia, Mali, Nigeria and Sierra-Leone.

**"The workshop was an opportunity to discover new ideas and practices in other States, discover the best international practices in MLA laws and processes, and develop a strategy for a more enhanced corporation. The implementation of the outcomes would without doubt move international corporation within the region forward. The Workshop was a huge success and all my expectations have been fully met"**

*Akutih Pius Ukeyima Esq., Senior State Counsel, International Criminal Law Division, Mutual Legal Assistance & Extradition Unit, Nigerian Federal Ministry of Justice*



## Australia Awards DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

### Promoting development through education

As part of the Australian Government's increasing engagement in Africa, Australia Awards in Africa (AAA) offer study opportunities at post-graduate level to candidates from eligible African countries. The scholarships are offered at Masters level for up to two years as well as for short professional development courses of up to three months. There are also limited openings for PhD studies in Agriculture-related disciplines.

Australia is committed to developing the capacity and leadership skills of Africans so they can effectively contribute to the development in their home countries. The scholarships play an important role in fostering and sustaining friendship and cooperation between Australia and developing countries. These awards are a central part of the Australian Government's development cooperation program in Africa. By providing people with the knowledge and the skills to promote development in their home country, the program aims to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium

Development Goals in Africa while promoting Australia as an active partner in African development.

The Australian Government offers three types of Awards:

- i. Short Course Awards (SCA): [www.adsafrica.com.au/countryShort.php](http://www.adsafrica.com.au/countryShort.php)
- ii. Australian Leadership Award Fellowships (ALAF)
- iii. Long Terms Awards (LTA) for Masters & PhDs (Agriculture): [www.adsafrica.com.au/scholarship.php](http://www.adsafrica.com.au/scholarship.php)

In the last three years out of the seven countries accredited to the Australian High Commission in Abuja, Nigeria has benefitted the most with a total of 79 students (45 SCA/ALAF, 34 LTA), followed with 21 students each by Cameroon (14 SCA/ALAF, 7 LTA) and The Gambia (21 LTA), Niger with 12 students (SCA/ALAF), Benin with seven students (SCA/ALAF), the Republic of Congo with six students (SCA/ALAF) and Gabon with four students (SCA/ALAF).





# Australian High Commission Internal Capacity Building

## Regional Management Conference (RMC), Port Louis, Mauritius

The three day intensive program (31 October to 2 November 2011) for Middle East and Africa Posts was attended by Senior Administrative Officer Margaret Newman and Accountant Femi Esan. Topics covered local labour law and employment packages; LES responsibilities and new challenges; as well as increasing activities of attached agencies such as AusAID. This conference was a great way to disseminate to the various posts vital information on DFAT management performance and development.



Femi with other participants during the RMC

## LES Leadership and Development Program, Australia



Mirella with Dominique from Mauritius

Research Officer and Aussie News co-editor Mirella Mahlstein Ajibade travelled to Australia to attend the Locally Engaged Staff (LES) Leadership and Development Program (23 October to 4 November 2011). The program consisted of a familiarisation visit of Sydney, a three-day management and leadership course in Mollymook and a series of briefings at the Department (DFAT) in Canberra. The course provided an excellent opportunity to network among LES and to establish links to DFAT staff at headquarters.

## LANA training, Australia

Property Manager and Local Area Network Administrator (LANA) Hakeem Lawal participated in the LANA training course that was offered in Canberra from 18 to 21 July 2011. The training conveyed key concepts of the role of a LANA at post. It also improved Hakeem's ability to search for information required for his duties.



Hakeem (middle) with other LANAs from Nairobi, Dhaka and Warsaw in front of DFAT building in Canberra

## Armoured vehicle training course

Two defensive armoured vehicle training courses were offered in November 2011 in Amman, Jordan, during which our driver Emmanuel Affon and High Commissioner Ian McConville



Emmanuel receiving his certificate

were both subjected to rigorous testing of their driving abilities in dangerous or difficult conditions. This was Emmanuel's first visit out of Nigeria, and he performed very well in a challenging environment. He can now apply the gained skills in the execution of his daily duties.

## Honorary Consulate in Lagos

We are delighted at the re-establishment of the Lagos Honorary Consulate. Australia's new Honorary Consul, Mr Alan Davies, was appointed in July 2011, and has already begun connecting with the Australian expatriate and business community. In early April 2012, Mr Davies spoke at the launch of Australian company Bisley Work Wear at the Tri-continental Hotel in Lagos, welcoming the fact that an Australian company was enhancing Health and Safety in the workplace in Nigeria with their range of Work Wear. Mr Davies has also hosted a highly successful Anzac Day service at his residence, attended by over fifty Australian and New Zealander expatriates, as well as a post-CHOGM reunion in December 2011. Mr Davies is a distinguished architect, and a partner at the Lagos-based firm James Cubitt Architects. He and his family have lived in Lagos for thirty two years.



AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE in Lagos  
8th Floor Union Marble House  
1 Alfred Rewane Road, formerly Kingsway,  
Falomo, Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria.

