



Inquiry into strengthening Australia's trade and investment relations with Africa

SUBMISSION

to the

Committee Secretary

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

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About

Vitti Capital is a Sydney based stockbroking and corporate advisory firm co-founded by Fredrick Chege in 2023 assisting clients in Australia and parts of Africa such as Kenya manage their portfolios, raise funds for their businesses and locate opportunities for mergers and acquisitions for corporates.

Website: <https://vitti.capital/>

The **African Australian Advocacy Centre (AAAC)** promotes and advocates for the human rights of African Australian communities through advocacy, research, and collaboration with different not for profit groups and other stakeholders, including all levels of government, academia, and business. Noel Zihabamwe is the Chair and Founder.

Website: <https://www.africanaustralianadvocacy.org.au/>

The African Professionals of Australia (APA)'s aim is to empowering African professionals to reach their full potential in their chosen field by creating a vibrant community where professionals excel personally and collectively and positively impact the community . Fredrick is the current NSW state chapter head and has been since early 2024.

Website: <https://www.apaaau.com/>

Introduction

Of the 55 African member states of the African Union¹, Australia has a consulate, embassy or high commission in 18 African countries (Australian Government, 2025a) while Australia hosts 17 African chanceries, embassies and high commissions onshore (Australian Government, 2025b). Both instances are detailed in the Appendix, Tables A1 and A2.

2024 figures showed that Australia imported US\$ 3.1 billion and exported US\$ 2.9 billion worth of goods and services from/to African nations (Euromonitor International, 2025) with the bulk of the trade involving wood products, machines, metals, electronics, fuels and vegetables (World Integrated Trade Solution, 2025). It is worth noting that numerous sources report figures of Africa and Middle East/West Asia with Australia, inflating reality.

On a continental level, the value of exports from Australia to Africa mirrored that of Australia to Latin America on absolute levels but Latin America beat Africa in exports to Australia by about US \$ 3 billion, effectively pitting Africa as the least traded continent with Australia (Euromonitor International, 2025). Worthwhile to note nuances between Africa and Latin America and are elucidated in Table 1.

Table 1 Nuances between Africa and Latin America

	<u>Africa</u>	<u>Latin America</u>
GDP	US \$ 2.9 trillion	US \$ 6.7 trillion
Population	1.3 billion	656 million
GDP per capita	US \$2,000	US \$21,000
Land size	30.4 million km ²	20.1 million km ²
Number of countries	55	20

Source: World Bank Group (2025a, 2025b, 2025c)

Investments from Australia to African countries are felt across various sectors, predominantly mining with several ASX players such as Lindian Resources (2025) developing one of the world's largest rare earths mining project, Kangakunde in Malawi, Base Resources (2025) having coming to the end of their Kvale mineral sands mine in Kenya, West African Resources (2025) on track to produce 4 million ounces of gold in Burkina Faso and Simandou mine in Guinea that holds the world's largest very high grade un-tapped iron ore reserves that is co-developed by Rio Tinto (2025).

The Australian government provides overseas development assistance (ODA) with cooperation under Direct Aid Program (DAP) (Australian Government, 2025c), Australia – Africa Regional Development Partnership (Australian Government, 2025d) and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) (Australian Government, 2025e). These are geared to community organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and multilateral agencies to deliver economic growth, security, food security and human development.

¹ This list excludes disputed territories and sovereign states.

