



## **The Honorable Kelly Ralston, Consul General of Australia in Houston, speaks at the Partnership's Coffee with the Consuls series**

The Partnership hosted its Coffee with the Consuls: Doing Business with Australia event on Wednesday, August 12 in the Partnership board room. The Honorable Kelly Ralston, Consul General of Australia and Senior Trade Commissioner with the Australian Trade Commission, served as the guest speaker. She discussed the objectives of the Australian Trade Commission, Austrade, and Australia's growing relationship with Houston. Craig Fitzgerald, General Manager of Overseas Operations and CSR Director for Aspen Medical, and Andrew Bower, President of the Australian American Chamber of Commerce in Houston, also participated in a panel discussion alongside Consul Ralston.

Consul Ralston discussed several 'pillars' that make Australia a great place to do business including their growth, innovation, talent, and business friendliness. "Oil and gas is our significant growth story as well as our main connection with the Houston region," she noted. In addition to oil and gas, Australia is actively developing their medical science and technology, agriculture and food, and tourism infrastructure sectors.

During his welcome remarks, Horacio Licon, the Partnership's Vice President of International Trade and Investment said, "Our foreign trade relationships, such as with Australia, are integral to our success, as well as future successes." He added, "Australia has a strong presence in the Houston region, and I trust they will be continue the momentum."

Australia ranks first among all of Houston's Oceania trading partners. From 2004 to 2014, trade between Houston and Australia increased at a compound annual growth rate of 11.1 percent.

The Australian Consulate-General in Houston opened in late March 2015 and adds to the Australian government's network in the United States which includes the Australian Embassy in Washington DC and consulates in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Honolulu.