

Council for Australian-Arab  
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**Business Guides to the Arab Gulf**  
**Qatar**

Prepared by

Bayliss Associates Pty Limited

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## Part I: A brief overview of Qatar

### The formation of Qatar

The State of Qatar consists of a peninsula of around 11,400 sq kms (or slightly more than one-eighth the size of Tasmania). It is prominently positioned in the centre of the Gulf, with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on its southern border, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain, its other close neighbours, adjacent to the east and west.

The modern state of Qatar came into being with the rise of the Al-Thani family in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The founder of the dynasty was Muhammad Al-Thani (who ruled 1868-76). The Al-Thani, who came from coastal communities on the east of the peninsula, around the present day capital of Doha, rose in resistance to the ruling family of Bahrain, the Al-Khalifa, who had ancestral roots near Zubarah, in the northwest. Disputes between two communities intensified and flared into open warfare during the 1860s.

Britain intervened in the dispute, as from the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century the British East India Company had negotiated a series of treaties with the small communities on the Arab side of the Gulf, in order to secure naval control of the region. From these treaties a loose association, which became known as the *Trucial States*, was formed. Bahrain and the various emirates that today form the UAE became members of that grouping. In 1868 the British Resident (or political agent), Colonel Sir Lewis Pelly, then based in Persia, stepped in to impose a settlement on the two sides.

The meeting between Colonel Pelly and Muhammad Al-Thani was a turning point in Qatari history as, for the first time, Qatar was recognised as a separate political entity, and the agreement also implicitly recognised Al-Thani as head of state.

Always deft at managing the balance of power, the Al-Thani family chose not to enter treaty relations with Britain at that time. Rather, they allowed the Ottoman Turks to station a garrison in Doha, thus protecting their hard-won separation from Bahrain. When in 1893 the Turks attempted to enforce greater control over Qatar, the Qataris again rose up and achieved a remarkable victory. At the same time Muhammad's son, Shaikh Qasim bin Muhammad (1876-1913), formed an alliance with the young, and rapidly rising, Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, who was on the verge of taking control of much of what is today Saudi Arabia. Qasim befriended Abdul Aziz, sent him tribute and, to cement the relationship, became a follower of the Wahhabi form of Islam championed by the House of Saud. Qatar continues to profess Wahhabi Islam today.<sup>1</sup>

By 1916, however, conscious of the Saudis' growing power, the Al-Thani signed an agreement with the British Government in India, bringing Qatar into the *Trucial* system. In 1936 Britain and Qatar signed a new treaty that provided more specific promises of protection, in return for exploration concessions for the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (that later became BP).

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<sup>1</sup> See the Business Guide on Saudi Arabia for a brief note on the rise of the Al-Saud royal family and the Wahhabi form of Islam.

Oil was discovered in Qatar in 1939, but it was not until 1949 that oil revenue began to transform the economy and society. Qatar's first national budget was drawn up in 1953 and by 1954 Qatari administration consisted of 42 government employees.

In 1970, Qatar once again chose a path of independence, rather than joining the emerging federation that in 1971 became the UAE. The country has remained small and vulnerable, and mindful of the need for strategic alliances. At the time of independence, its population has been variously estimated at no more than 30,000 citizens.<sup>2</sup>

As with the other Gulf States, the 'oil boom' of 1973–75 was a further turning point in Qatar's development. It was then that producer states, through the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), asserted control over their petroleum resources. The shift in control, and the introduction of pricing policies that better reflected the economic value of oil, injected unprecedented wealth into the major oil-producing countries. This was especially so in the case in Qatar with its extremely small population base.

Qatar has today proven oil reserves of 15.2 billion barrels (as against Australia's 4.0 billion barrels) and natural gas reserves estimated to exceed 25.2 billion standard cubic metres. The equivalent reserves for Australia are an estimated 2.6 billion standard cu m.).<sup>3</sup>

## The Government of the State of Qatar

Qatar is an absolute monarchy. His Highness (HH) the Emir Hamid Bin Khalifa Al-Thani is head of state and also holds the roles of Minister of Defense and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

His heir apparent is HH Tamim Bin Hamid Al-Thani, the fourth son of the monarch, who was born in 1980. Primogeniture is not strictly observed in the Al-Thani line. Rather, a successor is chosen by the monarch from amongst his immediate family, on the basis of ability and perceived suitability.