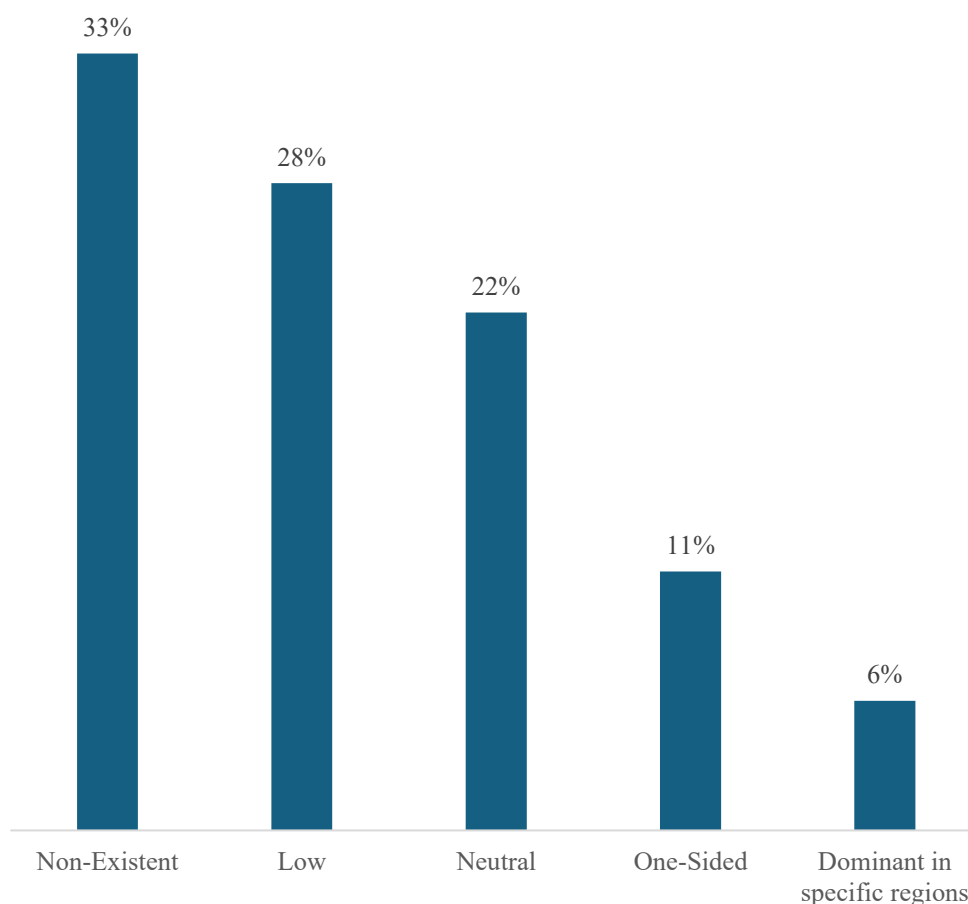
Building on the 2019 Australian Government response to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee report (Australian Government, 2019) and to better understand the barriers, opportunities and potential for growth of trade and investments across African countries and Australia, we administered a survey to members and community affiliates of the African Professionals of Australia (APA).

The Survey

Administered online via Microsoft Forms to nation-wide members and community affiliates of APA that includes groups such as the African Australian Advocacy Centre (AAAC), the Kenya Community of NSW (KCNSW) among others, the survey was open for 2 weeks, from Wednesday 26th November 2025 to Wednesday 10th December 2025. Participants were recruited using community affiliate entities and we received a total of 60 responses.

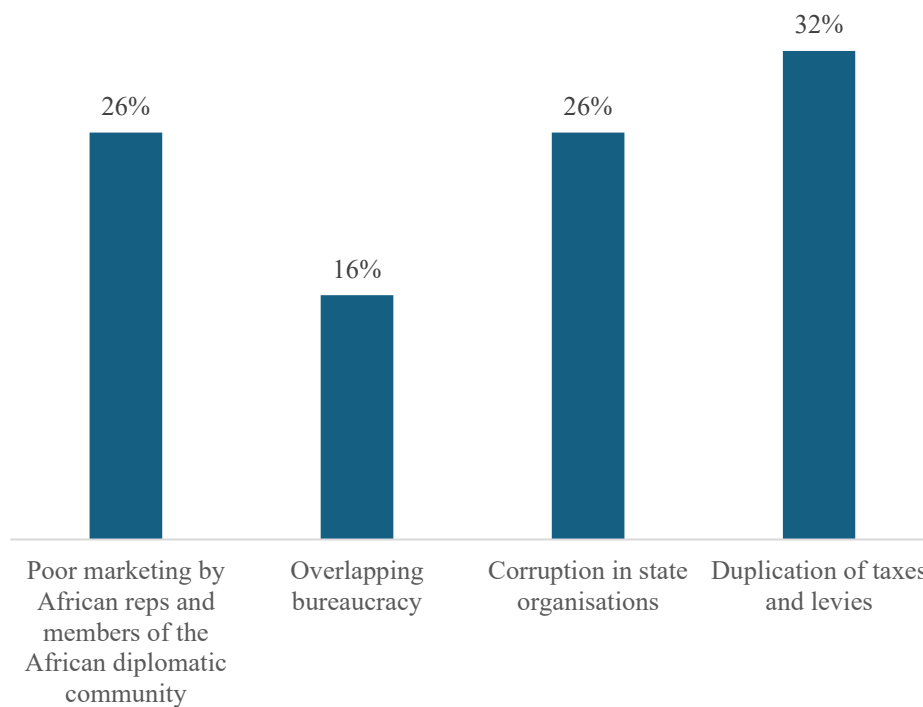
Responses were as follows:

