

# **MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS**

2025

# A Message from Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner to the Philippines, Luisa Rust

Last month, on 21 January 2025, ANZCham had the pleasure of joining the **Australia Day Reception** Embassy Celebrations as a **Gold Sponsor**, with **over 1,000 guests** from the Australian and Filipino government and business community gathering at the Grand Hyatt. It was a fantastic celebration and networking opportunity that highlighted the enduring partnership between Australia and the Philippines, which has flourished **for over 79 years.** 



Amb. Yu highlighted the close cooperation between Australia and the Philippines under our Strategic Partnership including the delivery of a diverse range of activities over the past year such as the release of the new Development Partnership Plan and the Australian Business Mission led by Australia's Business Champion to the Philippines, Shemara Wikrayanamake, CEO Macquarie Group.

For those interested, you can see Australia Day reflections from Ambassador Yu here:
"Australia Day 2025: Reflecting on true bayanihan | Philstar.com".

As a 2025 Embassy Corporate Sponsor, ANZCham looks forward to participating in **Australia-Philippines Friendship Day** in **May** and supporting other Embassy activities throughout the year. This month, the momentum continued with the **February MMM**, **held in Clark on 11 February**. We were thrilled to welcome **over 100 attendees**, with a great turnout of both members and nonmembers from the local Clark and Subic region, as well as Manila.

The event featured inspiring keynote speeches from Ken Peralta, Vice President, Investment Promotions and Marketing Department, of BCDA, and Karen Magno, Department Manager III of SBMA. They highlighted the many benefits for locators in Clark, New Clark City, and the Subic Bay region. Karen noted that there are now over 24 Australian locators in Subic Bay, with the region offering compelling advantages, including key infrastructure projects designed to boost accessibility and operational efficiencies. One major development discussed was the Subic-Clark-Manila-Batangas Railway, a 250 km railway expected to open in 2028. Aside from enhancing connectivity, the

ongoing development of Clark and Subic is set to accelerate investments in key sectors such as railways, port modernization, clean energy, semiconductor supply chains, healthcare, defense, education, and food security.

Ken and Karen joined a dynamic panel conversation alongside Francis Ceballos, Senior Vice President at Filinvest Land Inc., and Joey Roi Bondoc, Director and Head of Research at Colliers. The panel highlighted the range of incentives offered to investors in the region, including one-stop-shop support to navigate investment pathways and approval processes, corporate income tax reductions, deductions, and VAT exemptions. These incentives are backed by comprehensive national government regulatory reforms aimed at liberalising the economy and opening pathways to increased foreign investment. Notable reforms include amendments to the **Retail Trade Liberalization** Act, Foreign Investments Act, Renewable Energy **Act, and Public Services Act** — all of which have created a more welcoming environment for international business.

It's fantastic to see such energy and optimism around the opportunities in Clark and Subic, and ANZCham looks forward to continuing to support our members in exploring and leveraging these strategic locations for growth.

Cheers,
Luisa Rust
Director, ANZCham
Senior Trade Commissioner, AusTrade

**February Monthly Members Meeting** 

# INVESTING IN CLARK AND SUBIC WHY BUSINESSES NEED TO BE THERE

On 11 February 2025, ANZCham set a vibrant tone for the year at its inaugural Monthly Members' Meeting, held at the Clark Marriott Hotel. With the compelling discussion about "Investing in Clark and Subic – Why Businesses Need to Be There." The event drew a strong turnout and showcased the Chamber's forward-thinking approach to connecting members with emerging economic hubs.

The enthusiastic response set a promising tone for the Chamber's 2025 agenda, highlighting a year filled with opportunity and strategic growth.



Group photo of February MMM Panelists and Moderator with the Board of Directors (from left to right): Kimmi Siu Dewar,
ANZCHAM Executive Director; Benjamin Romualdez, ANZCHAM President; Honeybee Hubahib, ANZCHAM Director; Karen
Magno, SBMA Department Manager III; Erwin Kenneth Peralta, BCDA Vice President of Investment Promotions and
Marketing Department; Francis Ceballos, Filinvest Land Inc. Senior Vice President; Joey Roi Bondoc, Colliers Research
Director; Luisa Rust, Senior Trade Commissioner AUSTRADE; Boyet Santiago Jr., ANZCHAM Treasurer; and Natalie Davies,
ANZCHAM Vice President.