The executive branch of government consists of a Council of Ministers chosen by the monarch. There is also an Advisory Council, or *Majlis al-Shura*, made up of 35 appointed members. There are no political parties.

There is some expression of a popular vote, however, in municipal elections, which were held for the third time in 2007. The Central Municipal Council (CMC) has consultative powers aimed at the improvement of municipal services.

## The Qatari economy

A massive jump in the country's economic fortunes occurred in the mid 1980s with the discovery of the world's largest non-associated natural gas field. The resource is located largely offshore in an area known as the North Gas Field. It is thought to contain around 20% of the world's readily extractable gas resources. Although the field is partly shared with Iran, the discovery nevertheless gave Qatar the major share of the second-largest reservoir of natural gas in the world - after the massive reserves of Russia.

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<sup>2</sup> R. Said Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States*, 1998, p99

<sup>3</sup> OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin, 2007, Table 33 p41 and Table 34 p43

## The State of Qatar

For a country the size of Qatar, the development of these reserves has become an immense undertaking. In recent years the development of the infrastructure to extract the gas has been the focus and cornerstone of Qatar's national development.

Qatar is now the world's largest producer of liquefied natural gas (LNG), with a capacity of more than 31 million metric tons per annum (mmta)<sup>4</sup>, and it expects to reach 77 mmta of LNG exports by 2010. By that year, Qatar is expected to account for one-third of the world's LNG supply.

Gas reserves, at their current rate of extraction, are calculated to last possibly another 300 years.

Oil production in 2007 was around 840,000 barrels a day (bpd), and has been projected to reach 1.1 million bpd by 2009, subject to current uncertainties in the world economic climate. At the current rate of extraction, oil reserves are expected to last more than 40 years.

State-owned [Qatar Petroleum](#) (QP) produces over half Qatar's total oil output, with the rest generated by international companies operating under production-sharing agreements.

QP is the business partner for many foreign corporations and has a strong influence over many areas of commercial activity in the country.

The government is keen to diversify the economy and encourage industrialisation and privatisation to create a more balanced economic base. The focus of diversified development has been on petrochemicals, steel, fertilisers and cement production.

Qatar's industrial base is located at Messaieed (also known as Umm Sai'id), 45kms south of Doha on the east coast of the peninsula. It includes a refinery with a 140,000 barrels per day (bpd) capacity, a fertiliser plant for urea and ammonia, a steel plant and a petrochemical complex, with several new petrochemical plants planned. Most of these projects are joint ventures between U.S., European, and Japanese firms and the state-owned Qatar Petroleum.

## Basic demographics

The population of Qatar is estimated to total around 825,000<sup>5</sup> – of this total, somewhere in the region of 200,000 - 250,000 are Qatari citizens. The majority of residents of Qatar are expatriate workers, including other Arabs from Jordan, the Palestinian Territories, Syria, Egypt, Yemen and Lebanon, as well as South Asians, Filipinos and Europeans.

Qataris are mainly Sunni Muslims, but there is a significant Shi'a minority.

The IMF records Qatar's GDP per capita in 2007 at US\$78,000, one of the highest in the world.

Arabic is the official language, although English is widely spoken.

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<sup>4</sup> Australia, in comparison, produces about 20 mmta of LNG per year.

<sup>5</sup> See the CIA World Factbook entry for [Qatar](#).

Education is compulsory and free for all children of Qatari government employees from the ages of 6-16 years. Qatar has an increasingly high literacy rate.

In common with its GCC neighbours, Qatar's population is youthful, with 23% of the population aged less than 14 years. The median age is recorded as 31 years. ([CIA](#))

### GDP trends

Qatar has enjoyed strong economic growth as a result of the massive investments in its hydrocarbons industry, notably natural gas. During 2008 the [IMF](#) forecasted continued double digit growth through 2009. The current world economic crisis unfolding during 2009, however, will impact that growth projection.

