

Aussie News

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AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION



ABUJA

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High Commissioner's End of Year Message

Very good progress has continued with Australia's engagement in the West Africa region. A key component of this is the expansion of Australia's development assistance program including in relation to scholarships, mining collaboration and public sector reform.

We were pleased to conduct bilateral programs to the Republics of Niger and Benin in November, in concert with our regional AusAID coordinator, Sarah Willis and colleagues from the High Commission. Other useful visits included my return to Australia to attend the Africa Mining DownUnder Conference in Perth in early September (with participation by the Nigerian and Niger Ministers for Mining), and the attendance by a number of Australian High Commissioners from Africa at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth in October (strong and active delegations were present from Nigeria, Cameroon and The Gambia).

Bilateral visits to Australia took on a new dimension with the visit of the Nigerian Minister for Trade and Investment, Olusegun Aganga, to Perth in September, and the Guest of Government visit of President Goodluck Jonathan to Australia, along with four other key Nigerian Ministers, to Australia prior to CHOGM.

Good progress has been maintained with Australian mining projects in Cameroon and Congo (Sundance), Gabon (BHP), and Middle Island Resources and Cape Lambert (Niger). We are working closely with all the countries of our region to promote the "Mining for Development" Centre of Excellence and to offer training opportunities to government officials in the mining ministries.

We were delighted to confirm the appointment of an Honorary Consul in Lagos, and planning is underway for a trade delegation from Australia to Nigeria in early 2012 and a forthcoming Aboriginal Art Exhibition in Lagos in 2012. We have also welcomed a new member to our Australian High Commission team, Sandy Costagliola.

We wish you all a festive and safe end of year period, and look forward to increasing our engagement with West Africa across a range of exciting new areas in 2012.

With our best wishes

Ian McConville

Meet the A-Team (Abuja Team)



Back row from left to right:

Stuart Mooney (Second Secretary), Margaret Newman (Senior Administrative Officer & Deputy High Commissioner), Hakeem Lawal (Property Manager), Mirella Mahlstein Ajibade (Research Officer), Femi Esan (Accountant/PCO), Jane Heatherington (Personal Assistant to the High Commissioner), Alfred Okesokun (Driver), Sandy Costagliola (Administrative Officer).

Front row from left to right:

Patricia Okeji (Senior Accountant), Ian McConville (High Commissioner), Latonia Dabiri-Mpamugo (Administrative/Consular Officer)

Absent from picture:

Alison Edge (Second Secretary), David Davou (Driver of the High Commissioner), Emmanuel Affon (Driver)

Farewell to Second Secretary Alison Edge



Alison Edge, Second Secretary, on a visit to a DAP project site in Plateau state in 2010.

In February 2012, a long-standing member of the High Commission staff, Alison Edge, will finish her term as Second Secretary and Vice-Consul. During her three years in Nigeria, Alison has worked on a broad range of issues, including small and community grants, political and economic issues, and passport and visas. Her dedication and hard work to advance Australia's interests in Nigeria and the High Commission's other countries of responsibility has been widely recognised. She will be missed sorely by her colleagues in Abuja, and we wish her the best of luck on her return to Australia.

Remembrance Day

The High Commissioner and his family attended the Remembrance Day ceremony organised by the British Defence Attaché, Colonel James Hall, on Sunday 13 November at Zungeru, 50km from Minna in Niger State. In attendance were the British High Commissioner, H.E Andrew Lloyd, his spouse and members of the British High Commission and expatriate community. An Australian is among those buried at the cemetery, which is located on a hilltop overlooking the Kaduna River.



Picture: Courtesy of Col. James Hall

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)

Perth, 26 - 28 October 2011



CHOGM 2011
PERTH, AUSTRALIA

High Commissioner McConville with senior officials of The Gambian CHOGM delegation, which included former Foreign Minister and current Head of the Civil Service Mr Jammeh; Representatives from the Office of the President, Mr Jallow and Mr Njie; and Mr Jumura from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



One of the high points for our engagement with the countries of West Africa since June 2011 was the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) from 28 to 30 October in Perth. This was the largest multilateral meeting held in Australia in 2011 and involved Heads of State and Ministers from over 53 Commonwealth countries. I was fortunate to attend this meeting, welcoming and working with high level delegations from Nigeria, The Gambia and Cameroon. This enabled us to advance a number of bilateral objectives with all three of these countries of our accreditation.

Cameroon's delegation was headed by Prime Minister Philemon Yang and included Minister Delegate in

Charge of Relations with the Commonwealth, Dr Joseph Dion Ngute. The High Commissioner had an opportunity to meet briefly with the Prime Minister, as well as discuss a broad range of bilateral issues with Dr Joseph Ngute at a mining breakfast hosted by Australia's Foreign Minister, Kevin Rudd, in company with the Chairman of Sundance Resources, George Jones.