**Co-presented by Profitmaster Global Outsourcing**, a trusted financial solutions leader with over a decade of investment in Clark and Subic, the session delivered eye-opening insights into sound financial management and the power of strategic investments—setting the stage for transformative growth.



We are also grateful to **Berthaphil Inc. for being our event partner.** Their expertise in commercial, industrial, and residential property development within the Clark Freeport Zone was essential in bringing this event to life.

Among the key organizations present at the event was **StB Giga**, a major player in the region's growing industrial landscape. As the "*first LFP battery factory in the Philippines*", StB Giga is **pioneering the future of renewable energy storage both locally and globally**. StB Giga's participation was a testament to their commitment to this initiative and to Clark's growing role as a hub for energy innovation and sustainability in the Philippines.



The discussion commenced with, Mr. Ken Peralta, Vice President of Investment Promotions and Marketing Department in Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA), takes center stage to discuss innovations done in Clark, captivating the audience with his vision of "Building Great Cities."

He walked us through transformative projects in Clark—from the expansion of Clark International Airport and the North-South Commuter Railway to the innovative developments in New Clark City. His insights on leasehold-to-freehold land conversion also illuminated pathways for long-term foreign investment.

Building on this traction, Ms. Karen Magno, Department Manager III of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA), shared a compelling narrative of Subic's economic resurgence. Highlighting its strategic location, enticing tax incentives, and robust port infrastructure, she showcased why Subic stands as one of the country's most competitive freeport zones.





A lively panel discussion followed, moderated by **Luisa Rust**, **AusTrade Senior Trade Commissioner**, where industry experts, including Ken Peralta, Karen Magno, **Francis Ceballos**, **Filinvest Research Director**, and **Joey Roi Bondoc**, **Colliers Senior Vice President**, discussed the real benefits of investing in Clark and Subic.



Adding an extra layer of excitement, Jetstar Asia—our major raffle sponsor reinforced its commitment to connectivity with an inspiring address. The highlight was a generous giveaway: a roundtrip ticket to Singapore for lucky winner **Andrew** Willard, 5 ELK Business Development Manager, opening doors to one of Asia's premier business and leisure destinations.

(From left to right: Wai Keong Woo, Manager

for Trade and Commercial Projects of Jetstar Airways; Andrew Willard, 5 ELK Business Development Manager, Winner of Jetstar Ticket; Honeybee Hubahib, ANZCHAM Director, Chief Representative Philippines Qantas Airways )

ANZCham's first MMM of 2025 **served as a bridge between** opportunities and forward-thinking investors, concluding the evening with vibrant conversations, new partnerships, and a shared vision for the future.









**Click Here to See More Feb MMM Photos** 

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ANZCHAM Celebrates Australia-Philippines Partnership at the Australia Day Reception



On January 21, ANZCHAM had the privilege of being part of the Australia Day Reception organized by the Australian Embassy in the Philippines. This annual celebration serves as a heartfelt reminder of the strong and enduring partnership between Australia and the Philippines, and as a Gold Sponsor, ANZCHAM was proud to support such a meaningful event that highlights the ties between our two nations.

The evening was an inspiring gathering of leaders, partners, and friends from various sectors, to reflect on the achievements of the Australia-Philippines relationship and its promising future. Australian Ambassador to the Philippines, **H.E. HK Yu**, highlighted the opportunities ahead, saying: "next year will be another exciting year for the Australia Philippine relationship, as the Philippines take on the ASEAN chair role; Australia and the Philippines will be marking up 80 years of diplomatic relations, pretty impressive. This will create plenty of opportunities for us to work even more closely together towards our shared future."



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# **Australia and the Philippines: Partners in Prosperity**





**Undersecretary Maria Theresa Lazaro**, Undersecretary for Bilateral Relations and ASEAN Affairs at DFA, Philippines, echoed the Ambassador's sentiments, highlighting the milestones of the Australia-Philippines partnership. She noted that bilateral trade between the two nations reached \$2.8 billion in 2024 and continues to grow through agreements such as the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement.

We are proud to support the enduring friendship between Australia and the Philippines and look forward to the exciting opportunities that lie ahead as we celebrate 80 years of diplomatic relations in the coming year. **Mabuhay**!





