

Press release: Foreign Secretary arrives in Sydney for AUKMIN 2017

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson arrives in Australia to attend the annual meeting of UK and Australian Foreign and Defence Ministers

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson arrives in Australia today (Tuesday 25 July 2017) to attend AUKMIN, the annual meeting of UK and Australian Foreign and Defence Ministers, which will take place on Thursday. The Secretaries of State will discuss regional security and defence, East Asia, the future of Europe, terrorism and promoting our common values.

During the visit he will also:

- Meet with Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop, to discuss the bilateral relationship, cyber security and the Commonwealth
- Deliver the Lowy Institute's annual Lowy Lecture on Thursday evening, speaking about the UK-Australia relationship, Britain in Asia and Britain in the world
- Take a tour of the Sydney Opera House, and meet with representatives of UK company Laing O'Rourke, who are currently refurbishing the Opera House
- Visit the Tyro Fintech hub, to promote collaboration between the UK and Australian fintech sectors
- Meet with the leaders of top UK investors in Australia, and with major Australian investors in the UK to discuss UK-Australia trade and business opportunities

The Foreign Secretary said:

The bonds of kinship between Britain and Australia are deep and enduring. It is fantastic to be back in Australia, my first time as Foreign Secretary. Our relationship is based on shared history, interests and values, with large numbers of our nationals making each other's countries home.

I look forward to strengthening even further our partnerships on global challenges and opportunities, such as North Korea, the fight against extremism and terror, modern slavery and trade. Talks with

businesses and government on boosting trade between us when we leave the EU will also be at the top of agenda. I can't wait to catch up with old friends and to make new ones.

The Foreign Secretary's visit to Australia is the last stop in a three country trip. He held two days of positive talks in Japan last week, before moving on to New Zealand and finally Australia.

Further information

News story: Chief of the Defence Staff strengthens bonds with India

Under the umbrella of the 2015 Defence and International Security Partnership (DISP), Sir Stuart met senior Indian military figures, including the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC), currently Admiral Sunil Lanba; the Chief of the Army Staff, General Bipin Rawat; and the General Officer Commanding in Chief Eastern Command, Lieutenant General Praveen Bakshi. Sir Stuart also met with the Indian Defence minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, and the National Security Advisor, Shri Ajit Doval.

Sir Stuart's exchanges centred on the continued growing defence relationship through the recently established Capability Partnerships, the joint threats of terrorism and extremism faced globally, upcoming exercises and UN Peacekeeping among other topics.

UK Chief of the Defence Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach said:

My interactions with the civilian and political officials have served to underpin our already strong bonds. Our shared values provide a platform on which, as partners, we can contribute to regional and global security and jointly develop cutting edge capabilities for our armed forces. Whether beating terror, securing peace and stability through better peacekeeping or sharing operational knowledge and technology, as defence partners, we are world beaters.

The Chief of the Defence Staff visited Delhi and Kolkata over four days. In addition to meetings with senior military and civilian officials, he laid a wreath at India Gate in commemoration of the 74,000 Indians who served and died in the First World War.

Chief of Defence Staff Sir Stuart Peach presents a memento to Admiral Sunil

Lanba PVSM AVSM ADC, Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC).
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Sir Stuart also interacted with students at the prestigious National Defence College, India's principal establishment for strategic learning for senior Indian and selected international Defence officers. His trip was completed by a visit to the Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd, the premier Warship building Company in India.

The UK's and India's Armed Forces continue to benefit from a close relationship and Sir Stuart's visit fortifies this. Both countries' Armed Forces are undergoing a transformation in some guise and the learning experiences from each other in areas like the joint aircraft carrier projects, to combatting terrorism, develops best practice between global partners.

News story: New Director Generals to head HMRC's Customer Services and Customer Compliance Groups

Angela MacDonald, currently Operational Excellence Director in HMRC, will step up to lead the Customer Services Group, which oversees most of HMRC's interaction with individual taxpayers, tax credits recipients, and small and mid-sized businesses online, by phone or face-to-face.

Penny Ciniewicz, currently Chief Executive of the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), will now return to HMRC to lead the Customer Compliance Group, which includes compliance for all customer groups, from large businesses to individuals, as well as HMRC's counter-avoidance and fraud investigation functions.

Melissa Tatton, currently Director for Individuals and Small Business Compliance, HMRC, will step up to take over as Chief Executive for the VOA.

