

# Foreign Secretary celebrates UK-Australia trading ties as Cambridge-based business invests £100m Down Under

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab welcomed Cambridge-based company AstraZeneca's £100m investment into its state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Sydney on Friday 7 February. The money will go towards advanced digital technologies that are enhancing the way the company manufactures and delivers medicines to patients.

AstraZeneca supports 38,400 jobs in the UK and has fostered a strong base here thanks to the UK's attractiveness to businesses and investors. The UK-Australia trade relationship is worth over £17bn, and is set to increase post-Brexit.

On the first major ministerial visit abroad following the UK's departure from the EU, the Foreign Secretary will set out the guiding principles behind the Government's Global Britain campaign. Global Britain will be a force for good and an energetic champion of free trade as it pursues closer ties with international partners and embarks on a new role in the world.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

I'm delighted to have been able to see first-hand how British talent and innovation have enabled Cambridge-based AstraZeneca to announce £100m investment into its state-of-the-art manufacturing facility that will focus on sustainable healthcare, which will ultimately benefit people around the world.

This is another example of the great opportunities presented by the flourishing UK-Australian trade and business links between our two countries.

Pascal Soriot, Chief Executive Officer of AstraZeneca, said:

As an innovative UK-headquartered life sciences company, AstraZeneca is pleased to be making this important investment in Australia in some of the newest and most high-tech medicines manufacturing and production facilities in our global network. This investment will create new skilled jobs, enhance our international outlook and help us to go further for the patients that rely on our medicines around the world.

As part of the visit, the Foreign Secretary planted an indigenous Banksia tree – the first of 25 million trees to be planted in Australia as part of the company’s global initiative “the AZ Forest,” which involves a commitment to plant 50 million trees worldwide.

This reforestation initiative follows the devastation caused by the wildfires that have affected communities and ecosystems across Australia and had a far-reaching impact on the country’s biodiversity.

The Foreign Secretary will also travel to Japan, Singapore and Malaysia on his trip to promote the UK as a dynamic, forward-looking nation and global force for good.

## **Further information**

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# **CMA to issue consumer law guidelines for the IVF sector**

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has concerns about possible cases of mis-selling of services such as IVF ‘add-on’ treatments, and possible misrepresentation of clinics’ success rates. The CMA is working closely with the sector regulator, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), to understand patients’ experiences and learn more about how clinics operate.

Going through or exploring potential fertility treatments can be a stressful and emotional experience, with people having to make decisions in challenging circumstances. As such, it is important that clinics provide all the necessary information on treatments to allow patients to make informed choices.

Currently, there is no written guidance on consumer protection law for the IVF sector. The CMA is therefore concerned that clinics might not be aware of their obligations, and so is producing guidance which will cover issues such as:

- **Price transparency:** Clinics should present clear and upfront prices for their treatments.
- **Potential mis-selling of treatments:** Patients should not be mis-sold ‘add-on’ treatments. These are optional extras offered by some clinics that can cost up to £2,500 per cycle. Patients should be given all the information they need before deciding whether an add-on is right for them.
- **Success rates:** Clinics should not mislead patients about how successful their treatments are and should ensure that rates are accurate and up to date on their websites and in advertising.

- Unfair terms: Terms and conditions should be fair and transparent.

As it develops its guidance, the CMA will consult publicly later this year and would like people to get in touch to share their experiences.

The CMA will also publish some advice for patients.

At this early stage, the CMA has not reached a view as to whether or not consumer protection law may have been broken. However, if it finds evidence that some clinics' practices are misleading or their terms are unfair, it could take enforcement action.

All information relating to this review can be found on the [Self-funded IVF page](#). This also sets out how people can get in touch with information on the concerns identified above.

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## [Putting trainees on the road to accountancy](#)

DVLA is investing in its future by putting its finance staff on the road to accountancy.

There are currently 12 staff being supported by the agency as they work towards accountancy qualifications. Six are on track to complete [Association of Accounting Technicians \(AAT\)](#), with the other six studying with the [Association of Chartered Certified Accountants \(ACCA\)](#).

One team member, Emily Price, aged 27, from Swansea, is nearing the end of her studies with the ACCA.

She says the study and work balance, as well as the experience offered by working at the DVLA, have been exceptional and provided her with the skills she needs for her future career.

"I've had the opportunity to do two roles so far," explains Emily.

"The first one involved programme accounts, and working on costing and budgets for projects within DVLA.

"Then, last year I moved to the financial reporting unit – that's the team that prepare financial statements, which is very much in line with the course and exams I'm studying for.

"Working at the DVLA while studying is really helping me, I can relate what I'm doing in my role to my exams and what I'm learning about to my job. It's going really well."

Emily, who has a degree in accountancy, joined the DVLA in 2016.

Currently on track to qualify as a chartered accountant in March, she began her ACCA studies at a local college, but later changed to home learning as it offered her greater flexibility.

“There is an online lecture with a tutor, which I can do from home,” she said.

“In college I had to take time to get there and sit through the class, whereas with the online lectures you can work in the day and do the lectures in the evening. It allows me to use my study leave when I want to.

