



## AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES CENTRE

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Level 16, 1 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, Australia

Media Release

10 August 2010

### **Australia's first global disputes centre opens in Sydney**

Australia is set to become a global player in the booming market for cross border dispute resolution following the opening of the Australian International Disputes Centre in Sydney.

Jointly funded by the Australian and NSW state governments and Australia's only international arbitration administrator, the Australian Centre for International Commercial Arbitration, the state of the art facility will allow national and foreign companies to resolve commercial disputes outside the court system without resorting to costly and lengthy litigation.

A PricewaterhouseCoopers survey, 'International Arbitration: Corporate attitudes and practices', revealed 73% of corporations prefer to use arbitration to resolve their cross-border disputes rather than transnational litigation and saw arbitration as a means to successfully preserve business relationships.

ACICA President and Head of Clayton Utz's International Arbitration and Major Projects Group, Professor Doug Jones AM said: "International arbitration has emerged as the process of choice for businesses in the global economy. Investors want to avoid the uncertainty of litigation in a foreign court system with the associated lack of familiarity over processes and in some cases excessive time and costs. The decision concerning Chevron Corp is a recent example."

(In March Chevron Corp was awarded \$700 million by The Hague-based Permanent Court of International Arbitration that ruled in favor of its claim against Ecuador over past operations at its Texaco unit. The tribunal found that Ecuador's courts delayed rulings on a contract dispute between Texaco and the Ecuadorian government, thus violating international law. Chevron was awarded principal damages and interest as of 22 December, 2006, pending further proceedings to determine taxes, interest and costs. The ruling marked a victory for the USA's second-largest energy company following four decades of escalating disputes over oil production in the South American nation.)

The centre has been endorsed by Australian business with Chief Executive of the Australian Industry Group, Mrs Heather Ridout saying: "Commercial disputes are a reality of doing business; minimising them and resolving them well is the key. The centre's emphasis on providing a world class facility and capability for resolution, will be strongly welcomed and supported by Australian and regional business.

International lawyer, Michelle Sindler has been appointed the inaugural Chief Executive of the Centre.

Ms Sindler returns to Australia after a successful practice in international arbitration and dispute resolution in Europe. AIDC's Chairman, the Hon Trevor Morling QC said: "Michelle has

an impressive background in alternative dispute resolution, with a particular focus on international arbitration. The Board unanimously agree that she will be an asset to the Centre.”

The Centre was officially opened by the Australian Attorney General Robert McClelland and NSW State Attorney General John Hatzistergos in the presence of Chief Justice of the Federal Court of Australia Patrick Keane, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of NSW James Spigelman and other distinguished guests.

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### **About the Australian International Disputes Centre (AIDC)**

The Australian International Disputes Centre is Australia’s premier dispute resolution venue. Established in 2010 with the assistance of the Australian Government and the Government of the State of New South Wales, the Centre houses leading ADR providers which include the Australian Centre for International Commercial Arbitration (ACICA), the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (Australia) Limited (CI Arb), the Australian Maritime and Transport Arbitration Commission (AMTAC) and the Australian Commercial Disputes Centre (ACDC). The Centre offers a premier one stop full alternative dispute resolution service including panels of accredited dispute resolvers. For more information visit [www.disputescentre.com.au](http://www.disputescentre.com.au)