



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION PRETORIA

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MEDIA RELEASE

Australia committed to Africa's continued resources growth

Despite the global economic downturn, Australia's confidence in the African resource sector remains strong, with over 400 Australian delegates expected in Cape Town next week for one of the world's largest mining trade shows, Mining Indaba.

"Many Australian mining businesses have been operating in Africa for a decade now so there is a strong feeling of commitment to the market," said the Australian Trade Commission's Chief Economist, Mr Harcourt.

Major Australian mining projects are underway in countries as diverse as Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mozambique and Tanzania. Gold, copper, nickel, coal, mineral sands and uranium are among the resources being mined.

"Companies will have to work harder in the current economic environment but there remains a strong sense of optimism that there are still opportunities," Mr Harcourt said.

"Credit conditions will tighten but the world must not forget Africa, and on the evidence so far, Australian exporters remain committed to assisting trade and economic growth to help reduce poverty for the African community."

Australian Senior Trade Commissioner to Sub-Saharan Africa, Johannesburg-based Greg Hull said: "The resource industry is pivotal for Africa's future – how well it is managed will help to determine whether the prosperity sought in Africa, over coming decades, can be achieved.

"Australia is bringing to Africa not only high standards in mining itself and in advanced mining technologies, but also in the delivery of environmental protection, corporate social responsibility and community development."

Austrade has recently opened two new offices in Africa - in Kenya and Ghana to assist businesses keen to operate in these developing markets.

The new Australian High Commissioner to South Africa, Ms Ann Harrap, also underlined the commitment of the Australian Government to engage with the continent. "At a time when some countries are turning inward, Australia is looking to expand its engagement with the continent. This will include the implementation of a new and expanded development assistance strategy, with a focus on skills development."

She also highlighted Australia's intention to increase the scholarship program for Africa.

"We are aiming for a ten-fold increase in our fellowships and scholarships from across Africa as a whole. This will see up to 1,000 scholarships and fellowships available – with one of the areas of focus to be the mining and resources sector."

"This demonstrates the Australian Government's ongoing commitment to development on the continent."

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