1. What is the nature of Australia's existing trade and investment relations with countries in Africa?



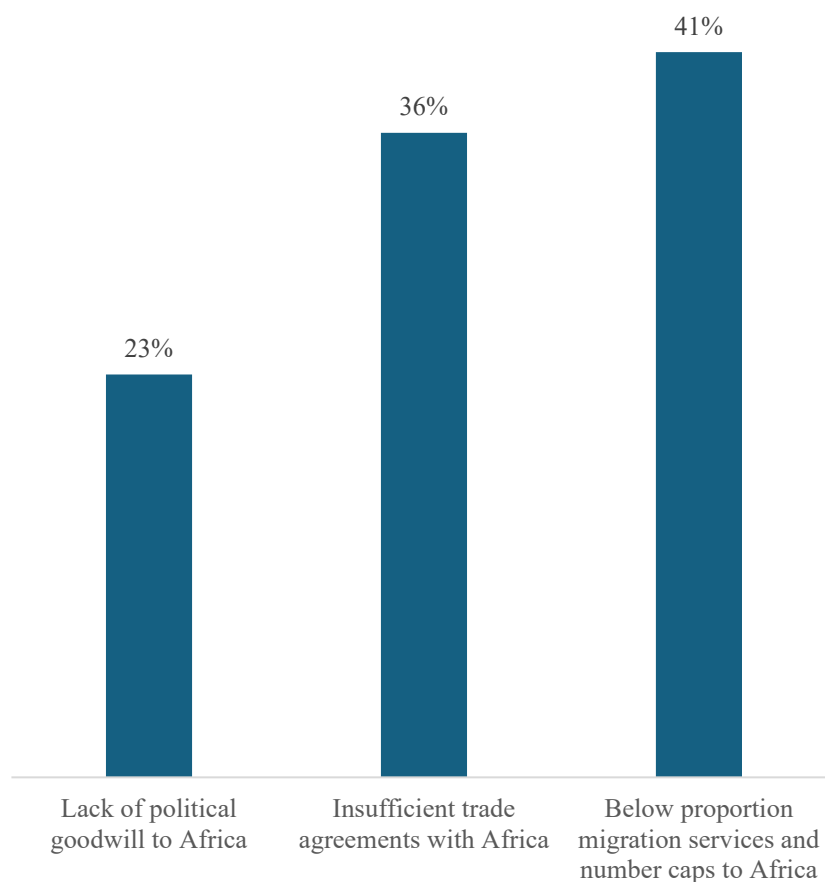
A vast majority of respondents (61%) reported non-existent or low existing trade and investment relations between Australia and Africa. About a fifth of all respondents were neutral and a slim minority (6%) reported that trade was dominant in specific regions such as resource rich countries i.e. South Africa with the rest of the continent being left out.

2. Barriers and impediments to trade and investment (African side)



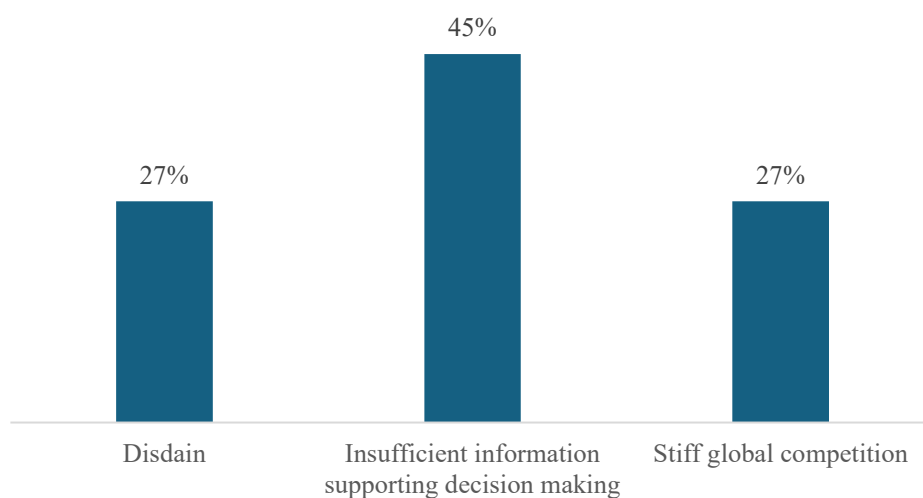
A third of respondents reported duplicative taxes, levies and duties as barriers to trade and investment from Africa to Australia. A quarter of respondents reported both corruption in the public sector, and favouritism as well as irrelevant marketing by members of the African diplomatic community as trade and investment barriers. A sixth of respondents reported conflicted red tape as a hindrance.

