



Australian Government

# AUSTRALIA IN THE ASIAN CENTURY

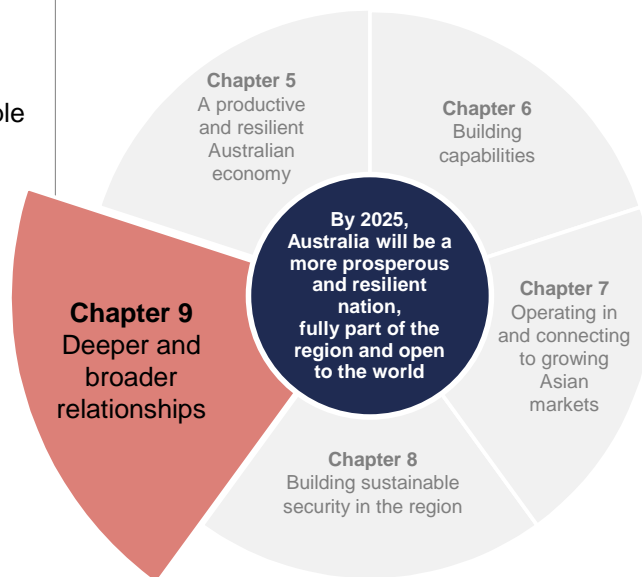


White Paper  
October 2012



# Chapter 9: Deeper and broader relationships

- effective diplomacy
- stronger and more comprehensive relationships
- closer people-to-people links
- vibrant cultural connections



### Key points

Australia's connections with the region have, over decades, been woven into a pattern that is both deep and complex.

We engage across the board—through governments at all levels, businesses, unions, academics, universities, the media, students, migrants, tourists, volunteers, scientists and people involved in the arts and sporting activities.

From these strong foundations, Australia will need to deepen and broaden our relationships across the community as competition for influence and access to markets increase in coming decades.

Stronger and more comprehensive relationships with countries across the region will be built through collaboration and cooperation and based on trust, mutual respect and understanding.

We will maintain an effective diplomatic network, with the necessary capabilities, and with an expanded footprint across Asia over time.

We will work with the Australian community to develop comprehensive country strategies, with China, India, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea as our initial priorities, to bring a stronger national purpose and cohesion to these relationships.

Australia's people-to-people links will be deeper and broader, through government support and through the actions of the entire community. This will include the substantial flows of people and ideas between institutions, such as parliaments, educational institutions, business and community groups and the public service.

We will commit 12,000 Australia Awards (Asian Century) over the next five years to nations in Asia to encourage people-to-people links with the region.

Cultural connections across a range of areas can be powerful forces for bringing people together. Exchanges in culture build greater understanding, foster cultural appreciation and offer commercial opportunities.

## 9.1 Introduction

The importance of Australia and Asia being ‘in each other’s minds’ has long been recognised (Garnaut 1989). The scale and pace of change taking place in Asia makes it even more important today.

In earlier chapters, just part of the long story of Australia’s relationship with Asia was traced. As we have seen, it has been an economic story, a foreign policy story, a defence story, a story about society. It has involved political leaders, diplomats, business people, unions, researchers, educators, students, migrants, tourists and artists. And from the beginning it has been a story of change and reinvention.

But in the decades ahead, the terms of the exchange between Australia and Asia will change again.

In some ways, Australia’s importance to our Asian partners will be even greater—the result of resource flows, migration patterns, political engagement and education exchange—at the same time as Asia’s importance for Australia grows significantly. And technology will provide extraordinary new opportunities to learn from each other and communicate.

But Asian states will have a wider range of global interests and certainly a greater range of interlocutors competing for attention and influence in coming years. So Australia will need to work harder to advance our interests in the region. In particular, the broad nature of the relationships Australia wants to develop will require greater involvement by many parts of our society outside government to bring success.

Two-way people movements will further strengthen the fabric of Australian society and our way of life. Improving people-to-people links can unlock large economic and social gains. Australia is well positioned to continue attracting highly skilled and talented people from the region to live, study and work in Australia. And Australians have much to offer the region.

Importantly, our links with Asia are social and cultural as much as they are political and economic. The arts, culture and creativity play an important role in strengthening Australia’s relationships with people in Asia. Australia’s cultural strengths underpin values of respect, understanding and inclusion that help to connect people, business, institutions and governments across the region.

A transformational agenda for Australia’s engagement with the region is needed.