### 🌠 Australia Day 2025

### MESSAGE FROM THE AMBASSADOR

Her Excellency HK Yu PSM, Australian Ambassador to the Philippines



January 26 is Australia Day – a day to celebrate modern Australia and acknowledge our history.

For at least 65,000 years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have lived in the great southern continent that we now call Australia. For millennia, First Nations Australians have been the land's traditional owners and custodians of a vibrant culture—the oldest continuous culture in the world—that continues to enrich us.

Today, Australia is proud to be the most successful multicultural society on Earthsone in four Australians are nigrants like me, and almost half of all Aussies have a parent born overseas. This includes over 400,000 Filipinos who now call Australia home.

In the Philippines, we mark Australia Day with our friends and partners. It is an opportunity to look back and celebrate the enormous amount of collaborative work that underpins our Strategic Partnership.

The friendship between Australia and the Philippines brings together people from all walks of life. Our police forces work together on combatting transnational crime and protecting the most vulnerable in our societies. Our defence forces train together in air, land and sea. Our students study in each other's countries, including through Australia Awards Scholarships and the New Colombo Pian, Our scientists are collaborating to improve agricultural research for the benefit of Filipine farmers, sherfolk and better food security for the wider population.

So this Australia Day 1, hope you will join me in toasting the true friendship between the Philippines and day the development of the province of t







## **AUSTRALIA AND THE PHILI** RTNERS IN PROSPER





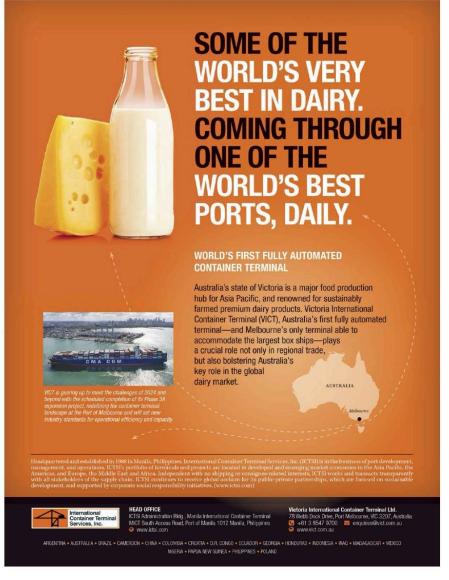
Australian Ambassador Her Excellency HK Yu PSM (6th from right) with representatives of major Aubusinesses in the Philippines at the National Day celebration.

Glorietta, Makati last November, with plans for additional store openings in 2025.

Over 250 major Australian companies operate in the Philippines, collectively employing 44,000 Filipinos. These businesses are driving positive change by enhancing skills, facilitating technology at the control of the philippines on the companies of the philippines of the philippines. To this end, the two governments businesses are driving positive change by enhancing skills, facilitating technology transfer, and creating new jobs.

There is significant potential for growth. Australia aspires to lift the Philippines from its current position as the 20th largest trading partners and supports the country's ambition to achieve upper middle-income status.

To unlock this potential, Australia and technology aligns with Australias, such as clean energy and mining are consomerable to the philippine conomy by enhancing the businesses-enabling officers in strategic sectors that benefit both the Philippines of the philippine conomy by enhancing the businesses-enabling officers in the Philippine conomy by enhancing the businesses-enabling officers in the Philippine conomy by enhancing the businesses-enabling officers in the Philippine conomy by enhancing the businesses-enabling officers in the Philippine conomy by enhancing the businesses-enabling officers in the Philippine conomy by enhancing the businesses-enabling officers in the Philippine conomy by enhancing the businesses-enabling officers in the Philippine conomy by enhancing the businesses are active and the philippine conomy by enhancing the businesses enabling of the Philippine conomy by enhancing the businesses enabling of the Philippine conomy by enhancing the businesses enabling of the Philippine conomy by enhancing the businesses enabling of the Philippine conomy by enhancing the businesses enabling of the Philippine conomy by enhancing the businesses enabling of the Philippine conomy by enhancing the businesses enabling of the Philippine conomy by enhancing the businesses ena





The Australian-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce Philippines (ANZCHAM) was honored to attend the New Zealand Partners' Night: An Evening Reception in Honour of Waitangi Day, hosted by the New Zealand Embassy in the Philippines. This annual celebration not only commemorates New Zealand's national day but also highlights the strong and growing partnership between New Zealand and the Philippines across trade, security, climate action, and people-to-people connections.