3. Barriers and impediments to trade and investment (Australian side)



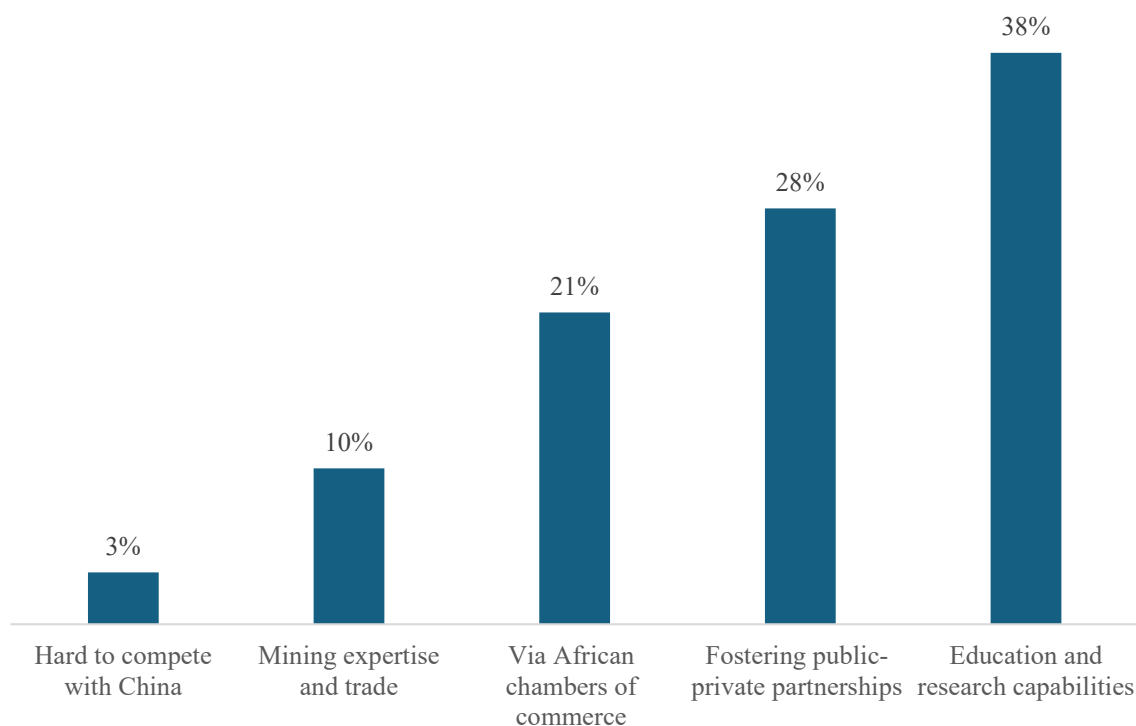
From the Australian side, majority of respondents (41%) reported a lack of proportional migration to Africa, insufficient trade agreements with Africa (36%) and lack of political goodwill possibly due to a strong focus on the Indo Pacific region (23%) as barriers to trade and investment.

4. Barriers and impediments to trade and investment (General)



Across both African countries and Australia, 45% of respondents cited a lack of sufficient information for decision making as the prime reason barring trade and investment. Tying on 27% of respondents, disdain and stiff global competition were other factors hampering trade and investment across Africa – Australia.

