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# Australian businesses challenged to become better invested across Asia



By [Mark Phelps](#)

January 28 2025 - 10:00am



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Australian businesses have been challenged to get more involved in Asia. Picture supplied

Australian business leader Charles 'Chick' Olsson has thrown out the challenge for more Australian businesses to get involved with their nearby Asian neighbours.

Mr Olsson, who was recently reappointed by Foreign Affairs Minister Penny Wong as Australia's Business Champion to Laos for a further 12 months, said there were impressive opportunities across the 10 ASEAN countries.

In addition to Laos, Association of Southeast Asian Nations member countries include: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Myanmar and Cambodia.



📷 Australian business champion Charles 'Chick' Olsson (pictured centre) alongside Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has thrown out the challenge for more Australian organisations to get involved in nearby Asian countries.

**"Each country is, of course, very different and require differing skill sets," Mr Olsson said.**

"But what they all have in common is there are any number of opportunities for Australian businesses to grow and operate in what is a massive, ever-evolving market.

"The important thing is to take that first step and realise that the informal and personal approach that is common among the Australian business community is usually very well received by our neighbours.



📷 Charles 'Chick' Olsson and his sons Daniel and Josh are exploring opportunities in Laos and Indonesia. Picture supplied

"Come and have a look at what is happening in one of the fastest growing economic regions in the world, that happens to be right on Australia's doorstep."

The 10 ASEAN countries have a population of more than 600 million people with a combined purchasing power of more than A\$16 trillion.

Australia already has strong ties to the region, commemorating 50 years of ASEAN-Australia dialogue relations in 2024.



📷 Smallholder livestock farmers in Laos are being provided with improved nutrition for their cattle and buffalo. Picture Mark Phelps

The Department of Foreign Affairs says in 2023, Australia's two-way trade with ASEAN nations amounted to \$183.4 billion - greater than the two-way trade with Japan, the US or the EU.

At the [ASEAN-Australia](#) Special Summit held in Melbourne last year, Prime Minister Albanese launched the [ASEAN-Australia Centre](#) to strengthen business, education, cultural and community connections between Australia and the region.

More than a million Australian residents can also claim an ASEAN country as their place of birth.

Mr Olsson has already made a significant investment in Laos through his Four Season company, which has developed innovative solutions to assist smallholder livestock farmers in improving the nutrition provided to cattle and effectively reduce household poverty levels.



📷 Four Season is currently assessing the use of seaweed as a raw ingredient for cosmetics, again with a focus on poverty reduction. Picture supplied



He has also promoted the use of Medical Ethics' popular livestock pain relief formulation Tri-Solfen in both Laos and Indonesia, where it has been recognised as an effective treatment for foot and mouth disease.

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Indonesia is major producer of seaweed. Picture Mark Phelps

"It is when you are on the ground and meeting with like-minded business people that opportunities emerge." he said.

"Everywhere and everyone has challenges. Australian business is a master at delivering real and effective solutions."

Business Champions are industry leaders who promote trade and investment opportunities to business communities with ASEAN countries, fostering trade, stronger economies and greater bilateral leadership.

Mr Olsson is set to lead a tour to Laos for the agricultural and mining industries later this year.