Tel: +234 1 8179492  
Fax: +234 1 8935480  
Email: [alan.davies@australian-consulate.com](mailto:alan.davies@australian-consulate.com)

**Picture (from right): High Commissioner Ian McConville, Honorary Consul Alan Davies, Nigerian High Commissioner to Australia Amb. Ayo Olukanni, Mr Muyiwa Omololu (CEO Eko Water Buses Ltd) and another guest during the CHOGM reunion in December 2011.**



**Painting:**  
**H.J. Wedge, Star Spirit, 1997**

## Touring Art Exhibition: *Message Stick - Indigenous Identity in Urban Australia*

**artbank**  
national contemporary art rental

The Australian Government in conjunction with its arts support program, Artbank, is presenting an exciting new touring art exhibition illustrating the strength and vibrancy of contemporary Australian Art. The Australian High Commission is delighted that the Transcorp Hilton Hotel has agreed to be the major sponsor for the event in Abuja. The exhibition, titled *Message Stick: Indigenous Identity in Urban Australia*, will be shown in the main foyer of the Transcorp Hilton from 10 August 2012 for a two week period. The exhibition, held in collaboration with the National Gallery of Art, Nigeria, is also generously sponsored by DeltaAfrik, an Australian-Nigerian Engineering company (Worley Parsons) based in Lagos.

Drawn from the active contemporary urban art scene in Australia, the exhibition features a selection of significant works by eleven Indigenous artists living in metropolitan areas or large regional towns throughout Australia, offering unique and moving political and social perspectives of contemporary Australian history. Strongly influenced by the experiences of the stolen generations, the striking images – at their heart – have the grieving, yet optimistic stories of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.

We are equally pleased that we will be able to display a selection of pictures by young Abuja-based photographers side-by-side with the *Message Stick* exhibition. These pictures are the result of an Australian Government-funded photography workshop conducted by Australian film-producer Jolyon Hoff in May 2012.

**Australia: embracing and celebrating the world's oldest living culture**

## Visa Information in Nigeria

Australia, as a multicultural and open country, welcomes people from all places to either visit or make Australia their home for good. In either case, if you are not an Australian citizen, you must remember to obtain a visa before you travel. In Nigeria, the High Commission does not accept ordinary visa applications for travel to Australia. Those wishing to travel to Australia should lodge applications for visas directly with VFS Global, with which the High Commission has entered into an agreement to assist with the facilitation of visa applications.

VFS is located in **Abuja** at: and in Ikeja, **Lagos**, at:

More information on VFS Nigeria:

**Plot Number 42  
Door No 38  
Lobito Crescent  
Wuse 2, Abuja**

**No 16, Billings Way  
Ground and 1st Floor  
Oregon Industrial Area  
Ikeja, Lagos**

website: [www.vfsglobal.com/australia/nigeria/](http://www.vfsglobal.com/australia/nigeria/)  
via email: [info.ausng@vfshelpline.com](mailto:info.ausng@vfshelpline.com)  
by phone: 09 8701519

VFS is open between 0800 and 1500 Monday to Friday.

Visa applications from Nigeria, Benin and The Gambia are being processed by the Australian High Commission in Pretoria, South Africa (more info: [www.southafrica.highcommission.gov.au](http://www.southafrica.highcommission.gov.au)). Visa applications from Cameroon, Gabon, Niger and the Republic of Congo are being processed by the Australian High Commission in Nairobi, Kenya (more info: [www.kenya.highcommission.gov.au](http://www.kenya.highcommission.gov.au)).



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## Consular Information

Registering is **EASY** via the 'smartraveller' website at <http://smartraveller.gov.au>

An important function of the High Commission is to protect the legitimate interests of Australians overseas and to assist in ensuring their welfare. As such we are committed to providing effective, prompt and courteous consular services, delivered in an equitable way, to all Australians requiring them. In order for us to help Australians, it is important that they register with us so

that we can contact them in an emergency.

Through the smartraveller website Australians can also find information about travelling overseas and on the consular services the High Commission can provide. Importantly, there is also a link to the travel advisories for Nigeria and the other countries for which we are responsible. These advisories are

updated regularly, so we suggest that those interested in receiving updates subscribe, again via the smartraveller website, to receive advice as to when these are amended. If consular assistance is required, we recommend in the first instance calling the **dedicated 24-hour Consular Emergency Centre hotline**, which can be reached at **+61 2 6261 3305**.

# Australian High Commission Team on Harmony Day – 21 March 2012



*Back row (from left to right):*

Femi Esan, Mirella Mahlstein Ajibade, Latoria Dabiri-Mpamugo, Margaret Newman, Emmanuel Affon, Ian McConville, David Davou, Alfred Okesokun, Patricia Okeji, Denise Roads, Victoria Adedeji, Hakeem Lawal

*Front row (from left to right):*

Stuart Mooney, Chris Watkins, Jane Millington, Jane Heatherington, Sandy Costagliola

**Our website has received a face-lift!**  
**Check it out on**  
**[www.nigeria.highcommission.gov.au](http://www.nigeria.highcommission.gov.au)**



Australian Heads of Mission in Africa demonstrating their “Team Australia” approach at the *Message Stick* exhibition during Mining Indaba in Cape Town.

*From second left to right:* Lisa Filipetto, Addis Ababa; Matthew Neuhaus, Harare; Ann Harrap, Pretoria; Billy Williams, Accra; Geoff Tooth, Nairobi; Sandra Vegting, Port Louis; Ian McConville, Abuja; Greg Hull, Senior Trade Commissioner for Africa



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