



CONSUL-GENERAL a.i.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE-GENERAL

BILL JACKSON PSM

CHICAGO

Presentation to ANZACC Midwest Annual General Meeting – 6 July 2011

Thank you for the opportunity to address this annual general meeting of ANZACC Midwest.

I have been introduced as Consul General ad interim and have been asked if I could explain what ad interim signifies and what it means for the Australian Government's work in Chicago.

Ad interim is a Latin expression used in diplomatic service which means "in the time between". In my case, the time between Consul General Libby Schick's departure in April, I arrived late May, and the finalisation of the appointment of her replacement and their arrival in Chicago.

So am I here to do the job or just to keep the chair warm? As they say a picture is worth thousand words so I went looking for an example in history to help illustrate whether I am for real, or just a pretender.

Being of Scottish heritage the logical choice for a pretender was Charles Edward Stuart, known as Bonny Prince Charlie or the Young Pretender. Charlie sought the thrones of England, Scotland and Ireland in the mid 1700s.

Does a comparison with Charlie's situation help? Probably not but I am going to do it anyway.

Charlie aspired to sit in the chair he was after. He never made it. I didn't actually aspire to this job, I was plucked from elsewhere, but I do get to sit in the chair.

Charlie got the girl in the lovely Flora McDonald who helped him escape when his campaign failed. I am not contemplating failure and I already have my girl. My spouse Carol, who works in Canberra, hopes to join me in late July at least for a holiday.

And, they made movies about the Prince. That's unlikely for me but had I been here for the shooting of Transformers I might have been able to slip into a scene or two as a mini-Deceptacon.

123 North Wacker Drive, Suite 1330, Chicago, Illinois, 60606, USA

Telephone: +1 312 267 1275

Facsimile: +1 312 419 1499

I use that as an example of something that might not be what it seems.

But no, the real situation is that I am here in Chicago and I am Consul General for as long as it takes to finalise the appointment of the right successor to Libby Schick.

“In the time between”, the Consulate General is open for business as usual and it is full steam ahead - or in this region, with its heavy concentration of automotive industries, perhaps I should say its full speed ahead like a next gen vehicle.

The core objectives for the Consulate General continue to be:

- Raising the profile of Australia as a high quality destination for investment and tourism.
- Working with Austrade to strengthen trade and investment opportunities between Australian and Midwestern companies and to promote educational services, which remains one of Australia’s major exports.
- Identifying further opportunities for collaboration between Australian and Midwestern educational and research institutions.
- We will continue to take every opportunity to advocate Australian Trade Policy with a focus in the United States on a successful outcome to Doha round Negotiation, APEC and the Trans Pacific Partnership.
 - TPP negotiations currently include Australia, the US, Brunei, Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam and may lead over time to an FTA Asia Pacific.
- We will monitor and report to head office on regional political and economic trends.
- And continue to encourage high level Australian visitors to the Mid-west and organise their programs.
 - Senator Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research was in Detroit last week for discussions with the automotive sector, and
 - the President of the Senate, Senator John Hogg is planning to lead a parliamentary delegation to Chicago in late September.
- Last on the list, but definitely not last in importance, is the provision of a high quality Consular service to Australian residents and travellers.

I would like to add a few words to illustrate some of those objectives.

First, on promoting Australia as an innovative society we have an amazing record which we will promote at every opportunity. I know this is preaching to the converted but I just can't resist listing a few examples.

- Australians have won 11 Nobel Prizes - most in medicine and science - making us one of the leading Nobel Prize-winning countries per capita.
- We have one of the world's highest rates of patent applications for innovations in renewable energy and biotechnology.
- Australians invented or developed
 - the modern standard for WiFi
 - the cervical cancer vaccine
 - Google Maps
 - The Black box flight recorder
 - The bionic ear (Cochlear implant)
 - Spray-on-skin
 - Penicillin as a medical antibiotic (discovered by a Scot -Fleming, developed by Australian – Florey)
 - Permaculture (Bill Mollison)
 - Wave energy technology (CETO), and
 - Dual-flush toilets

And where would NASCAR be without Australian developed Racecam TV coverage?

On selling the trade liberalisation message I draw your attention to the Government's recently issued Trade Policy Statement which is available on the DFAT website.

Australian Senator Nick Xenophon claims that, in international circles, Australia is known as the Taliban of free trade.

While I think that choice of words is poor, I don't think the government will ever apologise for its commitment to trade liberalisation as a tool for increasing prosperity.

Estimates indicate that a successful conclusion to the Doha round could benefit Australia to the tune of \$3 to \$5 billion dollars in GDP.

The benefit to the US is obviously much greater with some estimates at around \$38 billion and nearly 400,000 jobs.

For Illinois, as an example in this part of the United States, estimates indicate Doha would increase output by \$2.3 billion and generate 18,500 new jobs.

We will insert those statistics into the conversation at every opportunity.

I mentioned exploring opportunities for collaboration between Universities in Australia and the Mid-west.

The partnership between University of Indiana and the ANU in the Pan Asian Institute is a good example.

This combines the complementary strengths of the two universities into a single research and teaching enterprise.

It allows them to run programs they might not otherwise be able to run, for example, teaching languages for which there is small demand but are nevertheless very important.

A collaboration that really excites the imagination is between the ANU and the University of Chicago, and other entities in the US and Korea, on the Giant Magellan Telescope due for completion in Chile in 2018.

There is a great IMAX presentation on Hubble which really puts the significance, or perhaps insignificance, of planet Earth into perspective. Hubble, being in space, was supposed to be about as good as it gets.

But even though it is Earthbound, the Giant Magellan Telescope will be able to see considerably further than Hubble and produce images up to 10 times sharper. I understand it will allow astronomers to look back to the beginning of time.

The Australian Government is contributing around \$90,000,000 to that project which will create some 240 jobs in Australia during the construction phase.

Predecessors have been keen to pursue opportunities for collaboration between universities and that is something that will continue.

I have mentioned Austrade several times in describing our work.

As you will know, the Australian Trade Commission, or Austrade, is the Government's trade and investment development agency.

The Austrade office in Chicago is collocated with the Consulate General and Austrade Post Manager Chris Knepler participates in the ANZACC Board.

Austrade recently underwent major reform to reflect changes in the global business environment and in its responsibilities in recent years.

As a result, a number of positions in the United States were redeployed to other markets but not from Chicago, which flags the importance the Government attaches to business development in the Midwest.

Chris's priorities are growing investment, particularly in green technology and financial services, education, and trade in the automotive fields.

For those interested, a paper on Austrade reform is available on its website.

In conclusion I just want to say again that although we might be seen to be between "real" Consuls General, we are open for business as usual while the Government finalises a decision about the long term replacement for Consul General Schick.

If anything, I think the time it is taking to finalise the arrangements to get the right person for the job into Chicago is further evidence of the importance the Government attaches to its representation in the Midwest.

But I am more than happy for my employer to take all the time it needs in finalising the appointment and I welcome the opportunity as interim Consul General and, I guess, interim Honorary Chair of the Chamber, to continue the Consulate General's very productive association with ANZACC Midwest.