The oil and gas sector represents over 60% of Qatar's GDP.

### Foreign trade

Oil and gas account for about 85% of Qatar's exports that topped US\$42 billion in 2007.

Imports in 2007 reached around US\$20 billion. See [CIA](#) and [WTO](#).

Qatar's principal export destinations are Japan, Korea and Singapore.

The main sources of imports are the EU, Japan, the USA and the UAE.

The UAE is a primary transshipment point for Qatari imports.

### International relations

Qatar was a founding member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and is a member of OPEC and the Arab League.

Qatar joined the United Nations in 1971, and has been an active participant in its various bodies and agencies.

Qatar joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1996 and hosted the Fourth Ministerial Conference in 2001 (the Doha Round). See the [Doha Declaration](#) for background.

### Australian bilateral relations

Australia enjoys excellent bilateral relations with Qatar. Details of diplomatic and trade accreditation can be found under the section 'People to Help You'.

Australian exports to Qatar in 2008 totalled A\$ 182.8 million. Imports from Qatar totalled A\$ 401.9 million. Discussions on a Free Trade Agreement are in progress in the context of negotiations with the GCC.

For more details on bilateral trade flows refer to the [DFAT](#) and [Austrade](#) websites.

## Part II: The Market environment

### Legal structure

The legal system of Qatar is based on Islamic (*sharia*) law<sup>6</sup> and there are two main divisions of courts—namely the sharia courts, with jurisdiction over personal matters, and civil courts, with jurisdiction over matters of a civil or criminal nature.

The judicial system consists of Courts of First Instance, Appeal and Cassation<sup>7</sup>. In 2007 an Administrative Court and a Constitutional Court were established.

All judges are appointed by the monarch on the recommendation of the Supreme Judicial Council for renewable terms of three years.

### Customs and regulatory environment

In line with the GCC Customs Union, general rates of duty are 5 per cent on cif value. Some basic foodstuffs enter duty free, while higher duty rates apply for steel products, cement, fertilizers, alcohol and tobacco products.

### Documentation

Export documentation for Qatar includes a commercial invoice, certificate of origin, bill of lading and insurance certificate, if appropriate.

AQIS certification is required for plants and live animals.

See [AACCI Qatar](#) for full details.

### Labelling and packaging

Qatar's labelling and packaging requirements are similar to those of other GCC States.

Shelf life standards are applied to food products, and labelling must also include:

- Product and brand names
- Production and expiration dates
- Country of origin
- Name of the manufacturer
- Net weight in metric units
- List of the ingredients and additives in descending order of importance.

All fats and oils used as ingredients must be specifically identified on the label.

Labels must be in Arabic only, or in Arabic/English. Arabic stickers are accepted.

See the Austrade website on [Doing Business in Qatar](#) for further information on tariff and non-tariff barriers and methods of quoting and payment etc.

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<sup>6</sup> See notes in the *GCC Market Overview* document of this series of *Business Guides to the Arab Gulf* for further background on the sharia system and its social context.

<sup>7</sup> Cassation is a term for abrogation or annulment.

## Tenders

The [Central Tenders Committee](#) (CTC) of Qatar administers the majority of Government bids and tenders, as well as qualifying contractors. Technical bids are referred to the end-user agency for evaluation, following which the CTC opens commercial/price bids and makes an appropriate recommendation.

The CTC website provides further comprehensive information on the bid process.

Qatar affords preferential treatment to contractors who include a high level of local content in bids for government tenders.

Qatar also gives a 10% price preference to local firms and a 5% price preference to GCC firms in all government procurement processes.

## Investment

[UNCTAD](#) statistics indicate an inwards foreign direct investment flow of US\$1.1 billion to Qatar in 2007. These figures, however, do not appear to capture the massive investments made in the country's oil and gas sector, which the [US Department of Commerce](#) estimates are around US\$70 billion.