The evening was a testament to the deep and enduring ties between our nations, as emphasized by **H.E. Dr. Catherine McIntosh**, New Zealand Ambassador to the Philippines, in her remarks: "The past year has been nothing short of extraordinary. It has marked a real turning point in the bilateral relationship. [...] Our friendship is strong and the road ahead is full of promise.[...] It reflects the priority New Zealand is placing on the Philippines."

New Zealand's commitment to strengthening diplomatic, trade, and security relations with the Philippines was further reinforced by **Secretary Gilberto** "**Gibo**" **Teodoro Jr**. of the Department of National Defense, who acknowledged the nations' shared vision for regional peace and cooperation.

Climate action remains a critical pillar of the partnership. **Secretary Robert EA Borje**, Vice Chairperson and Executive Director of the Climate Change Commission, highlighted the importance of collaboration in addressing global environmental challenges.

**With nearly 60 years of diplomatic relations** between New Zealand and the Philippines in 2026, the future holds even greater opportunities for growth and shared success!

Kia ora, Mabuhay, and to an enduring partnership! 🜌 🔀







SELLING OUT FAST! The International Women's Day Forum 2025
Hits Maximum Capacity



The excitement surrounding ANZCham's International Women's Day Forum 2025, **co-presented** by **Teleperformance** and **KMC**, has reached a fever pitch—so much so that tickets for the forum is **ALMOST SOLD OUT!** *With only one week remaining, don't forget to register!* 

#### **EVENT DETAILS:**

7 04 MARCH, 2025

12:30 PM – 5:00 PM

Makati Shangri-La, Rizal Ballroom

This incredible momentum reminds us that when we invest in empowering women and girls, communities rise, industries evolve, and the future becomes a place of

collective strength and boundless opportunity.

A huge thank you to Virtua Solutions Outsourcing and GHD as our Trailblazer Sponsors, alongside Leighton and Jobstreet by Seek as our Changemaker **Sponsors**, for championing this important cause and making this forum possible.

Don't miss your chance to be part of this movement and take home a roundtrip ticket to Australia 💆 , thanks to Qantas, our Major Raffle Sponsor.

Register Now Members: ₱4,200

Non-Members & Guests: ₱4,900

#### FEW SEATS REMAIN, REGISTER NOW

\*Please be advised that once registered, payment of tariff is required irrespective of attendance

*i* Tariffs for no-show attendees are non-refundable

ANZCHAM AGM 2025: Connect. Provide. Create.



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On **25 March 2025**, join us at the **Isabela Ballroom**, **Makati Shangri-La**, from **5:00 PM to 8:00 PM**, for an evening of strategic insights, high-impact connections, and powerful opportunities.

This year's AGM will feature an inspiring opening address from H.E. HK Yu, AustralianAmbassador to the Philippines, and a compelling closing address from H.E. Dr. Catherine McIntosh, New Zealand Ambassador to the Philippines — underscoring the strength of the ANZ-PH relationship.

- **Elect the 2025 ANZCHAM Board of Directors** and be part of the decision-making process that drives our mission forward.
- **Gain exclusive updates** on ANZCHAM's initiatives and strategies for the future.
- **Forge meaningful connections** with industry leaders, government partners, and key decision-makers who are shaping the economic landscape.

And to make the evening even more exciting, **a roundtrip ticket to Australia**, courtesy of **Qantas**, awaits one lucky attendee!

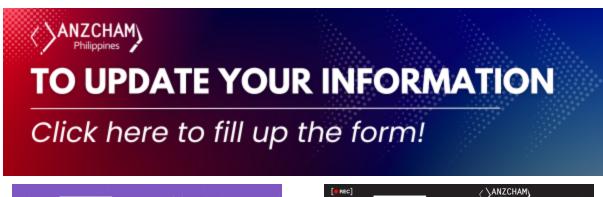
We extend our deepest thanks to **Convido Corporate Housing**, our Luminary Sponsor, for helping to make this celebration of business excellence possible.

Seize the moment. Shape the future. Connect, Provide, and Create with ANZCHAM.

**Register Here for AGM 2025** 

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**ANZCHAM Partners** 







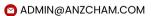


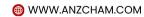




# Australian-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce Philippines

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