

The Hon Stephen Smith MP

AUSTRALIAN MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Media release

Joint media release with

The Hon Simon Crean, Minister for Trade

29 July 2008

Visit to Australia by Chile's Minister for Foreign Affairs

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Stephen Smith, and Minister for Trade, Simon Crean, welcomed the visit to Australia of Chile's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Alejandro Foxley, from 28-31 July.

Mr Foxley and Mr Smith will sign the Australia-Chile Free Trade Agreement at Parliament House in Canberra on Wednesday, 30 July.

Mr Smith said "This Free Trade Agreement, the first to be concluded by the new Australian Government, is the most comprehensive Free Trade Agreement Australia has negotiated".

"Upon entry into force, the Agreement will eliminate 97 per cent of tariffs on existing merchandise trade and 100 per cent of tariffs on existing merchandise trade by 2015."

Mr Crean, who is in Geneva at the WTO Ministerial meeting on the Doha round, said "This is a high-quality agreement where commitments go beyond what each country has committed at the WTO.

"The Australia-Chile Free Trade Agreement will reinforce the contribution of both countries to the multilateral trading system and serve as an excellent model for other APEC economies as they work towards deeper economic integration."

Mr Smith will also hold talks with Mr Foxley on a range of bilateral and global issues on Wednesday.

Mr Foxley will also have a meeting with Prime Minister Kevin Rudd during his visit.

While in Australia Mr Foxley will pursue a number of private agreements to strengthen bilateral education linkages following the announcement by the Chilean Government in May of an expanded international scholarship program.

Australia and Chile enjoy strong bilateral relations based on shared interests and cooperation, including in APEC and the Cairns Group. Two-way trade is currently valued at more than \$850 million a year and the stock of Australian investment in Chile currently exceeds US\$3 billion.

- [Australia-Chile FTA - Facts at a glance](#)
- [Australia-Chile FTA - The Deal at a glance](#)

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