The USA, Japan and the EU are the major investors in Qatar.

Qatar's investment laws allow 100% foreign equity in a range of business sectors, including manufacturing, agriculture, health, education, power, tourism, power and other specified projects.

In other areas, up to 49% foreign equity is permitted, with at least 51% of the equity to be held by a Qatari national partner.

Restrictions apply to foreign participation in commercial agency arrangements, real estate, banking and insurance. In 2006 legislation was enacted to permit foreign law firms to practise in Qatar.

The [Investment Promotion Department](#) of Qatar's Ministry of Business and Trade (previously Ministry of Economy and Commerce) administers the country's foreign investment program.

A full text of the [Foreign Investment Law of 2000](#) appears at this link.

The usual investment vehicle for foreign joint ventures is a Limited Liability Company (LLC).

Qatar is also examining the development of free trade zones to provide further enhanced investment and operational provisions for foreign investors.

Increased liberalisation can be anticipated in Qatar's investment settings as it seeks to maintain its competitive footing alongside its GCC neighbours who are actively promoting their markets to foreign investors as well.

In the World Bank's [Ease of Doing Business Survey 2008](#), Qatar was ranked 37<sup>th</sup> for 2009, ahead of the rankings for the UAE, Kuwait and Oman.

## Distribution

Distribution and logistics systems in Qatar are relatively efficient, assisted by the fact that most business activity is concentrated in and around Doha and a few other centres.



## The State of Qatar

In common with the rest of the GCC, modern supermarkets dominate the retail sector. The Carrefour Group of France has established a major hypermarket in Doha, in association with the Al-Futtaim group of the UAE.

## Banking and finance

Qatar has 15 commercial banks, of which eight are locally owned and account for about 80% of the sector's assets. The locally-owned [Qatar National Bank](#) (QNB), which is in part government-owned, holds nearly 50% of total deposits and handles most of the government's business. Major international financial institutions with a presence in Qatar include HSBC, Standard Chartered Bank, Zurich, Axa, Barclays, EFG Hermes, Credit Suisse, ICBC, ICICI, Citi and Morgan Stanley.

[The Doha Stock Market](#) now has 43 listings and a market capitalisation of about US\$ 110 billion in early 2008. In June 2008 it was announced that the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) would purchase a 25% stake in the Doha exchange. The timing of that move, however, may be influenced by developments associated with the world credit crisis.

Further liberalisation and consolidation in the banking and finance sector is likely, with the [Qatar Financial Centre](#) anticipated to take on a larger role in the introduction of a unified financial code.

## Part III: Doing business in Qatar

### Practical advice on entering the market

For Australian companies new to the Arab world, Qatar offers a business environment that is in many ways more easily accessible than some other markets in the region.

Given the scale and speed of development of its physical and social infrastructure, Qatar can offer attractive prospects for companies prepared to invest time in visiting the country. This can be done whilst in the region to pursue opportunities in the adjacent markets of the UAE, Saudi Arabia or Bahrain.

Doha is less than a 40-50 minute flight from Dubai, Abu Dhabi or Bahrain, and 90 mins from Riyadh, and so it is very accessible on a regional travel schedule.

Qatar has to date not attracted the same intensity of competition as the UAE, although this situation is changing as the impact of the country's oil and gas wealth is reflected in a raft of major development projects.

### Market research

Market data is not as readily available in Qatar as in other GCC countries. Coverage of the oil and gas sector is comprehensive, however, through the international energy agencies and oil trade media.

For other products and services, off-the-shelf reports are also not so readily available and may not be as timely as those produced for other GCC markets.

Some commercially available reports that may be useful include [Building and Construction](#) and [Telecommunications](#).

### Business customs

Business practices are similar to the rest of the GCC and are described in the Market Overview brief of this series of *Business Guides to the Arab Gulf*.

In view of its proximity to the UAE and the high level of transshipments between the UAE and Qatar, there is a tendency to consider Qatar a simple extension of the UAE market.