Approved by the Prime Minister, these appointments follow an extensive competition across the Civil Service and public and private sectors.

Chief Executive, Jon Thompson, said:

I'd like to congratulate Melissa, Penny and Angela on their appointments, and am delighted to welcome them to HMRC's Executive Committee. They bring a wealth of capability, leadership and experience with them, and will have vital roles to play in helping build our future and achieve our vision of becoming a world-class

organisation.

Melissa Tatton said:

I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to lead the Valuation Office Agency, given its strong delivery track record, as it continues to transform, and to be joining HMRC's Executive Committee.

Penny Ciniewicz said:

It's a privilege to be returning to HMRC after nearly eight years as Chief Executive for the VOA. I'm delighted to have the opportunity to build on the work of Jennie Granger in ensuring we reduce the tax gap and promote compliance, ensuring we bring in the money that pays for the UK's public services.

Angela MacDonald said:

As Operational Excellence Director, I see firsthand the commitment and passion among our people for delivering high-quality customer service. This is a fantastic opportunity and it is a privilege to follow in Ruth Owen's footsteps, investing in and building the best service we can for all our customers, now and in the future.

Angela will take up the DG Customer Services Group appointment on 7 August. Penny and Melissa will take up the DG Customer Compliance Group and Chief Executive, VOA, appointments on 4 September, respectively.

1. Penny Ciniewicz was appointed Chief Executive, Valuation Office Agency in September 2009, having joined HMRC in 2006. Her previous posts include:
 - Director of Knowledge, Analysis and Intelligence, HMRC (2007-2009)
 - Principal Private Secretary to the Cabinet Secretary, Cabinet Office (2004-2006)
 - Director Aerospace and Defence, Department for Trade and Industry (2002-2004)
2. Angela MacDonald was appointed Director for Operational Excellence, HMRC in January 2017. Her previous posts include:
 - Operational Excellence Director, Department for Work and Pensions (2013-17)
 - Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (2009-13)
 - Before joining the Civil Service, Angela worked in the Financial Services Industry, gaining experience across a broad range of roles.
3. Melissa joined the Inland Revenue as a graduate tax inspector and has forged a successful career as a tax leader across a wide range of roles.

Melissa was appointed to her current post as Director for Individuals and Small Business Compliance in 2014. Before that she held the following posts:

- Director, Large Business Service (LBS), HMRC (2011-14)
- Deputy Director, Business International, HMRC (2009-11)
- Melissa was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in June 2016.

[News story: New Chief Executive appointed to lead Valuation Office Agency](#)

Melissa Tatton has been appointed on promotion to head up the Valuation Office Agency.

The Valuation Office Agency, an executive agency of HM Revenue and Customs, is responsible for providing the government with the valuations and property advice needed to support taxation and benefits.

This follows the appointment of current Chief Executive, Penny Ciniewicz, as new Director General for Customer Compliance at HMRC.

HMRC Chief Executive, Jon Thompson said:

I'd like to congratulate Melissa on this important appointment. The Valuation Office Agency plays a vital role in providing the valuations and property advice required to support taxation and benefits. I look forward to Melissa joining the Executive Committee, and to becoming a valued member of the leadership team".

Melissa Tatton said:

I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to lead the Valuation Office Agency as it continues to invest in and improve its services, and to be joining HMRC's Executive Committee. It's vital that VOA customers continue to have confidence in its valuations and advice, and I'm honoured to build on the excellent work that Penny Ciniewicz has led over the past eight years.

Melissa will take up her new role from 4 September.

Melissa joined the Inland Revenue as a graduate tax inspector and has forged a successful career as a tax leader across a wide range of roles. Melissa was appointed to her current post as Director for Individuals and Small Business Compliance in 2014. Before that she held the following posts:

- Director, Large Business Service (LBS), HMRC (2011-14)
- Deputy Director, Business International, HMRC (2009-11)
- Melissa was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in June 2016

[Press release: Call for more industry action to stop recruitment fraud](#)

Recruitment companies must do more to help stamp out the rapidly growing issue of job scams, Employment Minister Damian Hinds has said.

Recruitment fraud is a serious, yet lesser-known crime which often goes unreported by jobseekers. However research shows that 1 in 10 jobseekers have been a victim of a job scam.

Victims are typically on low income and are duped into applying for a fake job. They are asked to pay up-front costs for items like security checks, with these victims losing on average up to £500.

