



Welcome remarks for visit by Israeli President

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Your Excellency, President Rivlin; Israeli Ambassador to Australia Mark Sofer; Australian Ambassador to Israel Chris Cannan; Deputy Israeli Ambassador to Australia Ron Gerstenfeld; United States Consul General Sharon Hudson-Deane; Consul General of Ireland Owen Feeney; Israel Trade Commissioner Shai Zarivatch; members of the President's delegation; and ladies and gentlemen—welcome to ASX. It is a great pleasure to host you.

President Rivlin I believe you have the honour of being the first serving Head of State to ring the ASX bell!

For the past six years, ASX has been developing and executing a strategy to attract quality technology companies from across the world to list and access capital in Australia. No technology strategy would be complete without a focus on Israel. It is one of the most dynamic and entrepreneurial of countries. Its 'start-up nation' nickname is clearly well-chosen.

During this period, ASX has visited Israel over a dozen times. We've spoken to companies about listing on ASX and we've showcased our trading and data services businesses too. We've proudly sponsored a range of key Israeli tech conferences in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

Today, we have 21 Israeli companies listed on ASX, valued at over \$1.2 billion. Israel is one of ASX's top three source countries for foreign listings. Accessing capital via ASX has helped Israeli companies grow and provided new opportunities for Australian investors.

Last week we launched, with much fanfare, the new S&P/ASX All Technology Index. It already contains US, New Zealand and European companies. I'm confident it won't be long before we have an Israeli tech champion too.

The cornerstone of our engagement with Israel is the annual 'ASX in Israel week', where we take leading Australian bankers, lawyers and fund managers to Israel to examine the 'promise' of the Promised Land. They are rarely disappointed.

And, it's hard not to be impressed when—very deliberately—we spend the first few days exploring places such as the Dead Sea, Masada and the Old City of Jerusalem.

It was my great privilege to lead an ASX delegation to Israel in late 2017, coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the battle of Be'er Sheva. This, of course, is considered the last great cavalry charge in history, when ANZAC forces helped end Ottoman Turk rule, which laid the foundations for the establishment of the modern state of Israel.

Three things I will not forget from that visit were

1. the drive and passion of the CEO's we saw—exemplifying the start-up nation mentality,
2. the incredible cultural experience that is Jerusalem, and
3. how come we know so little in Australia about our famous exploits at Be'er Sheva.

I'm pleased to advise that we're already deep in preparation for the fourth annual 'ASX in Israel Week' which will commence in Jerusalem on 5 June and be led by ASX Director Damian Roche, who is here today if you want to book your seat!

This annual event has been central to increasing capital flows between Australia and Israel, and creating investment and employment opportunities in both countries.

We have another connection too. We know that the Israel Securities Authority—the ISA is exploring how to improve capital markets in Israel using blockchain technology. ASX's key partner in the development of a blockchain solution for Australia's capital markets, Digital Asset, which was co-founded and is led by an Israeli is looking to work closely with the ISA to promote innovation and efficiency in Israel's capital markets.

The Australia-Israel connection is long and deep. ASX is proud that it includes a growing engagement between our two capital markets. This is to the benefit of both our economies.

Once again, thank you for visiting ASX. It is a privilege to host you.