The Gambian delegation, led by H.E Vice President Aja Dr Isatou Njie-Saidy, also included Foreign Minister Dr Mamadou Tangara as well as Head of the Civil Service Commission. High Commissioner had a good opportunity to discuss the Australia Awards program, as well as other areas of future col-

laboration in public sector reform and volunteers abroad.

The Nigerian presence at CHOGM was significant. Apart from its key participation in the Heads of State outcome, a highlight was President Jonathan's attendance at the announcement of Prime Minister Gillard's polio initiative with the pledging of \$50 million to combat the polio virus. Also in attendance at this event were Pakistan's Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani, Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper and British Prime Minister David Cameron. Nigeria is one of four countries that will benefit from Australia's grant of \$50 million. Internationally renowned Nigeiran Minister for Finance and Coordinator of the country's National Economic Management Team, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, featured as a panelist in the Prime Minister's "Empowerment of Women" initiative. Dr Okonjo-Iweala's stimulating presentation was warmly received by the 400 (mostly) women present at the dinner and discussion. President Jonathan was a special guest at the personal invitation of the Australian Prime Minister on this occasion.

DID YOU KNOW?

About a third of the world's population lives in a member country of the Commonwealth.



Official CHOGM photo of all Heads of State present

Guest of Government visit to Australia

We were delighted to host President Goodluck Jonathan to a bilateral visit to Perth from 25-27 October, in the lead up to the CHOGM meeting. One of the highlights was the fruitful discussions between Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard and President Jonathan, as well as the State Dinner hosted by the Governor General in honour of President Jonathan. A key outcome was the agreement to establish an **Australia-Nigeria Trade and Investment Council**, signed by the Prime Minister and the President. The impressive Nigerian delegation, including Ministers for Finance, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala; Minister for Petroleum, Diezani Alison-Madueke; Minister for Trade and Investment, Olusegun Aganga; Minister for Mining, Mohammed Sada, as well as the Governors for Kaduna, Akwa Ibom, and Ogun States, made a significant impact in Perth, and a number of trade deals were progressed. Trade continues to flourish, and Nigeria has moved up to be Australia's second largest trading partner in Africa with an impressive total of \$1.3 billion, mostly in crude exports to Australia.



High Commissioner McConville with Prime Minister Gillard, President Jonathan, Trade and Investment Minister Aganga, Nigerian High Commissioner Olukanni, and Council patrons Pascal Dozie, Chair of the Commonwealth Business Council, and leading Australian corporate identity Hugh Morgan.

Australian Development Cooperation Programs

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

We currently have three small 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 Direct Aid Program (DAP) administered by the High Commission; and the Australia Africa Community Grant Scheme (AACGS), now fully managed by AusAID.

We are pleased to note that the DAP budget has been increased from AUD220,000 last year to AUD250,000 for the 2011-12 financial year, which will allow us to support more projects.

Thus far, the High Commission has disbursed approx. AUD150,000 to 14 projects in Nigeria, the Republic of Niger and Benin.

Our project funding is a small part of the bilateral relationship between Australia and our countries of accreditation, but it is amongst the most personally rewarding work that we do. The Australian High Commission in Abuja is always looking for new projects to support and welcomes funding applications

from Benin, Cameroon, Gabon, The Gambia, Niger, Nigeria and the Republic of Congo. The AACGS is now fully managed by AusAID, but we still accept proposals which we will pass on to the relevant contact officers.

DAP Contact:

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Mail: Australian High Commission

Oakland Centre

48 Aguiyi Ironsi Street

Maitama, Abuja

Nigeria

DID YOU KNOW?

Australia's aid program has doubled in the past five years and will double again by 2015 – one of the fastest-growing aid programs in the OECD.

Australians are the second highest private donors to non-government organisations in the world.

Australian aid to Africa has increased 200 per cent in the last five years and will continue to increase.

Australia is committed to providing 0.15 per cent of Gross National Income to least developed countries.

Australia is a top ten contributor to WFP, WHO, UNICEF and CERF.

An innovative DAP project was to provide funding to the Human Rights Commission for their weekly appearance in the radio show 'Brekete', compered by the renowned Human Rights Advocate and Campaigner, Ahmad Isah (picture, courtesy of National Human Rights Commission). High Commissioner was one of the guests on 'Brekete' in August. This was an opportunity to respond to callers and underline Australia's support for the strengthening of human rights globally.



**I AM PROUD TO BE A
Brekete Family
MEMBER**

THE VOICE OF THE VOICELESS

SUPPORTED BY:



Discovery Media

HELP LINE:
08033221149



(Above) One of the highlights of the Ambassador's recent visit to Niamey in November 2011, in concert with Sarah Willis, AusAID West Africa, was to inaugurate the school desk project in Commune de Say, south of Niamey. This project involved the construction and installation of over 150 school desks in two different schools. The colourful ceremony was attended by school and district representatives, and involved speeches and traditional dancing.

