



## **The Honourable John Olsen, AO**

The Hon. John Olsen AO has been appointed Deputy Chairman/CEO of the American Australian Association Ltd, effective 15 April 2010. He will be joint CEO with Geoff Gray, the current CEO, from 1 March until 14 April.

Mr. Olsen spent nearly seven years in the United States, with a three year appointment as Consul General in New York from 2006 to April 2009, following an appointment as Consul General in Los Angeles from 2002 until 2006.

Prior to his diplomatic postings, he had a distinguished parliamentary career as Premier of South Australia, Minister for State Development and Minister for Multicultural Affairs from November 1996 to October 2001.

Mr Olsen was Minister for Industry and Minister for Infrastructure from 1992 to 1996, and from 1990 to 1992 he was appointed to the Federal Senate. He was elected State Opposition Leader in South Australia from 1982 to 1990 and appointed Chief Secretary, Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Fisheries in 1982. He joined the South Australian Parliament in 1979, was the President of the South Australian Liberal Party from 1976 - 1979 and was awarded a US Bicentennial Fellowship in 1976. Mr Olsen was the Mayor of Kadina from 1974 - 1977 and the Past President of Kernewek, Lowender and Rural Youth South Australia.

During his time as Premier, Mr Olsen successfully steered some of Australia's largest water management and conservation projects, including the recycling of water from Adelaide's Bolivar Water Treatment Plant to the Northern Adelaide Plains. He also endorsed and facilitated the Barossa Water Project, an innovative water distribution scheme from the River Murray to the Barossa Valley floor, alleviating the Barossa Valley winegrowers' water irrigation problems and boosting annual production by \$30 million.

Mr Olsen also oversaw the privatisation of the State's electricity assets, resulting in the reduction of the State debt from a record \$9 billion to \$3 billion. While in office, he negotiated a \$850 million 'smart-city' redevelopment of Adelaide's northern suburban area, Mawson Lakes - a project that is internationally recognised as best practice for residential urban redevelopment and is expected to create 4500 jobs by 2010.

He pursued a vigorous program of economic reform through the corporatisation and privatisation of government services. This included the single largest public outsourcing project of its kind at the time in the world -

the outsourcing of the State's water industry that received World Bank acclaim, a contract which included the establishment of a private sector water industry.

Mr Olsen also facilitated the contract negotiations and construction of the Adelaide-Darwin Rail line which has received international acclaim as a leading private-public partnership infrastructure project.

As Consul General in Los Angeles in 2004, Mr Olsen pioneered G'Day USA, a week-long programme showcasing the best of Australia. The programme expanded to New York in 2007 and has become the largest annual foreign country promotion in the United States. Since its inception, G'Day USA has resulted in millions of dollars of trade, investment and tourism for Australia's economy.

In 2007, he was awarded an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for his outstanding contributions to the South Australian Parliament. Mr Olsen is a Fellow of the National Institute of Accountants. He and his wife Julie have three adult children and four grandchildren.