

## **Visit by the new High Commissioner for Britain**

In March 2011, I was pleased to host the First Official visit to Western Australia by his Excellency, Mr Paul Madden, High Commissioner for Britain. Accompanying the High Commissioner was Mrs Sarah Madden, wife of the High Commissioner and Mr Philip Orchard, Head of Post, British Consulate, Perth.

Mr Madden succeeds Baroness Valerie Amos who was previously the High Commissioner for Britain. I met Baroness Valerie Amos on her first official trip to Western Australia back in March 2010.

Mr Madden is a career diplomat for over 30 years, with his previous international postings including Singapore, USA and Japan. He also served in the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office and its Department of Trade and Industry.

The United Kingdom shares a long-standing relationship with Western Australia and continues to be the State's largest single market in Europe for merchandise exports and imports.

The United Kingdom was Western Australia's sixth largest trading partner in 2009/10 with bilateral trade valued at \$5.4 billion. Western Australia's merchandise exports to the United Kingdom - dominated by gold - were valued at \$4.5 billion in 2009/10.

In our discussions about the economy, the High Commissioner pointed out that there are approximately 1,500 Australian companies active in the United Kingdom, with a large number using the United Kingdom as a base for continental Europe. Key Australian investors in the United Kingdom include Macquarie, National Australia Group, and ANZ; while British companies operating in Western Australia include BHP Billiton, HSBC and Unilever.

Western Australia and the United Kingdom are also linked very closely through history, heritage, culture, sport and tourism.

The United Kingdom continues to be Western Australia's highest source of international visitors. An estimated 160,000 British tourists visited the State in 2009 with an estimated total expenditure of \$269 million.

We studiously kept our discussions about the recent Ashes Series and the World Cricket Cup to a minimum!!

Whilst on his first official trip, Mr Madden also called on the Premier of Western Australia, the Lord Mayor of the City of Perth and the Governor of Western Australia, and also met with the State Director for CHOGM and Chief of Protocol from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, had a economic briefing on Western Australia by the Department of State Development, and met with the Chamber of commerce and Industry of Western Australia.

On a sad note, it was the last time we would see Philip Orchard in his capacity as Head of Post, British consulate, Perth. Budgetary cuts from the United Kingdom have closed down some operations in Perth and Philip is moving on. He has been an outstanding representative for the United Kingdom in our State and we wish him every success and happiness in the future.



Picture: (From left) Mr Philip Orchard, Head of Post, British Consulate, Perth, Mrs Sarah Madden, wife of the High Commissioner, the President, Hon Barry House, and Mr Paul Madden, High Commissioner for Britain.