Recently funded projects

(Below) Second Secretary Alison Edge and Admin Officer Latonia Dabiri-Mpamugo, visiting the Madalla Primary & Junior Secondary School in Suleja, Niger State, in August 2011, where DAP funded six lavatories.



(Left) Founded in 1991 the Drill Rehabilitation & Breeding Center "Drill Ranch" in Cross River State is the region's first primate rehabilitation project. Over 75 drills have been rehabilitated to wildlife with members of their own species. The DRBC has recorded over 250 births to rehabilitated wild born parents and their offspring, making the project the world's most successful captive breeding program for an endangered primate. Today, 286 drills live in six family groups, each in their own natural habitat enclosure in the Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary. The Australian High Commission is supporting the Drill Ranch through AACGS with the renovation and expansion of the Chimpanzee enclosure.

(Right) On 14 September 2011, High Commissioner Ian McConville and Admin Officer Latonia Dabiri-Mpamugo assisted in the inauguration of a DAP funded hand pump borehole in Orozo, Abuja. At this occasion Mr McConville was given a bow and arrows and offered the warrior title of "Sarkin Yaki of Orozo" as a gesture of appreciation and acceptance.



DID YOU KNOW?

Poverty remains a global challenge with 1.4 billion people living on less than \$1.47 a day.



Australian Government Representation across Africa

Egypt (Cairo)

Egypt, Eritrea, Syria, Republic of Sudan and Tunisia

Ethiopia (Addis Ababa)

Djibouti, Ethiopia and the African Union (Observer)

France (Paris)

Algeria, Central African Republic, Chad, Mauritania and Morocco

Ghana (Accra)

Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo

Kenya (Nairobi)

Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda

Mauritius (Port Louis)

Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles

Nigeria (Abuja)

Benin, Cameroon, Gabon, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Congo and The Gambia

Portugal (Lisbon)

Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Sao Tome & Principe

South Africa (Pretoria)

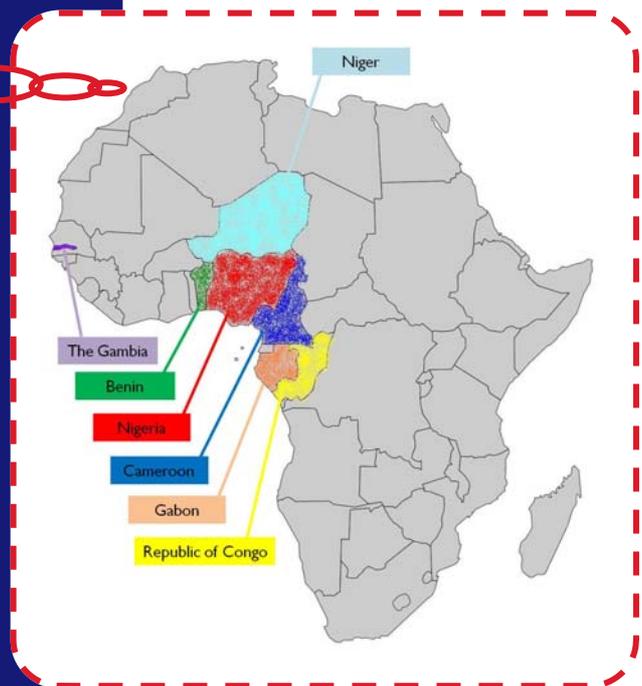
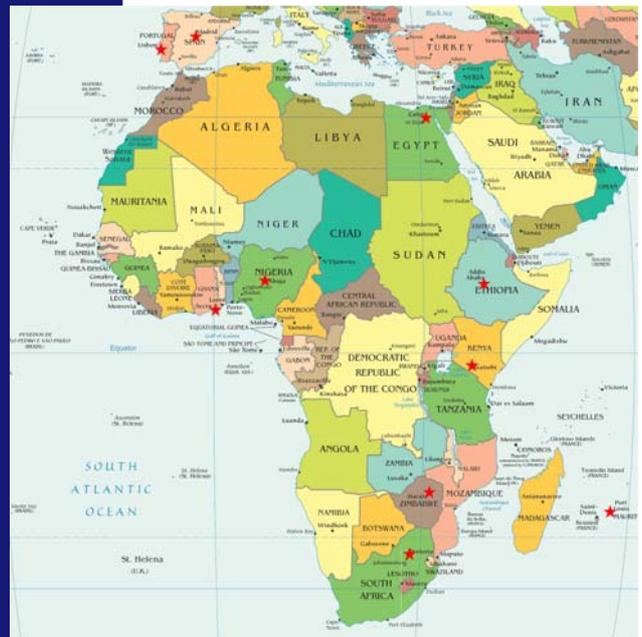
Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland

Spain (Madrid)

Equatorial Guinea

Zimbabwe (Harare)

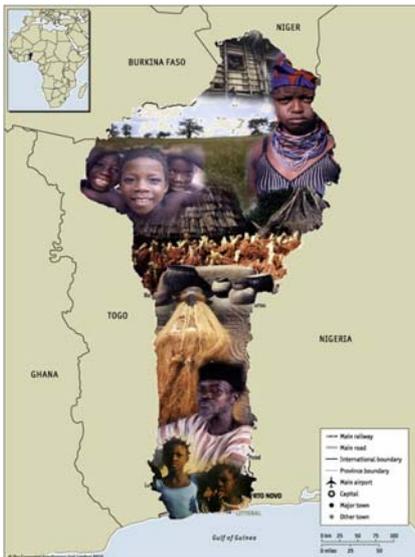
Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)



Our Countries of Accreditation: The Republic of Benin



The Australian High Commission in Abuja is responsible for managing Australia's diplomatic relations with a number of countries (see p. 6). In this edition, we would like to give our readers an overview on Australia's engagement with the Republic of Benin.



President Boni Yayi on 11 September 2010. Since then, Mr McConville has paid several visits to Cotonou, including when accompanying the Prime Minister's Special Envoy to La Francophonie, HE Mr Bill Fisher in June 2011.

Australian humanitarian and development engagement

In December 2010, Australia provided \$500,000 in humanitarian assistance to the Republic of Benin through the World Food Programme's emergency operations in response to the severe flooding which affected 680,000 people and worsened an already precarious nutritional situation. This complimented Australia's donation last year of \$8.5 million in humanitarian assistance to West Africa through United Nations agencies and non-government organisations. Australia

is also strengthening its relationship with the Republic of Benin by collaborating on food security through the West African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD), which is part of Australis's four year \$100 million food security initiative.

Australia is pleased to provide Beninese government officials with training and technical assistance. In October 2010 a Beninese official attended the trade policy course organised by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Benin is now also eligible to a wider range of short-term awards, and as of next year (2012), will have access to long-term post graduate level awards, as well as short-term awards and fellowships.

Recent Benin politics

The most recent presidential elections were held in March 2011. Incumbent President Thomas Boni Yayi was re-elected with 53.1% of the vote, a result that was subsequently confirmed by the Constitutional Court. Boni Yayi was sworn in for a second five-year term at the inauguration ceremony on 6 April 2011.

Diplomatic relations

Australia has recently strengthened diplomatic relations with Benin. High Commissioner Ian McConville presented his letters of credence to

Facts and Figures:

Land size:	112,620 square km (roughly half the size of the Australian State of Victoria)
Population:	8.85m (World Bank, 2010)
Capital city:	Porto Novo (the presidency and most ministries are set in the economic centre Cotonou)
Religion/beliefs:	Christians (about 40%), Muslims (about 25%), Voodoo adherents (about 25%)
Ethnic groups:	Fon, Yoruba, Mina, Bariba, Somba, Dendi, Pila, Peul/Fulani amongst others
Major languages:	French (official), Fon, Yoruba and others
Climate:	Hot and humid equatorial climate in the southern part with two wet/dry seasons; semi-arid climate in the northern part with one rainy and one dry season
Domestic economy:	Driven by subsistence farming
Main exports:	Cotton

UN Military Observer Course UNMOC



With the aim to prepare selected International and Australian Personnel for service as Military Observers within multi-national or United Nations peace operations, the Australian Defence Force offered a familiarisation course at the Defence International Training Centre (DITC) and a subsequent UN Military Observer Course (UNMOC) from 15 August to 16 September 2011. International participants included Major Isaac Anjo Haddison from Cameroon and Nigerian Major Woyengibarakemi Diriyai. Major Diriyai is the first Nigerian Officer to participate in the course and as such he presented the Nigerian flag to the DITC unit to be placed with the other flags representing the student body and alumni

(Picture: courtesy of DITC)

