

## **Visit by the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland**

Late September saw the First Official visit to Western Australia by his Excellency Mr Andrezej Jaroszynski, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland since his appointment to the position in October 2008.

The Ambassador met with both myself and the Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Mr Michael Sutherland.

The major wave of Polish immigration to Western Australia occurred after World War II, with settlements largely around Northbridge. A number of landmarks in Northbridge can be attributed to the work of Polish architects; for example, the Western Australian Art Gallery and the Perth Cultural Centre.

In our discussion with the Ambassador, it was interesting to learn that Poland was the only European Union country to record positive growth in 2009 despite the impact of the economic crisis.

The Ambassador expressed a desire to further strengthen economic ties between Western Australia and Poland. The Ambassador acknowledged the pivotal role Western Australia plays in such areas as oil and gas and believes that through the support of government bodies, the build up within the oil and gas industry in Poland could create partnering opportunities for Western Australia.

Business between Australia and Poland is strong, with many Western Australian companies active in Poland including Fluor Australia (a leading specialist company in the provision of engineering in the minerals industry), Culley Group (exporters of frozen meat), and Austal Ships (exporting of ships). Australian wine exports to Poland from Western Australia have increased over recent years with significant growth potential in the market. Westavino, based in Perth, has introduced over 90 wines to the Polish market. This is excellent news for the Margaret River wine producing area in particular.

The Ambassador highlighted that Poland has growing potential for Western Australia's commercial interests. Direct merchandise exports to Poland were approximately \$1 million, while imports from Poland were worth \$16.6 million.

Australian companies have also made promising inroads in Poland in less traditional (non-commodities) areas such as packaging, food handling and processing, beverages, building and construction, education and environmental technologies and mining equipment.



Picture: *The President, the Hon. Barry House, with the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland, His Excellency Mr Andrezej Jarosynski,(centre) with the Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Mr Michael Sutherland.*