The Employment Minister wants more organisations to do their part to highlight this serious issue, and is challenging big players and jobs boards to take action by signing up to the SAFERjobs campaign.

Employment Minister, Damian Hinds, said:

It's unacceptable that jobseekers, typically ordinary people on low income, are being targeted by fraudsters. Looking for work can be tough enough and even the smallest setback can derail the most promising careers.

Many of the people affected are just looking to provide for their families, and instead face financial hardship at no fault of their own. I want more of these fraudsters caught and to feel the full extent of the law.

That's why I'm calling on more recruitment companies and job boards to take their responsibilities seriously, and follow our lead by promoting the excellent work of SAFERjobs.

The rallying call follows the success of DWP in promoting the non-profit,

joint industry and law enforcement organisation SAFERjobs through the government's job site Universal Jobmatch. This has increased the number of people accessing information on job scams six-fold.

The chairman of SAFERjobs, Keith Rosser:

Recruitment fraud is varied and affects people in different ways. It can be a fake job offer advising that the individual needs to pay for security checks, online training, visas or insurance, or a work-from-home scam conning people into money laundering.

Unfortunately, job scams are on the rise and in the last 2 years we have witnessed a 300% rise in recruitment related fraud and misconduct.

SAFERjobs offers free advice to jobseekers and agency workers to ensure people do not fall foul of scams or illegal practice. Look for recruiters who partner with SAFERjobs for a safer job search.

One person affected is Chloe, who was asked to provide money up front for DBS checks to work in childcare. In total she was scammed out of £125.

Everything about the role looked great, and I was advised it would take between 6 to 8 weeks for the checks to be completed. However, once I paid the money red flags started to appear when I didn't hear anything back from the company.

This is not how to treat people. This has caused me so much stress over the past couple of months, right when my income is low and I'm trying to find work.

I would like to get my money back and have opened up a fraud investigation with the support of SAFERjobs – I want to stop this agency from doing this to other people.

Top tips

Jobseekers should always be careful to protect themselves and below are some basic tips on being safe when looking for work.

Never part with money – employers should pay employees, not the other way round. Someone should be suspicious if asked to pay for any fees upfront for security checks, visas or training.

Never phone the company for an interview – premium rate phone scams are common. This is where an individual calls a pay-for number thinking it's an interview, when actually they are paying for every minute they stay on hold.

Never provide personal details – bank account details, National Insurance

number, date of birth, driving licence or utility bill information that are not relevant to an application process. Such information should also not be included in a CV.

Never do everything online – whilst technology is a great enabler to help people find work, at some point a job discussion should lead to telephone or face to face an interview. Hiring agents who keep the relationship solely to email must be treated extremely cautiously.

Do some research – find out about the company that the job is with. Check landline telephone numbers to confirm the job is real, and use social media and similar sources to dig deeper into the organisations to see their reputation.

Anyone in doubt about a job advert should check in with [SAFERjobs](#) for free advice.

More information

SAFERjobs is a non-profit, joint industry and law enforcement organisation designed to support job seekers, agency staff, and contractors with any suspected fraud, malpractice, breach of legislation, or poor experience they may encounter. SAFERjobs is supported by:

- DWP
- BEIS
- Metropolitan Police
- and other government and industry organisations

Typical cost of an average scam is £4,000, according to figures from Action Fraud.

DWP formed a partnership with SAFERjobs in 2015 and since then have shared good practices and intelligence. The department wrote to a number of employers who used Universal Jobmatch encouraging them to register with SAFERjobs last year.

DWP agreed with SAFERjobs in June 2015 to put their website link on the Universal Jobmatch site to raise awareness and protect jobseekers. Following this, traffic to the site increased from around 740 to more than 70,000 hits the next month. Average monthly hits to the site are now around 50,000. Eighteen of the top 25 job boards in the UK now promote SAFERjobs.

A study of 10,000 job seekers by CV Library in conjunction with SAFERjobs in September 2016 found that 10% had been a victim of a job scam. Of those that have been targeted, almost half (46.7%) suffered financial loss and a third (33.7%) of students feel vulnerable when job hunting. In the last 12 months more than 444,400 people have sought advice on staying safe in their job search and other labour market issues from SAFERjobs. The year before that they had 322,700 queries (June 2016 to June 2017), the year before that just

19,000 (June 2015 to June 2016).

Reports to SAFERjobs have increased by 300% in the past year alone (between September 2015 and September 2016).

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