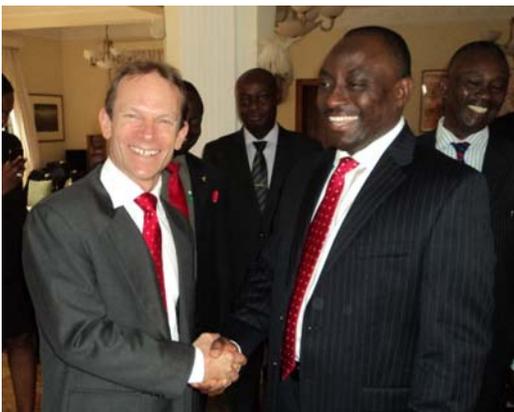
Visit of Justice Adejumo to Australia

A big thank you to Justice Tony North of the Federal Court of Australia who kindly agreed to be the host for the visit of Justice Adejumo OFR, President of the National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NIC) in July 2011. The full and rewarding program included visits to Fair Work Australia, the Federal Court, the Federal Magistrates Court and the Australian Human Rights Commission. A highlight was the visit by Justice Adejumo of a native title determination at Yambuk near Port Fairy in Victoria. Justice North said that Justice Adejumo was 'very warmly received at the native title determination by the Aboriginal people. Indeed they paid him and his Registrar the honour of wearing the possum skin cloaks which are very important sign of authority to the Gunditjmarra people'.



L-R: Justice Adejumo, Justice Tony North and Mr W.O. Daudu (courtesy of Justice North)

Assistance to the Nigerian Copyright Commission



On 13 September, 2011, the High Commissioner held a reception at the official Residence to commemorate the successful completion of an Australian Leadership Awards (ALA) Fellowships Program by officials from the Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC) in Australia. The program, hosted by the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in this instance, aims to develop leadership and build links between Australian organisations in key partner countries through the awarding of Australian Government scholarships.

Picture: High Commissioner Ian McConville with NCC Director General Afam Ezekude

AUSTRALIA

CANDIDATE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL 2013-14



Australian Peacekeeper in Timor-Leste (courtesy of Australian Government)



UN Security Council Chamber. (UN Photo/Mark Garten)

The importance of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to the maintenance of international peace and security is as great now as it ever has been. Not since the founding of the United Nations (UN) have we ever faced such uncertain times. Australia seeks to be part of the solution to these challenges. As a founding member of the United Nations and with our long democratic tradition we strongly support the rule-based international order which the United Nations Charter underpins.

Australia is a long-standing contributor to the UN's work on pre-

ventative diplomacy, peacekeeping and peace-building. We have participated in more than fifty UN and other multilateral missions across the world.

Australia is a committed contributor to the Millennium Development Goals with the focus on food security, water and sanitation, education, health, economic growth and scholarships. Our aid program has doubled in the past five years and will double again by 2015. Australian aid to Africa has increased 200 per cent in the last five years and will continue to grow.

Australia supports reform of the Security Council and its working methods to better reflect the modern world and ensure it is accessible to small and medium sized countries. We pressed for transparency during our last term on the Security Council and we continue to advocate for greater transparency of, and accessibility to, its deliberations.

Australia is at the forefront of efforts to address today's key global challenges. We assist small island developing states and others most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, we take a lead role in advancing disarmament and non-proliferation efforts and we continue to promote human rights and respect for international law.

With our capacity, energy and experience, Australia would make a strong and positive contribution to the UNSC's vital work.

DID YOU KNOW?

Australia is a reliable and consistent contributor to UN and other multilateral peace operations. Australia has provided more than 65,000 personnel to more than 50 UN and other multilateral peace and security operations since 1947.

Of these, over 30,000 have participated in UN peace operations and more than 20,000 in UN-mandated operations.

Australia Awards for Africa (AAA)

Until recently, Australia's engagement with Africa, particularly West and Central Africa, had been limited to the Australian private sector (especially mining companies) doing business with Africa. However, in 2009, all that was to change as the Australian Government pledged its increased cooperation with Africa through its commitment to expand its Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to Africa.

One sector that has witnessed significant Australian government support in Africa is in the human capacity building/strengthening domain through the award of Australian Government scholarships for middle level public sector functionaries to pursue postgraduate studies in priority sectors of African governments. The awards also include a number of short course professional programs of up to three months in Australia. An in-Africa capacity building short course program is also slated to begin in 2012 to benefit more Africans.

West Africa is currently enjoying its 3rd year of the Australia Awards for Africa (AAA) after the first two opportunities in 2010 and 2011 intake rounds which had 41 and 43 awardees respectively.

For the year 2012, with awardees scheduled to begin their Postgraduate studies in Australia from January 2012, West Africa has a total of 62 awardees for the Masters de-



Pre-Departure Briefing for awardees from Nigeria and Cameroon on 13 October 2011, at the Australian High Commission Residence

gree programs, five PhD degree programs and over 100 short course awardees (maximum of 3 months in Australia). These have gone through an all-Africa competitive selection process. Africa is equally enjoying, for the first time, the Australian Leadership Awards Scholarship (ALAS) program. This is a special initiative of the Governor General awarded to Master degree level awardees to have a special leadership program whilst pursuing their Masters Degree programs in Australia. A total of 20 awards were offered to Africa and four are from West Africa (Nigeria-2; Liberia-1; and Sierra Leone-1). It is important to note here that all the different kinds of Australian Government scholarships have recently been brought under one umbrella, the Australia Awards for Africa (AAA) Initiative with a single branding.