## 9.2 The work of government

Diplomacy is the term used to describe the broad processes by which states deal with each other. At the most senior levels of diplomacy, Australian political leaders promote Australia's interests in the region through frequent contact with their Asian counterparts.

Ministers have a greater range of opportunities for regular meetings with their regional colleagues than ever before and heads of government now meet annually at the East Asia Summit (EAS), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, the Group of Twenty (G20) and other forums and meetings.

Resident diplomatic missions provide the day-to-day framework for dealings between states. They give us an on-the-ground understanding of the countries Australia is working with and enable us to directly advocate our interests with those in power and with decision-makers more broadly.

Australia's diplomatic missions are staffed by professionals from a range of departments, working together under whole-of-government arrangements. People who are 'in country' for long periods develop the relationships and local knowledge needed to provide the right advice and to get things done. A targeted and flexible diplomatic capacity is essential for promoting and protecting Australia's interests overseas.

### *National objective*

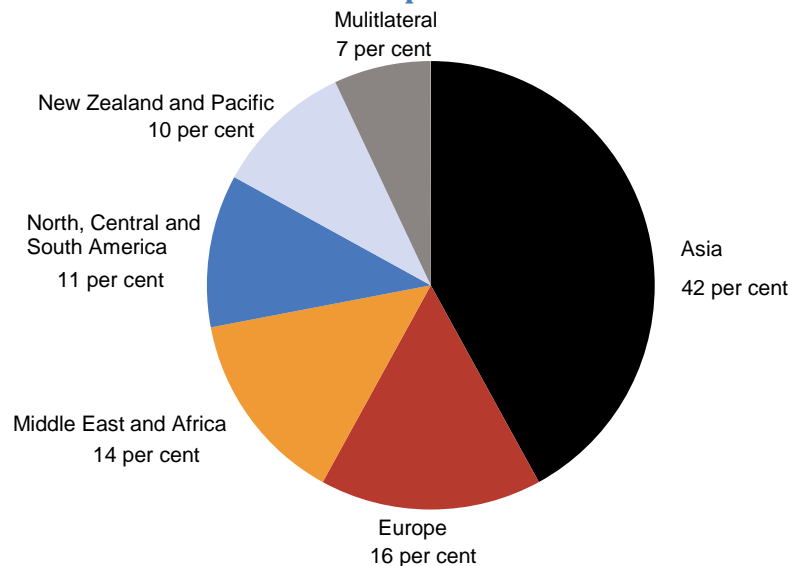
22. Australia will have the necessary capabilities to promote Australian interests and maintain Australia's influence.

- Australia's diplomatic network will have a larger footprint across Asia.

Successive Australian governments have recognised that our prosperity and security are intertwined with our region, and have shifted diplomatic resources accordingly. More Australia staff from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in overseas diplomatic and consular posts are in the Asian region than in any other part of the world. At 30 June 2012, 42 per cent of the 593 Australia-based DFAT staff in posts overseas were located in Asia (Chart 9.1). And of DFAT's 1,700 locally engaged staff in overseas posts, 45 per cent were in Asia.



**Chart 9.1: DFAT staff posted overseas**



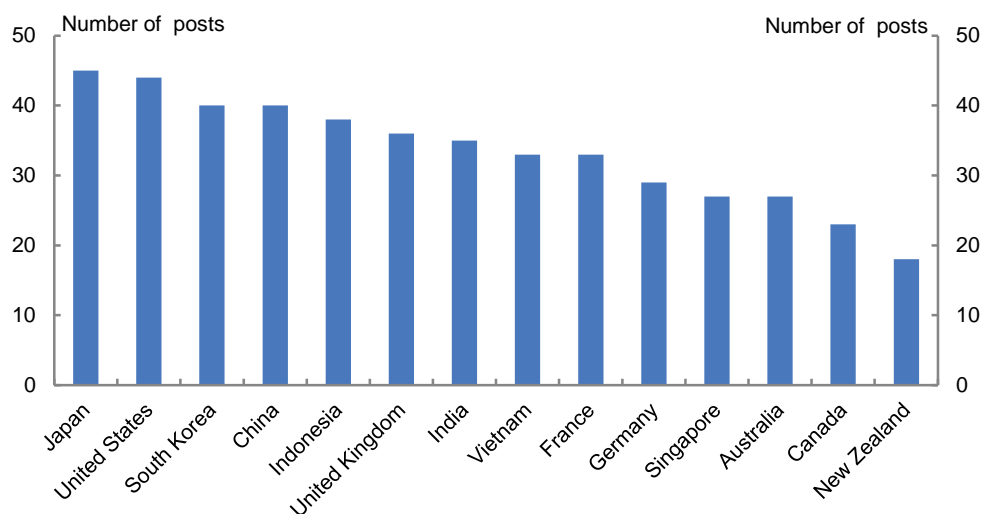
Note: As of June 2012. Multilateral refers to staff accredited to international organisations.  
Source: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Asia's strong economic growth and increasing strategic weight are focusing international attention on the region. This means Australia faces growing competition for influence as others devote more resources to the task of building relationships (Chart 9.2). And Australia's level of official representation is lower than that of similarly sized countries seeking greater engagement in the Asian region. At the same time, demands on the diplomatic service have expanded as our agendas with countries in the region have become more diverse and complex. While the growing number of Australians travelling abroad place increasing demands on our consular services.

