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AustChamThailand

PATRON

His Excellency William Paterson PSM
Australian Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand

PRESIDENT

Shane Torr
ISM Technology Recruitment
Portfolio: Embassy Liaison; Foreign Chambers/Presidents; ATBC; Regional AustChams

VICE-PRESIDENTS

Khun Sutipong Ittipong
Siam City Bank
Portfolio: Community Services

Peter Emblin

Thai Strategic Capital Management Ltd
Portfolio: Events; Seminars and Luncheons; BOI; Marketing and PR

TREASURER

Bruce Wunderlich
Oxyvital (Thailand)
Portfolio: Treasury

DIRECTORS

John Anderson
Meinhardt (Thailand)
Portfolio: Events-Awards; Industry Groups

Andrew Durieux

Coverage
Portfolio: Events-AFL; Business Content; BCP

Brett Gannaway

Siam Ocean World
Portfolio: Sponsorship; Events-Ball

Anne Lewinski

The Sukhothai Bangkok
Portfolio: Membership

Khun Seksan Tammakoon

Bangkok Hospital Medical Center
Portfolio: Alumni

Belinda Skinner

talent+
Portfolio: Communications

Ben Yong

Baker & McKenzie
Portfolio: Business Advocacy; Joint Foreign Chambers; TAFTA; Legal

Saeed Zaki

dwp
Portfolio: Industry Groups/Business Advocacy; Sustainable Development; CSR

EX OFFICIO

Jodie McAlister
Trade Commissioner, Austrade

COORDINATORS

Paul Whyte and Paul Wilkinson
Eastern Seaboard (ESB) Coordinators
Email: esb@ustchamthailand.com

Steve Brajak

Phuket Coordinator
Email: phuket@ustchamthailand.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Martin Kyle
Australian-Thai Chamber of Commerce
20th Floor, Thai CC Tower
889 South Sathorn Road
Bangkok 10120
Tel.: +66 2 210 0216
Fax: +66 2 675 6696
execdirector@ustchamthailand.com
www.ustchamthailand.com

Advance

Editorial Committee

Shane Torr, Belinda Skinner, Robert Taylor, Martin Kyle, Gary Woollacott, Gregers Moller

Marketing & Production

Scand-Media Corp. Ltd
4/41-42 Moo 3, Thanyakarn Village
Ramintra Soi 14, Bangkok
Tel.: +66 2 943-7166/8
Fax: +66 2 943-7169
scandmedia@scandmedia.com

Advertising

Finn Balslev
Email: finn@scandmedia.com

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Dampened Spirits



Although local politics have again been making headlines, the impact on the economy from this, domestic inflationary concerns and global trends – including the price of oil – have become a major concern for businesses in Thailand. Some economic commentators have suggested we may be in for tighter times for the rest of the year – perhaps longer. AustCham is aware of this and we will continue to strive to deliver good value to members.

This month we welcome Paul Grigson, Australia's new Ambassador to Thailand. Mr Grigson is a senior career officer with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and his previous overseas postings include having served as Ambassador in Rangoon (2003-04), Chief Negotiator, Peace Monitoring Group in Bougainville (2000) and Deputy Head of Mission in Phnom Penh (1993-95). We wish him and his family all the best with the new role.

The Chamber had another good month with key events including a very well attended Commonwealth Sundowners. Many thanks to our sponsors, Raimon Land and The Sukhothai, as well as to all those Chambers and members who supported us. We held our traditional Big-Backyard Barbie at NIST which again proved to be a hit, particularly for those members with children. We capped off the month with a wonderful farewell luncheon for our Ambassador, His Excellency Bill Paterson, and his wife Helen, giving the Chamber and its members an opportunity to thank the Patersons for the fantastic support they have provided us.

We also held our third annual charity golf tournament on the Eastern Seaboard; this was once again a tremendous success with a full field turnout and it will allow us to make a significant donation to the Camillian Centre near Rayong. Sincere thanks go to ESB Coordinator Paul Wilkinson for his marvelous efforts in organising the day. Please see next month's *Advance* for photos from this event.

Earlier this year the Chamber commissioned a wide-ranging members' survey to get their views on the Chamber and the services it provides. The results were overwhelmingly positive with very good feedback about our social and business networking functions (particularly Sundowners) as well as other areas such as our community services program. Your comments about looking to the Chamber for more business matching, information, and lobbying have been noted and we will work to improve our services in these areas. A summary of the results is available to members via our website. As always, if you have any suggestions on how we can improve, please let us know.

On behalf of the AustCham Directors, best wishes for your business success. ■

Shane Torr
President, AustCham Thailand
www.ustchamthailand.com