Before awardees depart the shores of their countries for Australia, a Pre-Departure Briefing is held to acquaint the students with academic and social life in Australia. One such function was held in Abuja on 12-13 October 2011 for 2012 awardees from Nigeria and Cameroon. A similar event was held in Accra for awardees from Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone.

It is worth noting that the 2013 intake round (the 4th in the series) has, since 1 October 2011, been opened for applications with the deadline as 28 December 2012.

*Emmanuel Arnold Ekow Fletcher
Program Manager
Australia Awards for Africa
AusAID, Accra*

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 400,000 international students from around 200 countries receive an Australian education each year.



October 2011 international course participants

Trade Policy Course

The Australian Office of Trade Negotiations (OTN) holds bi-annual "Trade Policy Courses" extended to Australian Government agencies, Australian industry and foreign government officials. The course focuses on multilateral trading systems; challenges on the international trade policy; understanding the World Trade Organization; and developing an appreciation of Australia's trade interests. The last Trade Policy Course took place in Canberra in

October 2011. International participants included two candidates from our countries of accreditation, from the Cameroon Ministry of External Relations, Mrs Fabienne Alvin Ngbwa, and from the Republic of Congo's Ministry of Commerce and Supplies, Mr Armel Issanga Ngouama. Previously, the Australian High Commission was able to send participants from Nigeria and Benin (October 2010) as well as Niger and Gabon (May 2011).

International Participation in Graduate Training

Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) invited two Nigerian officials to participate in the Department's Graduate Training Program from 8 August to 7 October 2011.

Mr **Nicholas Uhomobhi** and Mr **Shehu Usman Bello** from Nigeria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs were valued participants in the training, which aims to strengthen professional skills and increase understanding of Australian foreign and trade policy objectives. The inclusion of international participants in this course is also a unique opportunity for the Department's own officers to establish strong and enduring personal connections with the broader foreign and trade policy communities.



"Australians are cheerful people with great concern for human and capital development." - Nicholas Uhomobhi
"To put it succinctly, Australia is a good place for learning." - Shehu Usman Bello

CHOGM: International Media Visit (IMV)

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade recently hosted an International Media Visits (IMV) Program for three international journalists from Kenya, Nigeria and Jamaica. The three journalists arrived in Perth on 23 October to cover the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and associated meetings such as the Commonwealth Business Forum. From 30 October onward, the group commenced a second program of meetings with Australian academics, scientists and journalists, which led them from Perth through to Brisbane, Townsville and Sydney. Food security, sustainable development, natural resource management and climate change were key themes of this IMV Program.



"Australia - great place, wonderful people, friendly animals - excellent combination"
Nigerian participant Oloyede Oworu, Senior Editor, Daar Communications PLC

Africa DownUnder

Perth, 31 August - 2 September 2011



Left: High Commissioner Ian McConville with Nigerian Minister for Trade and Investment, Olusegun Aganga, and Nigerian Minister for Mines and Steel Development, Arc. Musa Mohammed Sada, at the Ministerial dinner hosted by Western Australian Premier, Colin Barnett



Right: Mr McConville and the Prime Minister's Special Envoy Bill Fisher with former Minister of Mines and Energy of the Republic of Niger, Foumakoye Gado (now Minister of Energy and Petroleum) and Congolese Minister of Mines and Geology, Pierre Oba sponse

The annual Africa DownUnder event fosters links between Australian mining experts and African countries seeking to develop their mining sectors. This year, Nigeria's Minister of Trade and Investment, Mr Olusegun Aganga, and the Minister for Mines and Steel Development, Mr Mohammed Sada, played an important role at the meeting. In his address to the conference, Australia's Special Minister of State, Mr Gary Gray, said that fundamen-

tal to the continued economic growth of Africa is a strongly performing resource sector. He noted that Australia is a great mining country. Australia has a great mining culture and a vibrant mining community, and is a natural partner for Africa. In elaborating, Mr Gray promoted Australian best mining practices, practitioners and best environmental standards to support development. He welcomed the opportunity for Australia to

share those skills and that experience with Africa.

This year's mining conference once again demonstrated that Africa DownUnder continues to provide a valuable opportunity for Australian companies to make contact with African governments and together identify opportunities to enhance their industry and commercial opportunities.

DID YOU KNOW?

Africa is experiencing a significant resource boom. Between 2000 and 2010 it is estimated that African governments accrued US\$200 billion in oil revenue alone. During the 1990s, 65% of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa was in mining, oil and gas. Between 1990 and 2004, FDI in mining rose almost eight-fold to US\$140 billion.