The Government recently opened new posts in Mumbai (India), Chennai (India) and Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia), and will soon open one in Chengdu (China). But Australia's overall diplomatic capacity has remained static—and at times declined—since the mid-1990s. In North and Southeast Asia, the number of DFAT policy positions has fallen while our interests have expanded rapidly. In South Asia, they have increased in the same period, largely in India but also to support Australia's efforts in Afghanistan. During this period, the number of DFAT policy staff in Europe has dropped.

To support Australia's interests in the region, when circumstances allow, we will open a full embassy in Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia) and consulates in Shenyang (China), Phuket (Thailand) and in eastern Indonesia. Over time, we will continue to review our diplomatic representation in Asia to reflect new priorities, both in capital and regional cities.

**Chart 9.2: Diplomatic posts in Asia**



Note: Compiled using data as of July 2012 from relevant foreign ministries websites. See glossary for definition of Asia.

Source: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Our approach to diplomacy must adapt to the evolving environment, a more complex policy agenda and new communications technologies (Box 9.1). Diplomacy will increasingly be a skill set, not a job description—our missions will need to draw on an increasing range of government agencies and external sources of expertise as Australia builds the specialist links and knowledge described in earlier chapters.

#### **Box 9.1: 21st-century diplomats abroad—a day in the life**

Until recently, Australia's diplomats were concerned mostly with government-to-government relationships, including advocating Australian interests in host capitals, reporting on developments and negotiating international agreements with other governments. Those remain important tasks—but more is asked of today's diplomats. The tasks of staff in overseas posts have multiplied and can now include any of the following:

- negotiating a science and technology agreement
- discussing market access for Australian agricultural products
- attending the trial of an Australian detainee
- participating in a forum to combat illegal fishing
- working with local authorities and the Australian Electoral Commissioner on possible electoral cooperation in future
- engaging in Ramadan festivities with a local community group
- promoting a cultural festival.

Source: Richardson (2011).

Today, almost every domestic policy issue has an international dimension, and most international issues have significant domestic repercussions.

As the agenda grows, Australia's overseas posts will more than ever be whole-of-Australia hubs promoting and managing a growing number of links—both physical and virtual. And they will continue to grow as hubs for greater business, institutional and community collaboration between Australia and the region.

A growing number of departments and agencies are already represented in Australia's overseas diplomatic posts (Appendix B). And other Australian Government agencies and promotion bodies work throughout Asia, such as Meat and Livestock Australia, Wine Australia, and Tourism Australia which has representation in China, India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea.

Each of Australia's six State governments has representative offices in various cities in Asia, some of which have been established for many years. State and Territory representatives, as well as some local governments, participate in trade, investment, tourism and cultural promotion and other missions to countries in the region. They also pursue other forms of engagement, including by promoting subnational, sister-state and sister-city relationships with regional counterparts, which involve their broader communities. Australia has over 100 of these relationships with Japan and more than 80 with China. We will continue to support stronger relationships between state and local governments and their regional counterparts.

DFAT has a central role in shaping and driving Australia's Asia engagement, including by consulting widely, drawing on external expertise, and connecting the domestic and international dimensions of policy. To do this effectively, it must work closely with other agencies and levels of government, with business and across the entire community.

At the same time, all Australian Government departments and agencies need to ensure that international considerations are embedded into their domestic policy analysis and implementation. They need to further invest in the development of effective working relationships with their regional counterparts.

