

The President meets with Israeli Ambassador

The start of 2010 has proved very busy with another Ambassadors visit.

I met with His Excellency Mr Yuval Rotem, Ambassador of Israel, during his First Official Visit to Western Australia. The Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Mr Michael Sutherland joined me for the meeting to welcome His Excellency to Parliament House.

Mr Yuval Rotem assumed the position of Ambassador for Israel in Australia in August 2007. Under this post, Mr Rotem is the resident Ambassador for Australia, as well as being the non-resident Ambassador for New Zealand, Papa New Guinea and Fiji.

In September 2003, Mr Rotem was promoted to the rank of Ambassador by then Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, making Ambassador Rotem the youngest Israeli career diplomat at the age of 46. Prior to his appointment, Mr Rotem was the Consul General of Israel in Los Angeles for five years. In this role, he was the senior representative of the State of Israel in the western United States.

Even though Israel is not currently a significant trade partner for Western Australia, it does represent broader strategic importance. We discussed how Israel is an important market for innovation partnerships and related venture capital. Furthermore, it has an active Chamber of Commerce and is accessible through members of the business community with networks in Israel.

In May 2008, the Western Australian Department of Industry and Resources assisted and supported an Australian-Israeli Chamber of Commerce led mission to Israel. The mission's focus was on technology-related matters, such as partnerships, capital raising and networking. The mission was led by Professor Lyn Beazley (Western Australian Chief Scientist) and comprised 19 delegates from the major universities and private sector interests.

We also discussed an upcoming Parliamentary delegation to Israel in April to be led by Michael Sutherland MLA, and joined by several other Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly Members.

Mr Rotem pointed out how there are strong historical ties between Israel and Western Australia and the Jewish community has made active contributions to the State's economic, social and cultural heritage.

The State Government has expressed that they would like the Ambassador's assistance in broadening the knowledge based relationship between Israel and Western Australia, particularly in those areas of mutual interest.



Picture: *The President, the Hon Barry House with the Israeli Ambassador, Mr Yuval Rotem.*