



ASSISTANT TREASURER

<http://assistant.treasurer.gov.au>

**PRESS
RELEASE**

AUSTRALIA ENGAGES KEY GLOBAL ISLAMIC FINANCE REGULATORY AND BANKING LEADERS

The Assistant Treasurer, Senator the Hon Nick Sherry, has today held a series of talks with the international leadership of the Islamic finance regulatory and banking sectors.

Visiting Manama, Bahrain on a visit to the Gulf, the Assistant Treasurer met with the Central Bank of Bahrain and key government economic and banking officials.

In addition, the Assistant Treasurer was the first Australian official representative to meet with the General Council for Islamic Banks and Financial Institutions and the Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI).

The meeting with AAOIFI included wide-ranging discussions with Dr Mohamad Nedal Alchaar, AAOIFI Secretary General.

“As I have indicated, Australia is committed to ensuring we can accommodate Shariah-compliant finance, banking, insurance and other financial services products within our tax, regulatory and prudential codes,” said the Assistant Treasurer.

“Holding talks with the key international agencies leading the evolution and expansion of Islamic banking across the world is a major step forward in making sure this rapidly growing \$1 trillion-plus industry knows we’re very serious about these reforms back in Canberra.”

Today’s talks follow the Rudd Government’s announcement that the Board of Taxation would undertake a comprehensive review of Australia’s tax laws to ensure that, wherever possible, they do not inhibit the expansion of Islamic finance, banking and insurance products.

“The Bahrain Central Bank made a very generous offer today to work with Australian regulators as we boost our readiness for a range of Shariah-compliant products, both wholesale and retail.”

The Assistant Treasurer also visited Deloitte’s Islamic Finance Knowledge Centre in Bahrain and addressed a national roundtable of key figures from the Islamic finance industry in the Gulf region.

MANAMA, BAHRAIN

28 April 2010 (Manama) / 29 April 2010 (AEST)

Media Contacts: Adam Wand (Manama) 0414 89 89 81
Joe Scavo (Canberra) 0413 800 757