



MEDIA RELEASE

SIMON CREAN APPOINTED AKBC CHAIR

8 May 2019

The Australia-Korea Business Council (AKBC) today announced the appointment of the Hon Simon Crean as its new Chairman.

Mr Crean spent 23 years as the Member for Hotham in the Australian Parliament, serving as Opposition and Labor Party Leader, overseeing significant ministerial portfolios, including Science and Technology, Primary Industries and Energy, Employment, Education and Training, Trade, Social Inclusion, Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government and Arts.

Mr Crean has made a number of visits to Korea in different capacities, engaging with Government at a high level. He first visited during his term as President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions in 1989 and subsequently as Minister for Science and Technology in 1991 and Minister for Trade in 2009.

Australian exports to Korea were valued at \$23.4 billion in 2017, representing Australia's third largest export market and 6 per cent of all Australia's exports, with iron ore, coal and beef ranking as the top exports. Our two-way goods and services trade is also significant and was worth over \$55 billion in 2017, placing Korea as Australia's fourth largest two-way trading partner.

Mr Crean currently holds a number of leadership positions in business, including the Chair of Australian Livestock Exporters' Council, Director at Linfox International, Council Member of Monash University, Deputy Chair of the European Australian Business Council, Director of the Red Meat Advisory Council, Co-Chair of Cornerstone Group and Chair of the Deakin University Advanced Manufacturing Council.

AKBC Executive Director Liz Griffin said she was delighted to welcome Simon to the role.

"Simon brings more than 40 years' experience spanning government, industrial relations, international and domestic trade, and development. His exemplary career and outstanding network of relationships with industry, government and community stakeholders will add enormous value to the AKBC and its members.

"The appointment marks an exciting new chapter for the AKBC as we prepare for the 40th annual AKBC-KABC Joint Meeting in Sydney later this year."

Mr Crean said he was honoured to be appointed Chairman and looked forward to working with the Executive Committee and membership.

"I look forward to stewarding the AKBC and making the most of the burgeoning opportunities to strengthen Australia's relationship with Korea and bring our two business communities closer together."

The AKBC farewells former Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Mark Vaile AO, who served as Chairman since 2014. Hon Mark Vaile AO will remain on the Executive Committee of the AKBC as a Director.

Ms Griffin thanked Mr Vaile for his leadership and the significant contribution he made to strengthening Australia's relationship with Korea.



“Under Mark’s leadership and guidance, our two business communities have never been closer. As one of the architects of the Korea-Australia Free Trade Agreement, in addition to his contributions as Chairman, Mark has left an indelible mark on our bilateral relationship.

Mr Crean will begin in his new role this month.

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About the AKBC

The Australia-Korea Business Council (AKBC) exists on behalf of its members and seeks to foster friendship and understanding between the business communities of Australia and Korea and to promote technical and economic cooperation, trade investment, education and tourism between the two countries. Korea is currently Australia’s fourth largest trading partner.

AKBC works closely with the Korea-Australia Business Council (KABC), its counterpart in Korea. The KABC is currently chaired by Jeong-Woo CHOI, the CEO and Chairman of POSCO, Australia’s single largest export customer.

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