To maximise your business opportunities in Qatar, however, it is important *not* to treat Qatar in those subsidiary terms, but deal directly with the market, and not through intermediaries in the UAE.

### Agency representation

In common with other GCC countries, agency representation is strictly regulated - in Qatar's case by the [Commercial Agents Law of 2002](#). This legislation mandates that only Qatari nationals or Qatari national-owned companies can undertake agency representation on behalf of a foreign company.

Agency agreements must also be registered with the [Ministry of Business and Trade](#) (formerly the Ministry of Economy and Commerce).

## The State of Qatar

In common with the rest of the GCC, particular care and diligence should be taken when appointing an agent or distributor in Qatar. In a relatively small business community, market-based information is most important in negotiating agency appointments.

As it is common for local agents to represent a wide range of foreign principals, it is important to review the range of agencies that any prospective partner already holds. This will provide a good indication of the standing of the agent – and moreover, it will help to avoid potential conflicts of interest. Naturally your company's products or services should enjoy a complementary fit with those of a prospective agent's other activities.

When considering agency appointments, a golden rule is to avoid quick decisions, and make several visits to Qatar before finalising arrangements, in view of the complexities associated with agency termination. (We recommend that you read the *GCC Market Overview* document in this series *Business Guides to the Arab Gulf* for more advice on agency matters.)

### **Representative offices**

The Qatar Government introduced legislation in 2003 that allowed the establishment of a representative office without a local partner. Representative offices cannot, however, enter into financial transactions. These matters must be handled by the company's head office.

### **Branch offices**

Branch offices are usually established for the execution of specific contracts or projects. The licence for these offices will usually not permit general operations outside the terms granted.

It is still common for foreign companies to appoint a Qatari service agent, who will perform administrative tasks, such as immigration and work permit procedures, and will manage direct dealing with government agencies. The [US Department of Commerce](#) has noted that while this is a common practice, it is no longer required under the law.

**Summary of business formation options:**

Alternative	Pros	Cons
<b>Registered agency</b>	Most common agency type. Requires careful selection of agent.	Any dispute likely to favour the agent. Can be costly to terminate.
<b>Foreign company</b> <b>100%</b> - in designated development sectors	Freedom to operate.	
<b>Limited Liability Company (LLC)</b>	Common entity for foreign investors. Offers flexibility.	A Qatari national must hold at least 51% of shares.
<b>Branch office</b>	No local partner required. Can perform contracts or enter into business in the name of its parent company. Common for professional services companies.	Lack of a local partner can be a disadvantage in certain (e.g. tender) situations. National (Qatari) agent required for administrative matters.
<b>Representative office</b>	Market the parent company's products and services.	Cannot enter into or negotiate contracts that must be with the parent company. Service agent may be required for administrative matters.
<b>Special zones:</b> Qatar Science and Technology Park, Qatar Financial Centre, Education City, future FTZs	Incentives may apply with strong support services from the operating agency.	Minimum capital requirement may be stipulated.

As always, sound agency appointments are crucial to market success. Australian companies operating in Qatar all stress the importance of taking time and effort to establish representation arrangements.

Factor in multiple visits to Qatar to ensure that you meet a broad spread of contacts and also seek advice from a range of sources.

The key issues are:

**Research the backgrounds of any prospective agents before meeting.**

- Use Austrade, Chambers of Commerce and state governments to identify prospective partners.
- Check with any Australian companies they already represent (also with foreign principals, if you can) to determine suitability to represent your company.

**Assess a range of potential representatives if you can, not just one or two companies.**

- Do not be hesitant to ask for references from the company. You may wish to phrase this in terms of speaking to customers or other principals of the firm to understand how you could work better with the prospective agent. (If the company is not prepared to provide those introductions, it should give you cause to think further about the suitability of the relationship – and, at the very least, dig more deeply into the background of the company.)

## The State of Qatar

- Analyse whether the other companies the agent represents have any competitive interests to your own. If they do, clarify how that potential conflict will be handled.
- Consider and discuss whether your agency arrangement, and related products or services, could become 'lost' within a portfolio of those of larger international groups.
- Determine whether your fit of business interests is right.