Australian Mining Companies in Africa: driving growth and development

Australia is a resource-rich country with extensive experience in both mining and development. Australian mining companies are sharing this experience across Africa to assist countries wanting to reap the benefits and overcome the chal-

lenges of growing mining sectors. One of the more than 230 Australian mining and resource companies active in West Africa, with projects in Nigeria and Senegal, and developing interests in Mauritania, is exploration junior Erin Resources

Pty Ltd (Erin). Erin's local subsidiary is Erin Mineral Resources Ltd, and its African headquarters are currently located in Abuja, Nigeria. Erin's Country Manager/Director for West Africa is Australian geologist Mark Fleming, who has 11 years of experience working in Africa. Mr Fleming says that Erin's medium to long term strategy is to build a portfolio of projects which will deliver sustainable mineral development to Nigeria and across West Africa. As Erin's activities continue to expand across West Africa, Mr Fleming is optimistic that African countries, including Nigeria, will continue to recognise that creating the right institutional and policy frameworks to allow Australian mining companies to operate will bring real growth and development to the continent. The Australian High Commission works closely with companies such as Erin in their endeavours.



Erin Minerals Resources Engineers at a drilling site at one of Erin's Nigerian properties (Picture: courtesy of Erin Resources)

Mining for Development Initiative

DID YOU KNOW?

Australian mining and resource companies have more than 650 projects in exploration, processing, extraction and mining services, covering 42 African countries, worth A\$20 billion.

On 25 October, Australian Prime Minister Gillard launched Australia's new 'Mining for Development' initiative at the University of Western Australia. The initiative, worth A\$127 million, aims to help resource rich developing countries maximise the benefits of their mining sectors to grow their economies and provide social benefits to their people. The initiative will be accessible to all developing countries with significant mining activities or known minerals deposits.

More information at <http://www.usaid.gov/keyword/mining.cfm>.

Alan Davies - New Honorary Consul

The Australian High Commission is pleased to announce that Australia has appointed a new Honorary Consul to Lagos, Mr Alan Davies. Alan is an architect, town planner and businessman with over 30 years of experience in Nigeria. In his role as Honorary Consul, Alan will advance Australia's interests by exercising some consular functions to assist Australians in Lagos, communicate and maintain good relations with local authorities, and promote Australian/Nigerian trade. 'I'm very grateful for this opportunity to promote Australia's engagement with the city of Lagos', Alan says. 'My appointment is a concrete recognition by Australia of the importance of Lagos in Nigeria, and I look forward to working hard, with the Australian community in Lagos, to deepen the ties between Lagos and Australia'. Alan Davies would be pleased to hear ideas on how he can best assist Australians in Lagos, and can be reached on the following contact details:



Australian Honorary Consulate

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8th Floor Union Marble House

1 Alfred Rewane Road (formerly Kingsway)

Falomo, Ikoyi Lagos, Nigeria

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Fax: +234 | 8935480

e-mail: alan.davies@jamescubittarchitects.com

DID YOU KNOW?

Australia has welcomed more than 6.5 million migrants from over 200 countries, including more than 660,000 refugees. Of 22 million Australians, more than five million speak a second language.



Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is presenting an exciting new touring art exhibition illustrating the strength and vibrancy of contemporary Australian Art. The exhibition, titled *Message Stick: Indigenous Identity in Urban Australia*, will be travelling throughout the Pacific and Africa. And we

are excited to announce that it will be on display in Lagos in June 2012. 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.

Touring art exhibition: *Message Stick - Indigenous Identity in Urban Australia*

Painting: Julie Dowling, *The Ungrateful*, 1999.

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.

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

The 'Aussies and Friends in Lagos'



The 'Aussies and Friends in Lagos' have been described as a 'scattered bunch infiltrating a wide array of business and activities through the bustling metropolis'. All are warmly welcome to link in with the Aussies, Kiwis and Birds of Paradise in Lagos by sending an email to:

Tirscha McPherson at
tmacca72@gmail.com
 or **Barry Phipps at**
bphipps@aislagos.com

Recent events in Lagos included a traditional **Aussie-style BBQ** on 12 November, which was attended by 40 people. Those present welcomed those who had arrived in Lagos and the surrounding areas over the last 12 months. It was a lovely evening and all had a great time. A big thank you to Wendy and Dave Beenie for hosting the event at their compound!

In October 2011 a group of Australian officials visited Lagos to meet with and learn from the Australians living there. The delegation was warmly received and appreciated the time and thoughts of all present, and were pleasantly surprised by the optimism and energy of the small but vibrant Aussie community.

Australia Day 2012 will be a special time in Lagos, as Aussie, Kiwis and Birds of Paradise will greet with open arms anyone interested in celebrating Australia's national day. We definitely have something, somewhere, and all contacts on the "Aussie list" will receive the details (time and place etc.). In true Aussie tradition, it will be BYO ('bring your own') meat and drinks and a salad or desert to share. Keep watching the emails!

