

Strengthening our friendship with the Commission of European Communities (EU)

I was privileged to meet with the Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the Commission of European Communities, Mr David Daly.

The joint meeting with the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Hon Grant Woodhams, was important because it was the first Official Visit to Western Australia by his Excellency. Mr David Daly, who is originally from Dublin, was appointed as Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the Commission of European Communities in January 2009.

The purpose of the visit was to help improve the mutual understanding and information between the EU and Australia. The EU and Western Australia share a very special relationship; not only does 70% of the population of Western Australia have European ancestry but the EU is also the largest source of foreign investment in Australia. Western Australia's merchandise exports to the EU account for approximately \$8.9 billion, with key export items being gold, nickel, and iron ore, which are some of our State's key mining commodities.

The EU and Australia have comparable democratic parliamentary systems of government, so it was interesting to listen to Mr Daly's take on how the EU is dealing with security policies.

The EU is also Australia's largest scientific partner, so Mr Daly was very interested in WA's involvement with the Australian and New Zealand Square Kilometre Array (anzSKA). The SKA aims at helping us learn about the evolution of the universe. The State Government of WA, together with CSIRO, has established a candidate core site in WA and is building the Australian SKA Pathfinder.



Picture: *The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Hon Grant Woodhams, Mr David Daly, Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the Commission of European Communities, and the President of the Legislative Council, the Hon Barry House.*