### **Do not make impulsive decisions to capture a short-term deal.**

- Spend time to understand and be comfortable with the Qatari commercial setting. It is a very face-to-face market.
- Assess first-hand the sales team that will be handling your agency. Offer to take key personnel to Australia for further training and familiarisation.
- Assess the standard of back-up technical capability, if that is required.
- Determine the extent to which access to government is important, and the degree of respect and access your potential agent may have.

## Franchising

As elsewhere in the GCC, most major international franchises are represented in Qatar, especially for fast food.

'Second and third tier' franchising can also present opportunities for market entry, particularly in non-food sectors.

A local partner will be necessary – but a well-calibrated marketing program can still have real impact in Qatar.

## Visiting Qatar

Qatar has excellent flight connections. Dubai is very close by and there are also direct flights to a range of international centres, including Bangkok and Singapore.

There is a good selection of four- and five-star hotels, with more planned.

While the geography of Qatar is reasonably straightforward, it is most efficient to plan your calls in advance and when you have multiple appointments, arrange for a car and driver (who speaks reasonable English), to ensure that you can cover your program efficiently.

Hotel concierges can usually assist in this regard. Austrade's Trade Consultant in Doha and Austrade and Australian state government representatives in Dubai, who travel frequently to Qatar, may also be able to give good tips on how to get around the country.

In terms of appointment programs, check addresses and landmarks when you are confirming appointments – and *always* try to obtain the mobile phone number of the person that you are planning to meet. Mobile phone calls and text messages are by far the best means of communication in country.

See the [AACCI](#) website for details of Qatar business visa requirements.

## Trade promotion

The trade exhibition program in Qatar is not as comprehensive as other Gulf centres. Some of the key events are listed in [Trade Shows](#) and [IFP](#).

The major trade exhibitions in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Bahrain usually attract a good Qatari trade visitor flow.

There are three Arabic and two English-language newspapers, and media placements can capture attention. The use of advertising and PR should be discussed with your prospective agent.

## Timing of visits

The Islamic calendar has an overarching influence on business activity in Qatar, and the availability of key contacts.

As with other Gulf States, you are *strongly* recommended to study and observe the Islamic calendar when planning business visits. The [AACCI website](#) is an excellent source of this information.

Also Check [Qatar public holidays](#) too, as they will include the National Day and perhaps Bank Holidays. Many senior executives take extended leave in July / August and visits at this time (in the height of summer) should be carefully considered.

## People to help you

Australia does not have a resident diplomatic mission in Qatar.

The [Australian Ambassador to the UAE](#), based in Abu Dhabi, who is accredited to Qatar, visits regularly and is responsible for diplomatic and consular relations with Qatar.

Qatar's Ambassador to Indonesia is also accredited to Australia.

[Austrade Dubai](#) has responsibility for trade-related matters in Qatar, and has engaged a Trade Consultant in Qatar who can also assist with market entry advice.

Australia and New Zealand Business in Qatar [www.anzbiq.org](http://www.anzbiq.org)

Prior to travel please register your travel details online at: [www.orao.dfat.gov.au](http://www.orao.dfat.gov.au).

Also please consult the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website at [Smartraveller](#) before planning a visit.

## Major industry sectors in Qatar

### Oil and petrochemicals

Qatar's industrial sector is dominated by the oil and gas sector and the heavy industries associated with it, such as petrochemicals, fertilizers as well as steel and cement.

Qatar is undertaking a range of 'mega projects' – principally in the oil and gas sector. These are described on the website of the [Investment Promotion Department](#) of the Ministry of Business and Trade (formerly the Ministry of Economy and Commerce).

### Light industries

Some development has taken place in the manufacture of footwear, food and beverages, textiles, furniture and paper products. The emphasis, however, is still overwhelmingly on the petrochemical and metallurgical sectors, where Qatar's super-abundant resources of hydrocarbon feedstocks give it an extraordinary competitive advantage.