A major fund-raising venture for women's organisations in Lagos is the annual '**Small World**' event,

which will be held on 18 February 2012. It is a night of festivities that sees over 30 nationalities manning stalls that display fares and delicacies from their region. In 2012, the 'Aussie and Friends in Lagos' will again come together to present the best of what our land offers by organising a stall. The 2012 'Small World' event will have a circus theme. Funds raised will provide support for a local secondary school near Lekki with regards to school furniture and materials. People must buy a ticket before the event, as they sell out quickly. If you have any questions, please contact Tirscha or Barry.

The High Commission is pleased to convey the sincerest Christmas and New Years' wishes from all the 'Aussies and Friends in Lagos'.

Tirscha McPherson (left) at the Cheque collection for 1 million naira from this year's 'Small World' event in February 2011. The raised funds were used to support a local school at Ibeshe. (Picture: courtesy of Tirscha McPherson)



DID YOU KNOW?

Australia is a product of a unique blend of established traditions and new influences. The country's original inhabitants, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, are the custodians of one of the world's oldest continuing cultural traditions. They have been living in Australia for up to 60,000 years.

Australian Public Service Commission engagement in the region

L-R: Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC) Permanent Secretary Mallam Abdulkadir Musa; former FCSC Chairman Amb. Ahmed Al-Gazali; and High Commissioner Ian McConville. Photo: Lucie Elukpo



Permanent Secretary, Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC), Mallam Abdulkadir Musa (left); Chairman, Ahmed Al-Gazali; and Australian High Commissioner to Nigeria, Ian McConville, during the envoy's visit to FCSC office, in Abuja, on Monday. PHOTO: LUCIE ELUKPO

We had a very productive visit of the Australian Public Service Commission to Nigeria in August 2011 and we are hopeful this will generate a plan of action for bilateral public sector collaboration. The delegation made calls on the Chairman of the Federal Civil Service Commission of Nigeria, as well as the Head of the Civil Service and the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Martin Uhomobhi.

We are currently exploring ways of increasing linkages with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in the region and were delighted that two Nigerian officials participated in the Department of Foreign Affairs' Graduate Training program from August to October 2011 (see article on page 11).

ASOHOM Charity Bazaar



(Left) Libby McCutchan, Spouse of Australian High Commissioner Ian McConville, with Yahaya Ahmed, CEO of DARE (Developmental Association for Renewable Energies), one of the organisations ASOHOM supported this year by funding 60 fuel efficient wood stoves in the Katsina area where desertification is a huge problem. Mrs McCutchan is Chairperson of ASOHOM and Bazaar Convenor.

The 8th annual ASOHOM (Association of Spouses of Heads of Mission) International Charity Bazaar was held again this year in October at the Sheraton Abuja Hotel. Thirty-four countries hosted stalls selling food and other produce from their great nations - and of course Australia was there boots and all! Once again the sausage sizzle was the backbone of the Ozzie stall, manned by some expert tong handlers. The 'Aussies and Friends Bush Band' kept the crowds entertained with rigs, reels and old sea shanties, and the guitar case was nearly overflowing with donations from the enthusiastic crowd. Funds raised from the bazaar will be used for ASOHOM charity projects focusing on Women and Children in need in Nigeria.



The 'Aussies and Friends Bush Band', including High Commissioner McConville (violin), and Second Secretary Stuart Mooney (guitar), entertaining bazaar visitors.

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:

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

and in Ikeja, **Lagos**, at:

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

More information on VFS Nigeria:

website: www.vfsglobal.com/australia/nigeria/
via email: 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.embassy.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.embassy.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**.

Registration Info for Australians abroad

Registering with us is easy:

Go to the Australian Government's travel advisory and consular information service (<http://smartraveller.gov.au>) and follow the link to register.

And please provide an email and a postal address so we can send you a copy of the newsletter!



Anzac Biscuits

Traditional biscuits baked by anxious wives and mothers during World War I, packed in food parcels, and sent to the Australian soldiers in the trenches.

INGREDIENTS (Makes about 35 biscuits)

- 1 cup rolled oats
- 3/4 cup desiccated coconut
- 1 cup plain flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 125g (4oz) butter
- 2 tablespoons golden syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 1 tablespoon water

Preheat oven to 300F (150C)

Mix oats, flour, sugar and coconut together. Melt syrup and butter together. Mix soda with boiling water and add to melted butter and syrup. Add to dry ingredients.

Place 1 tablespoonfuls of mixture on greased tray (allow room for spreading).

Bake for 20 minutes. Loosen while warm, cool on trays.

Enjoy!



Australian High Commission

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