

Media Release

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Australia – Pakistan Online Alumni Business Forum launched in Pakistan

The Australian Trade Commission has launched an online business forum to connect Pakistani alumni from Australian educational institutions with business news and opportunities from Australia. The online forum is hosted on Linked-In, and the forum titled the "Australia – Pakistan Alumni Business Forum" was launched in Karachi on 8th April 2014.

The Linked-In forum will facilitate networking & business opportunities with and amongst Pakistani alumni from Australian universities & educational institutions.

The forum will;

- Enable alumni to keep up to date with developments in education, trade and investment in Australia.
- Connect Australian alumni in Pakistan who have shared interests.
- Exchange business ideas, research collaboration opportunities and find out about visiting experts as well as cultural and sporting events.
- Introduce business and investment opportunities with Australia for the alumni's organisation and their professional contacts.

Speaking about the Linked In forum, Nicola Watkinson, Minister – Commercial and Senior Trade & Investment Commissioner – South Asia, Australian Trade Commission, said *“One of the most important aspects of the Australia - Pakistan relationship are the links that are formed by people who have studied in Australia. Many alumni are now well established in different domains of the society and can help to build stronger links between our business and academic communities.”*

“Alumni’s are often interested in staying in touch with Australia and leveraging their experience in the market for their business benefit. This forum will enable alumni to hear about new business, research and study opportunities and network with other alumni with similar interests. I encourage Pakistani alumni from Australian universities to become involved in building a strong Australia-Pakistan community that supports mutual understanding and bilateral cooperation. This initiative complements the work undertaken by Australian educational institutions and adds a business dimension to our engagement with our alumni.”, said Nicola Watkinson

“The forum will support alumni in Pakistan through business and social networking. I encourage alumni them to stay connected with Australia as the future of our two nations will benefit from the strong relationships we build today”, said Nicola Watkinson

An Alumni Working Group comprising of a cross section of Alumni's in Pakistan from Australian Universities would also be involved in alumni activities.

Speaking about the launch of the alumni forum Saad Mahmood, Resident Director, AEO Pakistan and alumnus from The University of Canberra said, *"I would like to encourage all Australian Alumni based in Pakistan or Australia to join this forum as this would be a very useful tool towards further enhancing the bilateral ties between Australia and Pakistan in all areas of mutual interest including linkages in the areas of Education, Healthcare, Agriculture, Food products, commodities, tourism, technology, engineering, etc"*

Amneh Shaikh-Farooqui, Programme Manager, Entrepreneurship and Community Development Institute (ECDI) and an alumnus from Australian National University said, *"The LinkedIn Alumni Forum initiative is an idea whose time has really come! It promises to become an excellent way to build, connect, network and empower a passionate community of Australian alumni, comprising of students and professionals, who can create meaningful ways of working together and moving forward"*.

Dr Zeeshan Shaikh, Secretary, Australia Awards Alumni – Pakistan Executive Committee said, *"I am thankful to Austrade for providing a platform which will help members to stay connected to diverse range of people who have studied in Australia and now working in different sectors nationally and globally. I would encourage members to contribute to the platform ranging from career and academic mentoring to sharing of job prospects and internships."*

Australia - Pakistan Economic Relationship

Australia - Pakistan two-way trade in 2012-2013 was AUD 811 million, with Australian exports to Pakistan valued at A\$ 632 million. Agri-business and agricultural science linkages are the traditional focus of the Australia – Pakistan economic & trade relationship. Whilst this continues to be a key area of focus there are new and growing opportunities in education, vocational training and resources.

Australia and Pakistan have a long-standing friendship built on a common heritage, shared interests and growing people-to-people links. In 2012 there were 11,000 Pakistani students enrolled in Australia's universities and educational institutions. Australia has become one of the most preferred destinations for Pakistani students seeking to further their education outside of Pakistan.

Australian Education

Australia is the 3rd most popular international student destination in the world, accounting for 7 out of the top 100 Universities in the world. Australia has 39 universities, a number of specialist tertiary institutions, and more than a hundred education centres to deliver specific courses. Engineering and technology, medicine, environmental science, accounting and finance disciplines are the most sought after education programs. Australia is also a significant international education destination for emerging careers in areas ranging from technology, digital, robotics, media & entertainment, scientific research, health, future materials, etc. Australian qualifications are recognised across the globe by leading professional associations and employers.

For more information on Doing Business with Australia, and for alumni involvement & participation, please contact The Australian Trade Commission at Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad

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