



Submission No 49

**Review of Australia's Relationship with the  
Countries of Africa**

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**Organisation:** Government of Western Australia



Government of Western Australia  
Department of the Premier and Cabinet  
Office of the Director General

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The Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Carter

**Western Australian Submission to the Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with Africa**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's Inquiry into Australia's relationship with Africa.

Please find enclosed Western Australia's response to the Inquiry which provides information on trade links with Africa, educational services available to African students and various cultural and scientific exchanges.

Should you require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact the designated officer within my Department, Ms Holly van der Gaag, on (08) 9222 9667 or at [Holly.VanDerGaag@dpc.wa.gov.au](mailto:Holly.VanDerGaag@dpc.wa.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

David Smith  
**A/DIRECTOR GENERAL**

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**Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade**  
**Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with Africa**  
**Western Australian Submission**

The Western Australian Government provides the following response to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's *Inquiry into Australia's relationship with Africa* from advice provided by the Department of Commerce, the Department of Culture and the Arts and the Department of Education.

**Department of Commerce**

Trade

Southern Africa is the primary focus of this State's existing trade. The largest African market for WA merchandise is South Africa, with WA exports totalling \$750 million (0.9% of annual WA exports). South Africa is the State's thirteenth largest export market. Mozambique is the State's twenty-second largest export market (0.5% of annual WA exports), buying about \$427 million in products annually. Alumina is one of WA's biggest export commodities to South Africa and Mozambique. Alumina exports to South Africa and Mozambique comprise approximately 23 per cent of WA's total alumina exports.<sup>1</sup>

Western Australian exporters of mining equipment have advised that there are a range of factors that make trade with the region difficult, potentially limiting the opportunity for expansion in the region. These factors include:

- political instability in some regions;
- shipping capacity and schedules from WA are not competitive as the commercial logistics of exporting containerised or modular items on commercial shipping lines to Africa requires trans-shipment to Singapore or similar trans-shipment ports;
- financial capacity, compounded by the negative effect on investment levels following the Global Financial Crisis;
- infrastructure quality and availability;
- equipment for projects may not always be available or reliable, delaying projects;
- congestion particularly at destination ports, transshipment ports and at border crossing within Africa;
- customs procedures and transparency; and
- extreme weather conditions in some areas.

WA has several existing trade linkages with Africa, including:

- Africa Down Under Conference

This conference has been held in Perth for the past seven years and is an annual event that attracts several African mining Ministers, business leaders

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<sup>1</sup> 'Resources in Western Australia: Aluminium', Department of Mines and Petroleum Report, Figure 1, page 1.

and executives from the mining services industries. Last year, the conference attracted more than 900 delegates, with approximately 100 exhibitors and a comprehensive program of speakers from both Africa and Australia.

- Mining Indaba

Held in Cape Town, Mining Indaba is Africa's most important mining event and the second largest mining conference and exhibition of its kind in the world. Over 150 Australian mining and mining service companies, including from WA, are expected to attend this year.

#### International Site for the Square Kilometre Array

The Western Australian Government is working collaboratively with the Commonwealth Government, through the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR), the New Zealand Government and CSIRO, in preparing Australia's bid for the international Square Kilometre Array project (SKA), the world's largest radio telescope. Only two sites are being considered for the SKA project with Australia and South Africa competing to host the facility. Both countries are developing pathfinder projects to support their bids to prove their sites are suitable for the SKA. The scientific community in both countries interact regularly in respect of technologies being developed.

WA will continue to develop specific relationships based on clear opportunities and strategic importance related to specific industry development opportunities. There is a need to consider opportunity costs in allocating time and effort to developing linkages with Africa compared with other regions, so as not to limit potential benefits from other large high growth markets.

### **Department of Education**

#### Current Service Provision for African Students

The Department of Education provides specialist English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Second Dialect (ESD) programs for students newly arrived in Australia on migrant or humanitarian visas, or those born in Australia who speak a language other than English. These programs operate in over 130 public schools, supporting students' acquisition of Standard Australian English and enabling their access to the curriculum. The level of English language competence and time spent in Australia determines the nature of specialist support provided to individual students.

