



**THE HON DR CRAIG EMERSON MP**  
MINISTER FOR TRADE

Transcript  
The World Today, ABC Radio

17 May 2011

E&OE

---

*Subjects: Austrade's new direction.*

---

- PRESENTER:** The first comprehensive review of Austrade in 20 years has found that the organisation's resources have spread too thinly and it's suffered from a lack of focus. The Trade Minister Craig Emerson told Naomi Woodley that the government is reshaping Austrade's activities so that it can be more effective for Australian businesses.
- CRAIG EMERSON:** The purpose of the new orientation of Austrade is to focus on emerging and frontier markets, where Australian businesses find it very costly to obtain information, work out how to get through the system in these countries, and yet they are incredibly important growth economies from an Australian business point of view.
- NAOMI WOODLEY:** In this shift to emerging markets, Austrade will be closing smaller offices in Europe and North America. How many are going to be closed, and is this going to have any impact on staff levels at Austrade?
- EMERSON:** Well, I would hope that the review would be seen in a more positive light than "the review equals the closure of offices". I've just indicated that this is an exciting, new chapter for Austrade which is about the opening of offices in countries like Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Ghana

and Colombia, just to name a few. So the thrust of the review is to increase its presence in emerging and frontier markets. Of course, we have to recognise the realities of tight fiscal constraints, and that means that some offices in North America and Europe would close. But we will concentrate very heavily in those countries on promoting foreign investment from North America and Europe. Insofar as trade is concerned, there will still be a heavy trade promotion presence, but in addition to that you've got private corporations in those countries that facilitate trade between Australia, North America and Europe.

WOODLEY: You've also said that services to Australian businesses from Austrade will focus on those which are ready to take on the international marketplace. Is that also about maximising the amount of work that Austrade is able to do?

EMERSON: Under the previous government, there was an ambition to double the number of exporters. As a consequence, if Austrade found a business that exported \$500 worth of produce in a year it could tick a box and say that it had increased the number of exporters. What we're saying is that the objective needs to be a sustained increase in export earnings, and that means dealing most specifically at the personal level with those businesses that are getting close to being ready to export.

WOODLEY: Have you set similar targets yourself? What would you like to see as the, I guess, the end result of this new direction?

EMERSON: I'm not setting a specific target, because targets are created in order to be missed - and that's what happened with the previous government. What we are doing is ensuring that Australian businesses can get into emerging and frontier markets, rapidly-growing markets that have exciting commercial opportunities but for which the search costs for Australia are very high.

PRESENTER: That's the Trade Minister Craig Emerson speaking to Naomi Woodley.