



Greater Fort Lauderdale Sister Cities International Welcomes Official from Gold Coast Australia



Back row (l to r): Toy Beeninga*, Todd Hiteshew*, Andrew Cuba*, Jonathon Luscomb* Front row: Assistant City Manager Susanne Torriente, Don Slesnick, Hal Morris, Marianne Winfield, Al Battle*. (*City of Fort Lauderdale staff)

The following is an excerpt from DFAT News that was distributed by Mauro Kolobaric, Minister-Counsellor (Management) and Consul General, in the Embassy of Australia in Washington, D.C.

Australian interests abroad are served through its embassies, high commissions, consulates, multilateral missions and representative offices. Over 70 consulates are headed by honorary consuls, who provide an important role in supporting our overseas network. Honorary consuls come from a wide background and bring local knowledge and extensive networks to the role which assists in promoting business, investment, trade and cultural links. And of course with the consular assistance they provide to Australian citizens.

One of our more recent appointments is Don Slesnick, who has been Australia's Honorary Consul in Miami since 1 May 2014. His background as a prominent local lawyer and community leader and Mayor of Coral Gables for

10 years made the choice to appoint Don as Australia's representative in Miami eminently sensible. Don served in Vietnam, is a former US Army advisor to NATO forces in Germany and now serves the Chief of the Army Reserves as one of his civilian 'ambassadors'.

Over 1.4 million Australians travel annually to the United States with around 160,000 travelling to Florida as their primary destination. With its title as the cruise capital of the world, and the ports of Miami and Fort Lauderdale handling over eight million passengers a year, Florida is a booming tourist hub. Florida is the fourth most populous state in the US and a growing centre for high tech, financial and banking services.

Don has been very active since taking up his appointment and is recharging the Australian presence in Florida. This was most recently evidenced when he was contacted by the Director of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Sister Cities International to talk about how the consulate could help strengthen the relationship between Lauderdale and its Australian sister city, Gold Coast. This relationship will celebrate its 35th anniversary later this year.

As part of the ongoing sister city relationship, a recent visit to Miami took place by the Gold Coast Waterways Authority, headed by Hal Morris, its CEO. This provided an opportunity for the authority to view the marine facilities managed by the City of Ft Lauderdale. The visit included briefings on environmental and regulatory requirements, law enforcement issues, infrastructure/dredging and marina operations.

Don was invited to join the tour and helped welcome the Gold Coast representatives during official meetings. All in all another productive day for Australian interests in South Florida served by our Honorary Consul in Miami.