5. Opportunities for Australian businesses to diversify exports to specific African markets

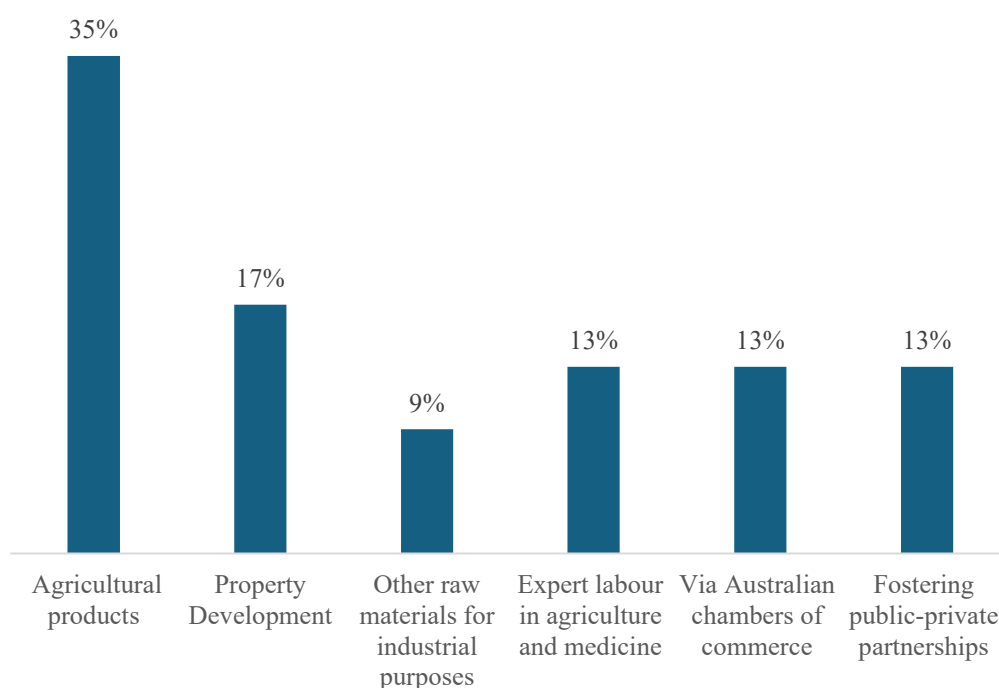


Education, research and development (R&D) were reported by most respondents (38%) as potential avenues Australian businesses could venture into, to diversify their exports to

specific African markets. About a third of respondents cited public-private partnerships, a fifth of respondents cited utilising African chambers of commerce and a tenth of respondents cited mining and trade.

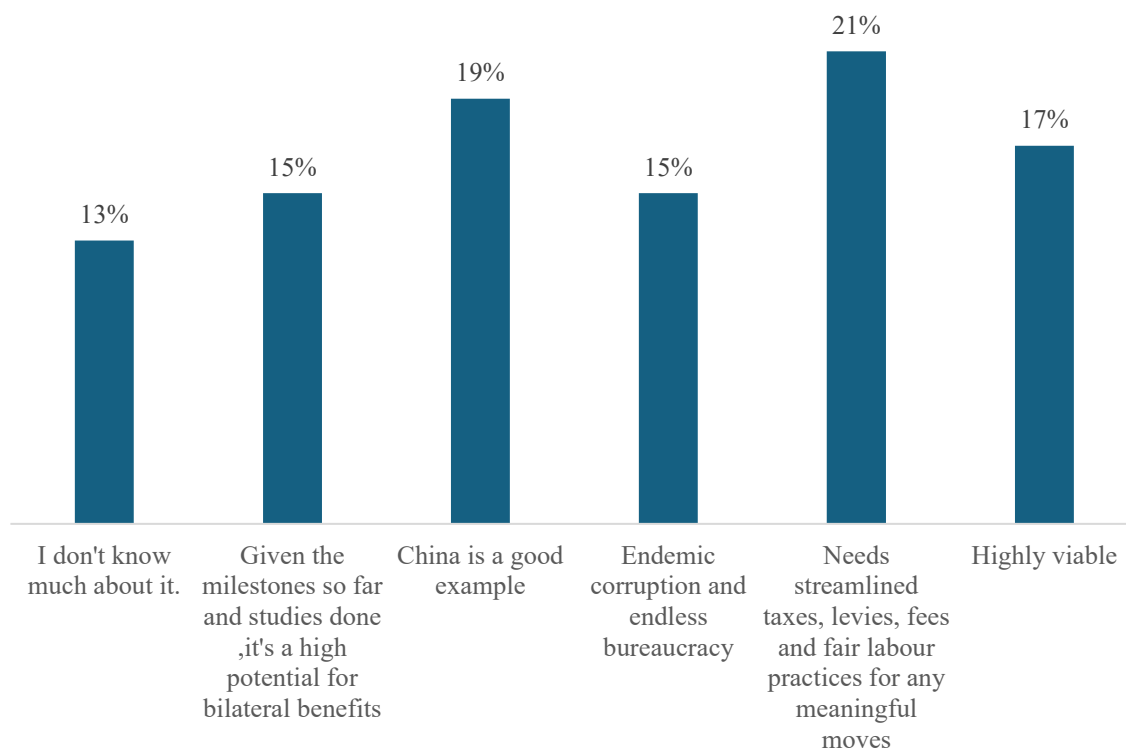
A minority (3%) of respondents reported that China's foray into Africa is difficult to compete with for Australian businesses.

