

Media Release

Connect ASEAN expands operations with new enterprise that will focus on Malaysia

Wednesday October 14, 2015. Connect ASEAN founder and CEO Paul Tynan has announced the strengthening of the organisation's growth platform by expanding its infrastructure through the opening of a new enterprise that will focus on assisting Australian and Malaysian SMEs to connect and engage in international commercial and bilateral trade activities.

The new business will be branded and marketed as **Connect Malaysia** and Paul Tynan also announced that former Australia Malaysia Business Council (AMBC) Victoria President **Joe Perri** will head the organisation as Principal Consultant.

The new enterprise will open its doors at the end of this month and be positioned as a boutique fee for service consultancy that will work with Australian SMEs seeking to expand their operations into Malaysia – or Malaysian businesses seeking to set up an operation in Australia.

Commenting on the factors that influenced him to start the business Tynan said, "There is an enormous gulf in the market at present between the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) being entered into by the federal government and high level reports being produced by the *'top of end of town'* and government agencies – and the grass roots reality of the SME sector and actually doing business on the ground in the countries of Asia Pacific".

"Don't get me wrong, I absolutely agree and support the promotion of opportunities in the economies of Asia Pacific that are quite literally immense and Australian businesses must look to these economies and potential that they will provide. However, there is no off the shelf/instant solution for doing business internationally – each country is incredibly different culturally and economically and needs to be considered accordingly".

Pointing to the countries of ASEAN that will be coming together as the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2016 with extensive economic benefits for the economies and peoples of the region, Paul Tynan stressed that it will still require perseverance and commitment by Australian SMEs if they are to be successful in capitalising on the commercial opportunities and potential.

Having visited the region frequently, studied FTAs, in particular the Malaysia Free Trade Agreement (MAFTA) and reviewed reports extensively, Paul Tynan regards Malaysia as the most Australian friendly destination for local SMEs seeking to expand their operations overseas.

As well as a rapidly growing and affluent middle class, Malaysia's strategic geographical position within Asia Pacific makes it the ideal destination for a regional hub into the markets of ASEAN and beyond.

In addition, Australia-Malaysia economic and cultural links have deepened and come together in a closer relationship over past decades and today Malaysia is Australia's 8th largest trading partner.

A further beacon attracting Australian businesses is Malaysia's pro business infrastructure that welcomes those operations that can fit into and support the nation's Vision 2020 aspirations.

Hence the decision by Paul Tynan to focus on Malaysia through Connect Malaysia and his appointment of former AMBC Victoria President Joe Perri to head the operation.

Commenting further on Joe Perri's appointment Paul Tynan said AMBC Victoria benefited greatly under his leadership that was reflected in the business council's healthy financial position and membership growth that tipped 100 SME, professional, corporate and company members following his departure at the August AGM.

"Joe's energy, enthusiasm and expertise as a passionate communicator, advocate and promoter of bilateral trade engagement between Australia and Malaysia are acknowledged and appreciated by both government and business".

"I am confident that under Joe's leadership, Connect Malaysia will quickly establish itself as the 'go to organisation' for SMEs seeking to find a JV partner or explore export/commercial opportunities in Malaysia", concluded Paul Tynan.

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Notes to the editor: Pictured together from left Paul Tynan and Joe Perri

