



Australian High Commission Colombo

Media Release

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Australia-Sri Lanka trade reaches \$1.3billion

Trade between Australia and Sri Lanka has surged to a record high of A\$1.3 billion in 2016-17, on the back of strong growth in trade in services, up more than 27 per cent. Growth for the year overall was more than 15 per cent, continuing the strong trend growth of 8.6 per cent over the past five years.

Education continues to grow as a pillar of the economic relationship with more than 9500 enrolments by Sri Lankan students to study in Australia and thousands more pursuing Australian-affiliated studies locally. The rapid growth in Australian tourists visiting Sri Lanka (up almost 10 per cent for the year) saw Sri Lanka's services exports to Australia grow by more than 36 per cent.

Merchandise trade remained steady at around \$480 million, based on Sri Lanka's traditional strengths in tea, textiles and rubber. Garments exports have grown strongly in the past year reflecting the decision by Australian retailers to source garments from Sri Lanka. Australia's major exports of vegetables, dairy, wheat and machinery have also performed well. There are now more high quality Australian goods appearing on Sri Lankan supermarket shelves.

Welcoming the trade figures, Australia's High Commissioner Bryce Hutchesson said 'this year's figures reflects the steady growth in commercial engagement between our two countries. As close friends and Indian ocean neighbours, we're now seeing the trade and investment relationship expand as Sri Lanka's economy moves forwards and Australian companies take an increased interest in the Sri Lankan market.'

'During Prime Minister Turnbull's visit to Sri Lanka in November 2017, we signed the Australia-Sri Lanka Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement. The Arrangement provides a practical forum for our two governments to address trade issues. Our shared aim is to open up new commercial opportunities for business. I'm pleased that inaugural talks under the Arrangement will take place in Canberra in April 2018.'

'With the recent launch of direct flights between Colombo and Melbourne, we anticipate we will see continued strong trade growth in 2017-18.'

More data on Australia-Sri Lanka trade can be found at:

<http://dfat.gov.au/trade/resources/trade-statistics/pages/trade-statistics.aspx>