6. Opportunities for African businesses to diversify exports to specific Australian markets



Slightly more than a third of respondents reported agriculture as an opportunity for African businesses to diversify into Australia. Real estate development (17%), labour services in particular within agriculture and health (13%), public-private partnerships (13%) and other raw materials (9%) rounded up opportunities for African businesses to diversify exports into Australia.

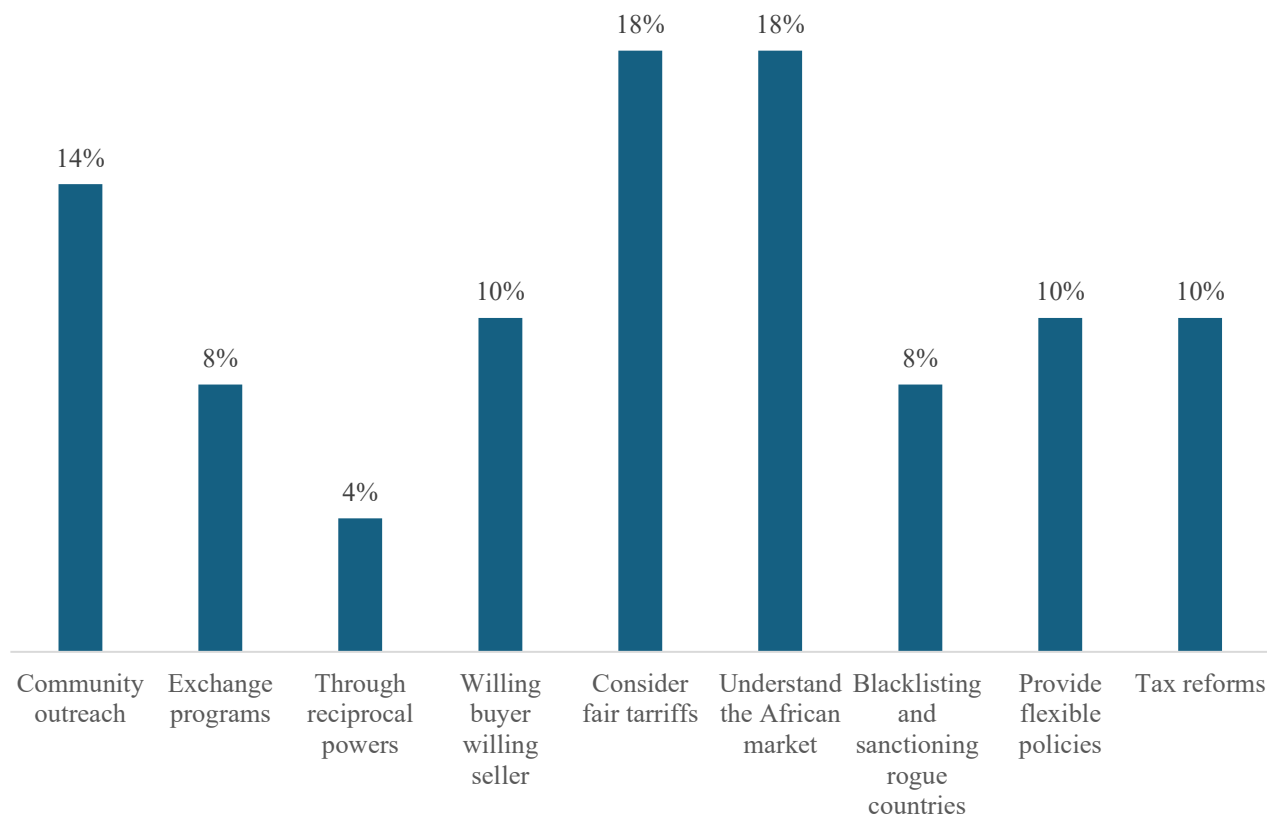
7. How would you assess the potential for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to stimulate greater economic engagement between Australia and Africa?



