

media statement

12 December 2014

MLA proposes changes to the International Business Unit structure

MLA's Board has endorsed beginning industry consultation around a restructured International Business Unit.

MLA's Managing Director, Richard Norton, said this was the next step in finding improved efficiencies for the business.

"At the moment we have staff flying on a regular basis around the world at a cost to levy payers. There is no doubt of the value of our work in international markets, but we need to be sure we are being as efficient as possible," he said.

Under the proposed changes, the seven regional manager roles would be changed to become six International Business Managers (IBMs).

It is proposed IBMs will be responsible for all in-country activities in the markets they manage including market access and live export where applicable.

The reduction in numbers reflects a change to the management of the Asian region – moving away from the management of individual markets and towards an Asian Hub.

"We have seen the success of the hub approach in our management of Middle East North Africa (MENA), where we have a Manager with responsibility over multiple markets," Mr Norton said.

"We currently have highly skilled staff located in offices through the Asian region. They have built relationships with our key stakeholders in these markets over many, many years."

"The proposed changes will let us leverage these skills more broadly across the region."

Under the proposed restructure, the current regional offices and their staffing will not change. However, the managers for the regional offices may no longer be based in that region on a permanent basis.

The restructured Asian Hub will be serviced by three International Business Managers:

- IBM based in Beijing with responsibility for China, Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan. It is proposed Michael Finucan take up this position.
- IBM based in Singapore with responsibility for Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, Burma and India. It is proposed Andrew Simpson take up this position.
- IBM based in Japan will remain but will have more of a role in working with the other markets, particularly in relation to consumer marketing. It is proposed Andrew Cox remain in this position.

In addition to these changes, a new Indonesian based role is being created to focus on market access including technical trade barriers. Two strong external candidates, who are currently based in Indonesia, have been identified for the role. An announcement is likely in February.

The IBMs located in North America, Brussels and MENA will remain. These roles are currently held by David Pietsch, Michael Crowley and David Beatty respectively.

One of the six IBM roles will also take on responsibility as General Manager of the International Markets team. In addition to the IBMs reporting to the role, the managers of the Australian based live export program and market access program will also report to the GM IBM. The GM IBM will report directly to the Managing Director.

Dependent on the outcome of industry consultation around the proposed restructure, an internal recruitment process will be conducted for this role with an announcement likely in early February.