“DVLA offers study leave so I get a specific set of hours per module. It is up to me how I use it, I could use half a day a week or bunch it up before an exam.

“The support I get from my team and the agency has helped enormously. It has been tough – the whole work, life and study balance is difficult at times but I’m getting through it and I know it will be worth it in the end.”

The agency has 14 accountants who qualified while training at the DVLA, and a further 13 that qualified before joining.

Rachael Cunningham, DVLA Finance Director, said:

We’re proud to invest in our people and it is great to see it paying off as Emily thrives as part of our team.

Training and qualifications like these ensure our staff are effective, efficient and capable to work at the highest standard.

[Find out more about our current vacancies and working for DVLA.](#)

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## **Karen Pierce appointed as Her Majesty’s Ambassador to the United States of America**

Dame Karen Pierce DCMG, currently Ambassador to the UN in New York and Permanent Representative at the UN Security Council, has been appointed Her Majesty’s Ambassador to the United States of America.

HM The Queen appointed the new Ambassador after the Prime Minister approved the successful candidate on the recommendation of the Foreign Secretary. The

request for agrément has now been submitted to the US Government. Karen Pierce is one of the UK's most experienced senior diplomats and will be the first woman to serve as HM Ambassador to the US.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

It is a time of huge opportunity for the friendship between the UK and US and I am delighted that Karen Pierce will take forward this exciting new chapter in our relationship. We're proud to be sending to Washington such an outstanding diplomat, and I warmly congratulate her on her appointment.

Karen Pierce said:

I am honoured to have been asked to represent the UK in the US. I think it is the UK's single most important relationship. There is a deep bond between Britain and the US, built on many pillars.

We have a fantastic cross-Government team across the US and I look forward to working with them to strengthen and even further deepen the special relationship between our two countries and peoples.

Dame Karen will take up her appointment after obtaining the United States' formal agrément.

## Biography

Karen Pierce has been the United Kingdom's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York since March 2018. Prior to this role, Karen served as the Director General for Political Affairs and Chief Operating Officer of the Foreign and Commonwealth in London, from 2016.

Karen joined the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in 1981. Her first role was in Tokyo between 1984 and 1987, after which she returned to the UK to work in the Security Policy Department. Karen worked in Washington as the Private Secretary to the British Ambassador to the United States between 1992 and 1995. Between 1996 and 2006, Karen held several positions in London including Team Leader for Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, Deputy Head of Eastern Adriatic (Balkans) Department, Head of Newsroom, Head of EU Department (Bilateral) and concurrently Head of Afghanistan Political Military Unit after 9/11 before returning to the Balkans as Balkans Coordinator from 2002 to 2006.

In 2006, Karen moved to New York for the first time to be the Deputy Permanent Representative and Ambassador at the UK Mission to the UN. In 2009, she returned to London to become the Director of South Asia and Afghanistan Department and the UK's Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. In 2012, Karen started her second multilateral role, this time in Geneva, where she was the Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UK Mission to the United Nations, World Trade Organization and Other International

Organisations until 2015. Between 2015 and 2016 Karen was the UK's Ambassador to Afghanistan.

## **Further information**

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# **Ten years of protecting people and supporting business**

Today more than 100,000 businesses are in primary authority partnerships that support them in protecting consumers whilst being given the confidence to invest and grow.

To mark the anniversary, a two-day conference will be held on February 26/27 to look at how Primary Authority has grown and where it will go next.

“The ability to address issues before they become problems, puts our members ahead of the compliance curve.”

David Richardson, Regulatory & Commercial Affairs Director, Wine and Spirit Trade Association

“Primary Authority is important to our business as it allows us to be in control – driving standards of compliance forward without the need for local authority intervention.”

Denise Din, Group H&S Compliance Manager, Bannatyne Fitness Ltd

## **Primary Authority facts**

- 90% of businesses in Primary Authority are Small and Medium Enterprises
- All the major UK supermarkets are in Primary Authority
- 136 trade associations and other groups acting as co-ordinators
- 191 local authorities participating in the scheme

Primary Authority enhances protection for consumers and workers by helping businesses comply with environmental health, trading standards or fire safety regulations through forming a legal partnership with one local authority which provides assured and tailored advice.

Other local authorities must heed this advice, which means businesses can invest with confidence in products, practices and procedures, knowing that the resources they devote to compliance are well spent.

Businesses can set up their own direct partnership with a local authority or, if they belong to a trade association (or other similar group), join an indirect partnership. This latter option is particularly important for smaller interest to businesses.

## **The benefits of Primary Authority**

### **People**

- are better protected and are helpful to comply with legislation
- are at reduced risk as local authorities can target resources on high-risk areas

### **Businesses:**

- have access to relevant, authoritative tailored advice
- gain recognition for robust compliance arrangements
- draw on an established means of meeting business regulations
- can be confident that they are protecting themselves and their customers

### **Regulators:**

- can support local economic growth through stronger business relationships
- can improve the consistency of local regulation
- can target resources on high-risk areas
- can develop their staff expertise via partnerships
- can protect front line services through cost recovery