Slightly more than a fifth of respondents reported that AfCFTA first requires harmonised taxes, levies, fees and fair labour practices before any external engagements. Closely, 19% of respondents mentioned that China is a good example for other countries to rely on in economic engagement with African countries.

About 15% of respondents mentioned that endemic corruption and endless bureaucracy will hamper any potential while 13% of respondents were unsure.

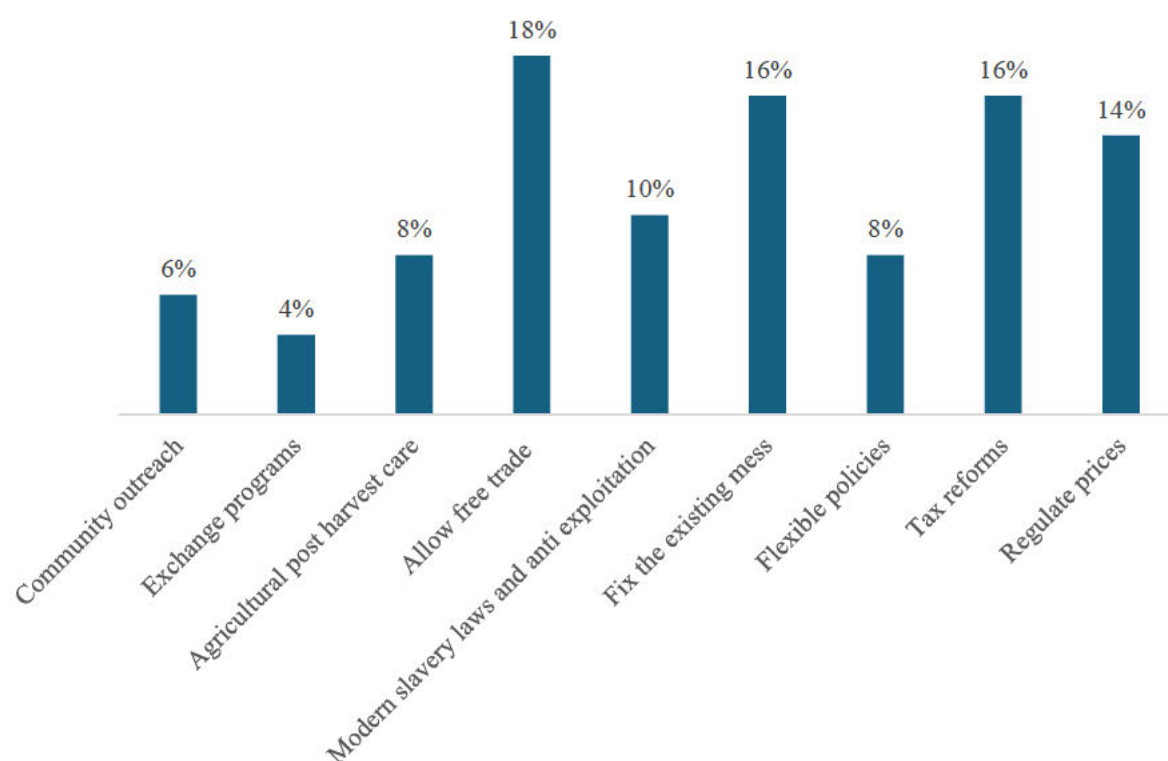
8. Role of the Australian Government in identifying new opportunities and assisting Australian companies to access existing and potential economic opportunities in Africa



The bulk of respondents (18%) reported the Australian Government considering fairer tariffs to Africa as well as deepening their understanding of the African market as top measures to assist Australian firms access African opportunities.

Other measures such as community outreach (14%), tax reforms (10%), flexible policies (10%), blacklisting and sanctioning countries that do not uphold democratic principles and basic human rights (8%) were some of the others mentioned.

9. Role of specific African Governments in identifying new opportunities and assisting African companies to access existing and potential economic opportunities in Australia



Most respondents (18%) reported that African Governments ought to consider allowing free trade, fixing the existing situation of bureaucracy, over taxation and corruption before advancing to new opportunities (16%), regulate prices (14%) and enact modern slavery laws and anti-exploitation measures, as some of the ways to assist African firms access Australian opportunities.