Intensive English Centres (IECs) cater for students in their 12-24 months of compulsory schooling in WA. Fourteen IECs are located across the Perth metropolitan area. These centres have enrolled significant numbers of students from African backgrounds over the past 5 years, providing intensive English language tuition and extensive pastoral care programs to support students' social and emotional needs. In addition to specialist ESL teachers, the centres are staffed with Ethnic Education Assistants, School Support Workers, School Psychologists and Curriculum Leaders. Two IECs operate Integrated Services Centres which provide nurses, counsellors and migrant workers to further support the successful settlement of the students and their families.

Post-intensive ESL/ESD programs operate in a large number of mainstream schools. Specialist staff (teachers and Ethnic Education Assistants), provide ongoing support to students as they continue to develop their Standard Australian English competence.

## **Department of Culture and the Arts**

Arts and culture are an important dimension of foreign affairs. They can play a vital role in developing long lasting bonds between governments and communities from different regions.

### Shared Culture

WA shares its Indian Ocean rim identity with countries on Africa's east coast.

According to the 2006 census data, WA is home to more than 46,000 people born in Africa. Adding those with one or more parent born in Africa, the total number of Western Australians with African heritage is approximately 85,000. The growing number of citizens with African heritage has led to increased participation in African cultural projects within the local community, and increased links and networks with a wide range of African countries.

### Recent Cultural and Scientific Exchange Projects

The Department of Culture and the Arts has involvement in a number of projects involving artists and organisations from WA and Africa. Other organisations in the arts and cultural portfolio also participate in projects with links to Africa. The following are some recent examples.

#### *1) Dance Project in Nigeria*

In 2008, the Department supported a Western Australian contemporary dancer to undertake a period of professional development under the mentorship of the Artistic Director of Ijodee Dance Company, Nigeria. Through this placement, new works were created, choreographic workshops were facilitated and informal forums with dancers, members of the media and artists from various disciplines were held.

#### *2) Barking Gecko Theatre Company – The African Magician*

From June to August 2010, Barking Gecko Theatre Company will tour the play *The African Magician* to primary schools across Perth. Barking Gecko is WA's leading professional theatre company performing for young people. The play was written by Sudanese playwright Afeif Ismail, who is now resident in Perth. Featuring puppetry, song and dance, *The African Magician* is an enchanting story for young audiences about one girl's journey as she struggles to understand the difference between belief and knowledge. The production is complemented by puppetry and writing workshops for students.

### 3) *The Western Australian Museum*

#### Conservation Department

The Conservation Department of the WA Museum has had long standing associations with several museums and collecting places in Africa that conserve shipwreck materials and shipwreck sites.

#### Collection & Content Department

Over many years, the WA Museum has loaned specimens and exchanged information regarding distributions of both marine and non-marine molluscan species to the Natal Museum, South Africa.

Over the past four years, the WA Museum has been in contact with the Natal Museum in relation to loans of specimens and exchanges of information for research regarding distributions of species of the gastropod family Phasianellidae.

Reciprocal agreements between the WA Museum and the South African Institute of Aquatic Biology (SAIAB) have resulted in fish biologists visiting the Museum's fish collections for exchanges of information and loans of specimens.

Since 1997, the WA Museum has been a direct contributor to, *A Field Guide to the Seashores of Eastern Africa and the Western Indian Ocean Islands*. Currently, the 3rd edition is undergoing revision. The field guide is published with funds from the Swedish International Development Co-operation (SIDA) and all proceeds from the sale of the guide go to a charitable trust, the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA), which assists in the development of marine science in this region.

### 4) *Art Gallery of Western Australia*

The Art Gallery has made a commitment to introduce Western Australian audiences to the Arts of the Indian Ocean rim region in the coming years. The Gallery is currently researching opportunities to develop a major exhibition of African art from a significant international collection.

The Director of the Art Gallery of WA, Dr Stefano Carboni, who is acknowledged as a world expert of Islamic art, will be visiting Egypt in February 2010 as to present a series of scholarly lectures on Islamic art at the American University in Cairo.