### Infrastructure

Infrastructure developments have provided a stimulus to the economy. Qatar successfully hosted the Asian Games in 2006, a major event for which a great deal of new infrastructure was created.

### Building and construction

The building and construction sector remains highly active, with many new projects planned, including roads and highways, ports and industrial complexes.

### Air, road and port facilities

The [New Doha International Airport](#) (NDIA) is scheduled to open in 2010. The airport will have capacity for 24 million passengers and the terminal facility will be the largest building in Doha. Doha now handles about 5 million passengers per year.

[Qatar Airways](#) has an extensive route network and has negotiated rights to fly to Australia.

Qatar has a paved road network of at least 8,000km, linking Doha with its ports as well as major industrial, gas and oil developments.

Increased work in the roads sector is required, however, and while this is a competitive sector, the size of the Qatar market means that there are fewer larger competitors than in nearby UAE or other Gulf States.

In 2008, a consortium led by the [VINCI Construction](#) group of France signed a US\$3 billion design-build contract for a 40km causeway connecting Qatar and Bahrain.

Qatar has three major sea ports - Doha, Umm Sa'id and Ras Laffan, an industrial city located on the eastern coast 80 kilometres to the north of Doha.

Doha is the country's main commercial port while Umm Sa'id is the primary petroleum export port.

Due to constraints in the Port of Doha, a new multi-purpose port is planned in the Mesaieed area, south of Al-Wakrah and will be linked to the mainland by an 8.5 km long trestle bridge.

In November 2008, it was announced that the local division of the Australian engineering consulting group, [WorleyParsons](#), would undertake the design engineering work for the new Doha port facility. [Cansult Maunsell](#), which has strong operational links with Maunsells in Australia, will oversee the project management for the project.



The first phase of the project will provide port capacity of two million 20-foot equivalent units (TEUs) per year. Port Melbourne, Australia's largest container port, in comparison, has a current throughput of two million TEUs.

## Services

Australia is well represented in the Qatar services sector with a range of leading consulting engineering and architectural firms active on a wide range of projects. Australian involvement in the lead-up to the Asian Games in 2006 provided the foundation for many Australian companies to establish a permanent presence in Qatar.

Areas where Australian service companies have established a strong reputation include facility design, environmental management, water treatment, landscaping and architecture.

## Food and beverages

Qatar imports some 90% of its food needs, and Australia is recognised as a reliable and reputable supplier. Many food imports are transhipped via Dubai and Sharjah.

## Education

Qatar has established [Education City](#), in association with a number of US and Canadian institutions, including Carnegie Mellon, Georgetown University, Texas A&M and the Rand Corporation.

The facility now has about 1,200 enrolments, half of these students coming from outside Qatar.

## Healthcare

Increasing expenditure on healthcare has provided good opportunities in this sector. Expansions to the [Hamid Medical City](#) will provide ongoing opportunities for healthcare products and services.

## Automotive

Australian passenger car exports to Qatar were A\$92 million in 2007. The auto aftermarket will provide good opportunities as vehicles move out of their warranty periods.

In Qatar 4WD desert driving is particularly popular, but the market is considerably smaller than in the UAE. It does, however, represent a niche market that may be worth pursuing for companies with 'desert proven' 4WD accessories.

## Tourism

Qatar is strongly committed to building a [world class tourism industry](#), and is planning major investments.

Qatar is actively seeking to sponsor world-class sporting events—and already hosts the [Qatar Open](#) as part of the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) Tour, and the [Qatar Masters](#) in golf on the European PGA Tour.

It has developed other excellent sporting and recreational facilities as a result of hosting the 2006 Asian Games.

Qatar is a member of FIFA and is scheduled to host some major soccer fixtures.



## The State of Qatar

To boost the sector, the government has formed a new body, the [Qatar Tourism Authority](#), which has identified a range of major tourist attractions to be developed.

Visa restrictions were relaxed in early 2002 and nationals of 33 countries (including Australia) can now obtain visas on arrival at Doha airport.