Conclusion

The African Australian trade and investment nexus remains one of immense opportunity. Previous research indicates a triangular cooperation i.e. Africa – Intermediary – Australia has some benefits to be reaped (Jonge, 2016) in addition to the direct trade and investment circuits.

With more Africans in Australia, the culture dissemination is gradually being felt and that provides social, economic and cultural opportunities. Employment opportunities for language interpreters (Yi, 2023), putting Australia on the global map with Sydney being the 7th world marathon major having Kenyan double Olympic champion and marathon great Eliud Kipchoge grace the race (Katami, 2025) and as remittances are sent to Africa (Money Transfer, 2025) that have impacts on housing (Chege et al., 2024), health and education (Amakom & Iheoma, 2014).

There are more strengths in leveraging on the African – Australian diaspora network, that is gradually increasing (Fozdar et al., 2022), to foster trade and investment relations given potential synergies and existing know-how of both geographical divides. Given the need for more information towards entrepreneurship, the diaspora network is poised to act as anchors for information dissemination.

Vitti Capital, the African Australian Advocacy Centre (AAAC), the African Professionals of Australia (APA) and Western Sydney University wish to thank the Committee for this inquiry and look forward to more engagements on fostering the Africa-Australia nexus.

Appendix

Table A1 Australian embassies and consulates overseas

<u>Country</u>	<u>Status</u>
Algeria	Closed in 1991
Angola	None – Referred to South Africa
Benin	None – Referred to Nigeria
Botswana	Consulate – Full services in South Africa
Burkina Faso	None – Referred to Ghana
Burundi	None – Referred to Kenya
Cabo Verde	None – Referred to Portugal
Cameroon	Consulate – Full services in Nigeria
Central African Republic	None – Referred to Ethiopia
Chad	None – Referred to Kenya
Comoros	None – Referred to Mauritius
Congo, Democratic Republic	None – Referred to Zimbabwe
Congo-Brazzaville	None – Referred to Zimbabwe
Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)	None – Referred to Ghana
Djibouti	None – Referred to Ethiopia
Egypt	Embassy
Equatorial Guinea	None – Referred to Spain
Eritrea	None – Referred to Egypt
Eswatini	None – Referred to South Africa
Ethiopia	Embassy
Gabon	None – Referred to Nigeria
Gambia	None – Referred to Nigeria
Guinea	High Commission
Guinea-Bissau	None – Referred to Portugal
Kenya	High Commission
Lesotho	None – Referred to South Africa
Liberia	None – Referred to Ghana
Libya	Closed in 2011
Madagascar	None – Referred to Mauritius
Malawi	Consulate – Full services in Zimbabwe
Mali	None – Referred to Ghana
Mauritania	None – Referred to France
Mauritius	High Commission
Morocco	Embassy
Mozambique	Consulate – Referred to South Africa
Namibia	Consulate – Referred to South Africa
Niger	Consulate – Referred to Nigeria
Nigeria	High Commission
Réunion	None – Referred to Mauritius

Rwanda	None – Referred to Kenya
Sao Tomé e Príncipe	None – Referred to Portugal
Senegal	None – Referred to Ghana
Seychelles	None – Referred to Mauritius
Sierra Leone	None – Referred to Ghana
Somalia	None – Referred to Kenya
South Africa	High Commission
South Sudan	None – Referred to Ethiopia
Sudan	None – Referred to Egypt
Tanzania	Consulate – Full services in Kenya
Togo	None – Referred to Ghana
Tunisia	None – Referred to Malta
Uganda	Consulate – Full services in Kenya
Zambia	Consulate – Full services in Zimbabwe
Zimbabwe	High Commission

Note: List omits mentioning countries where Australia offers shared services i.e. with Canada in Algeria, under the Canada-Australia Consular Services Sharing Agreement (Smart Traveller, 2025).

Source: Australian Government (2025a)

Table A2 Foreign chanceries, embassies and consulates with a physical presence in Australia

<u>Country</u>
Algeria
Angola
Botswana
Egypt
Eswatini
Ethiopia
Ghana
Libya
Malawi
Mauritius
Morocco
Nigeria
South Africa
Sudan
Uganda
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Source: Australian Government (2025b)

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