



Submission No 93

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

**Organisation:** WA Government – Answers to Questions on Notice

## **Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade**

### **Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with Africa**

#### **Western Australian Response to Follow up Questions**

**Your submission lists (p.1) a number of factors which make trade with Africa difficult. In what ways could the Commonwealth Government assist in addressing these impediments?**

The WA Department of Commerce has advised that a strategy on trade with Africa would need to consider commercial logistical issues to ensure that products can be transported into Africa efficiently. Solutions mainly lie in the commercial sector and are determined by the opportunities that provide the best return on investment. The Commonwealth Government could assist trade with Africa by encouraging shipping conferences to consider direct routes, instead of transshipment, or alternatively to support special consolidated and coordinated shipment for major projects.

**Your submission refers (p.1) to the Africa Down Under Conference and (p.2) to the Mining Indaba Conference. Would you discuss the trading benefits that have arisen from these conferences?**

At this time, the Department of Commerce has advised that they do not have quantifiable information regarding trading benefits arising from the Africa Down Under Conference and the Mining Indaba Conference. The Department of Commerce has provided the following information to give a broad overview of the importance of these two conferences to WA companies seeking to trade with Africa.

Both conferences provide an opportunity for WA companies seeking to invest in Africa to network with African government officials and WA companies already trading with Africa. In 2010, 1000 delegates and several African Mines Ministers attended the Africa Down Under Conference. WA companies attending the Africa Down Under Conference can gain a better understanding of the political, regulatory and technical environment of African markets. The Mining Indaba Conference is the largest mining event in Africa, drawing more than 3000 delegates, including 150 from Australia, in 2010. It is an important opportunity for WA companies looking to trade with Africa.

**Would you assess the performance of Austrade in assisting Western Australian companies in trading with Africa?**

The Department of Commerce has advised that whilst Austrade has offices across several African countries, including South Africa, Ghana and Kenya, it is more difficult for WA companies to obtain information on other African markets which are not as well represented but may be equally as important. As such, events such as the Africa Down Under Conference and the Mining Indaba Conference are often the only way for companies to access information about a particular region.

Although the Austrade office in WA offers a full range of services to companies, the Department of Commerce has advised that often WA resource companies are the

first foreign companies entering certain African markets. These companies often play a larger role than Government in providing information about African markets.

**Would you discuss how successfully migrants from Africa have integrated into Western Australian society?**

In 2005, consultations were conducted by the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) on behalf of the Across Government Working Party on African Humanitarian Settlement Issues. The Working Party was established in response to the need for assistance in addressing the complex and high needs of recent arrivals to Western Australia from African countries. Through this research, OMI found that African humanitarian entrants face a range of barriers to inclusion and integration, particularly in the areas of employment, education and training, social participation and political, civic and community participation. In particular the research noted a need for targeted programs to increase access to further education, issues associated with the high costs and complexity of recognition of overseas qualifications and the significant adjustment difficulties faced by African humanitarian entrants.

OMI advise that both Commonwealth and State Government agencies, as well as non-government organisations, have been active in responding to the needs of African humanitarian entrants. In addition, many African humanitarian entrants have brought with them a strong work ethic and sense of community, and have collectively demonstrated an eagerness to find meaningful employment and to improve not only their own lives and that of their children, but also those of the broader community.