### Stronger and more balanced relationships

As Australia's individual bilateral relationships become more complex, we need to review the official bilateral architecture that underpins our stable and mature relationships within the region to ensure that it can help us manage this complexity (Appendix B). The bilateral architecture already in place with Indonesia, Japan and South Korea, for example, is well developed. Australia's relationships with China and India will be the immediate priority for future development of bilateral architecture.



We will look at ways to further enhance ties with Asia. This will include expanding regular high-level meetings between government leaders, ministers and senior business leaders. We will also build dialogues between young leaders and increase the flow of people and ideas between institutions. Institutions that should look to expand their links include parliaments, the judiciary, academia, cultural institutions, research organisations and businesses. In addition, we will continue to implement agreements and treaties across a wide range of areas.

Strengthening Australia's economic and business diplomacy is important. We need deeper and more comprehensive bilateral ties between Australian and regional economic agencies, greater involvement with regional economic forums, stronger links between Australian and regional business groups and effective Australian-based think-tank and university networks that are well connected to the region (often referred to as Track 2 diplomacy).

*National objective*

23. Australia will have stronger and more comprehensive relationships with countries across the region, especially with key regional nations—China, India, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea.

To bring a stronger national purpose and cohesion to our relationships with Asia, we will consult widely to develop comprehensive country strategies. This will include discussions with business and other community leaders to help identify opportunities to deepen and strengthen our national relationships. Deepening our people-to-people links will be a particular focus. These strategies will be tabled in Parliament and regularly evaluated and updated.

Because of their size, economic links with Australia and strategic and political influence in the region and globally, China, India, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea will be the initial priorities for the development of these country strategies.

At the same time, Australia will reinforce our partnerships with other countries across the region, including members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), such as Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines.

ASEAN, as an organisation, has amplified the voice of Southeast Asian countries and is at the core of regional groupings. To deepen Australia's engagement with the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN member countries, Australia will appoint a Jakarta-based Ambassador to ASEAN.

Australia will be able to strengthen our relationships in the region by pooling expertise and coordinating our Asia-focused programs more effectively across all levels of government under an overall 'Australia' umbrella. Coordination and consultation across agencies, levels of government and non-official expertise will be made easier through using new technology, such as the National Broadband Network.

## Public diplomacy

The work of diplomacy is clearly no longer confined to dealing with governments and officials. The range of actors influencing the international agenda has proliferated to include business, the media, think tanks, cultural and educational institutions, community groups and individuals. If we are to advance our national interests across Asia, Australia must increasingly listen to, engage with, and try to influence the views of this broader constituency. To do this, Australia must draw on the connections and interests of a broad group of individuals and organisations, not only government and officials.

This means there is a core role for public diplomacy.

Public diplomacy, which includes cultural diplomacy, has traditionally been defined as the actions taken by government to shape the perceptions of individuals and groups in other countries in ways that will promote Australia's foreign policy goals (Senate Standing Committee 2007). But in recent times, with the influence of new technology including social media, the evolving nature of communications, and the proliferation of interest groups, a broader definition that takes into account the dynamics of two-way connections and a broader range of actors is more useful. And public diplomacy has a role to play both within Australia and overseas.

Foreign affairs ministries in the region are devoting more resources and using a wider range of public diplomacy tools to promote their culture and achievements internationally. And many countries outside the region have major public diplomacy programs that they use to promote understanding and awareness of, and interaction with, communities in the region; for example, the United States and the United Kingdom.

As the international environment becomes more contested, communication channels more complex and power more diffuse, public and cultural diplomacy tools help to start conversations, share knowledge and convey nuanced messages about Australia and our regional partners. The value of public diplomacy was demonstrated in helping to repairing Australia's image in India during 2009–10 (Box 9.2).

Australia's public diplomacy programs include: the Australia Awards program; cultural exchanges and projects in our overseas posts; country-specific foundations, councils and institutes;<sup>1</sup> international broadcasting services (Australia Network and Radio Australia); various schemes to encourage high-level visitors to come to Australia (including the Special Visitors Program, the International Media Visits Program and the International Cultural Visits Program); and the Building Brand Australia program.

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1 Including the Australia–China Council, the Australia–India Council, and the Australia–Indonesia Institute, the Australia–Japan Foundation, the Australia Korea Foundation, the Australia–Malaysia Institute, and the Australia–Thailand Institute.

Social media is increasingly being used as a public diplomacy tool. It provides new opportunities to foster engagement and collaboration amongst community and business groups around the region. Through the creative use of these new tools, we can reach and engage new constituencies in Asia and Australia.

#### **Box 9.2: Public diplomacy in action—repairing Australia’s image in India**

In response to widespread negative fallout in India as a consequence of incidents in Australia involving Indian students, in 2009–10 the Government developed, in consultation with India experts, a public diplomacy strategy to help repair Australia’s damaged reputation. Drawing on the expertise of the federal and State governments, the City of Melbourne, media, educational institutions and the community, it included:

- intensive advocacy led by the Prime Minister and involving State Premiers and senior ministers
- encouraging more informed media coverage in India and Australia through fact-finding visits to Australia by more than 30 Indian journalists; providing regular media interviews and briefings; and holding regional seminars involving Indian, Australian and regional journalists
- promoting greater mutual understanding by bringing senior Indian opinion leaders to Australia; stepping up cultural connections, including by supporting a concert in Parramatta by Indian composer AR Rahman; touring a photography exhibition on Australia’s Indian community to major cities; and producing ‘interstitials’ (short items shown between features) on multicultural Australia for television and web distribution in India.

Time and persistence are needed to address reputational issues and to build the goodwill and resilience necessary for a bilateral relationship to withstand tensions that can arise. Research by the Reputation Institute shows that Australia’s reputation in India has improved since 2011, but that is not a reason for complacency.

Cultural exchanges build greater understanding between countries at all levels and the arts, culture and creativity can strengthen Australia’s relationships with nations in Asia both formally and informally (Box 9.3). Australia’s cultural strengths, as home to the world’s oldest living culture and one that welcomes great diversity, underpin values of respect, understanding and inclusion that help to connect people, business, institutions and governments.

In addition to its role in forging people-to-people connections, media is a particularly powerful public diplomacy vehicle for projecting a positive image of contemporary Australia abroad.

The newly reconfigured Australia Network service, which combines the resources and experience of the Australia Network and Radio Australia, provides a more flexible public diplomacy tool that includes an extensive on line component to build knowledge about Australia in the region.

### **Box 9.3 The Indigenous dimension of Australia's cultural diplomacy**

Indigenous Australians have had a leading role in bringing Australia to the world. Contemporary Indigenous visual arts is one of the most highly regarded art movements in the world.

There are frequent exhibitions involving leading Indigenous artists touring Asia, both through our national collecting institutions and through Australia's diplomatic missions. The exhibition curated by the National Museum of Australia of works by Emily Kame Kngwarreye toured to Tokyo and Osaka in Japan and attracted record-breaking crowds and much local media attention. Indigenous music was a major component of Australia's cultural programs at the Shanghai and Yeosu expos in 2010 and 2012. Performing arts groups, such as leading dance ensemble Bangarra Dance Theatre, regularly tour overseas. Indigenous performing and visual art will feature prominently at OzFest, a major Australian cultural festival being led by the Australian Government in India from late 2012.

Presentations such as these demonstrate the vitality and uniqueness of Australian culture, which in turn assists Australia's national interests, including in our region. Each year, the Government supports a tour of a contemporary visual arts exhibition that showcases the richness of Australia's Indigenous cultures. Ongoing interaction between Asia and our Indigenous cultures is crucial and will lead to outcomes in tourism, economic growth and cultural exchange.

Through the provision of a mix of news, current affairs and business, English-language learning, education, documentaries, drama, sports and children's programs, the Australia Network will allow Australia's 'voice' to be available throughout Asia (Box 9.4). Ensuring that programming, applications and platforms respond to demand, while at the same time ensuring the editorial independence and integrity on which Australia Network's reputation depends, will increase its relevance and influence in the region.

#### **Box 9.4: International broadcasting—reaching mass audiences**

International broadcasting has the potential to reach more people each day than any other public diplomacy tool, enabling swift responses to unfolding events.

Australia's international television broadcasting service, the Australia Network, reaches an estimated 31.2 million homes in 46 countries in the Asia-Pacific region. It has a mandate to encourage awareness of Australia, promote cross-cultural communication and build regional partnerships. It is among the most-watched government-funded international television services in the region.

Radio Australia, which recent surveys estimate has a weekly reach of 1.54 million, provides content to Asia in six languages—English, Chinese (Mandarin), Indonesian, Vietnamese, Cambodian (Khmer) and Burmese (ABC 2012). It is a multichannel, multiplatform, multilingual service with nine new audio channels for radio and online, broadcasting 24 hours a day.

Other international broadcasters are competing for audiences in Asia, and spending considerable money in doing so, include Al Jazeera (Qatar) (\$359 million in 2009), CCTV (China) (\$280 million in 2009) and NHK World/Radio (Japan) (\$226 million in 2008).

Diplomatic dialogue through non-official channels, often referred to as Track 2 diplomacy, comes under the heading of public diplomacy. It generates new ideas and strategies and allows the non-government sector from different countries—usually academics, business people or officials acting in an unofficial capacity—to interact in processes aimed at creating and enlarging common ground to assist policy development. By its nature, these dialogues are more about the dynamics of building trust and common preferences than about 'bargaining' or negotiating strategies.

As demonstrated effectively in the past, Australian non-government sector networks, including business, universities, think-tanks and other networks, are a valuable resource for promoting foreign policy priorities, and an avenue for mobilising a broader set of resources. These networks can be used and deployed strategically to make Australian initiatives more likely to succeed and Australian foreign and trade policy more effective. Australia's public diplomacy efforts over time will continue to grow in influence.

We will routinely draw on non-official expertise and influence in developing and implementing foreign policy initiatives. Through greater coherence and connection between official and non-official dialogues, we can enhance our diplomacy to promote greater mutual understanding between communities in Australia and Asia. And over time, in partnership with the community, we will explore new avenues for intensifying our public and cultural diplomacy and engagement with the region.

### 9.3 The work of communities

The work of preparing Australia for the Asian century cannot depend on the Government alone. While the Government will play a leading role in strengthening and building truly comprehensive relationships with partners in the region, others across a broad spectrum of society, spanning business, unions, community groups, educational institutions and arts and cultural institutions, will play their role too. Public diplomacy and people-to-people connections are mutually reinforcing.

#### *National objective*

24. Australia will have deeper and broader people-to-people links with Asian nations, across the entire community.

Polling indicates that Australians' views of Asia, while largely positive, do not always recognise the dramatic regional transformations that have occurred over the past decade (Box 9.5). Similarly, some of our regional neighbours hold dated and stereotyped impressions of Australia.

So change is needed in the way Australians think about and engage with the region. The active support of the community will be critical in challenging traditional mindsets, identifying new opportunities and intensifying our regional engagement.

We will work to put in place structures that help this process, but Australia will only succeed in the Asian century by engaging the whole community.

Australia's community and institutional connections with Asia are diverse and growing. In recent decades, Australia's cultural wealth has been boosted through greater Asia engagement, particularly migration flows. This is reflected in the food Australians enjoy, where we choose to travel, the books we read and the films we watch.

Australians of Asian heritage bring a wide range of valuable perspectives to our nation:

[G]reater engagement with Australians with Asian heritage and backgrounds is needed to better utilise talents and resources in these communities. Senior and future leaders in these communities have extensive contacts and interaction with business and social interests that will benefit Australia's presence and economic prosperity in the long-term. (AIYD 2012:4)

In addition to encouraging informed and up-to-date perceptions of Asia in Australia, Australians of Asian heritage can also help to project more accurate perceptions of Australia into our region.

Partnerships with individuals, groups and institutions in Asia have intrinsic value for those involved as they link Australians with the dynamism and diversity of the region.



But over and above this intrinsic value, Australia's rich network of people-to-people connections provides ballast to our official relationships. They are a conduit for ideas and opportunities, and a mechanism for exploring sensitive or complicated issues that may not be amenable to government resolution.

#### **Box 9.5: Australians' views on Asia and Asia's views of Australia**

The 2012 Lowy Institute poll presented Australians with six possible responses from the Australian Government 'as the Asian region grows and becomes more significant' (Hanson 2012).

The strongest support was for doing more to get 'Australia included in Asian political forums' (37 per cent of respondents said that it was 'very important'), increasing 'defence spending' (32 per cent) and encouraging 'Australians to learn more Asian languages' (31 per cent). A quarter said the Government should 'increase the number of Australian diplomats we send to Asia', but there was less support for doing 'more to attract Asian investment into Australia' (16 per cent) or increasing 'the number of migrants Australia accepts from Asia' (13 per cent).

Responses differed across generations. Australians aged 60 years or older were twice as likely as 18–29-year-olds to say that increasing defence spending is 'very important'. Older Australians were more likely to say that encouraging 'Australians to learn more Asian languages' was 'very important'. Australians 18 to 29 years old were the most likely age group to say it was 'very important' that the Government 'increase the number of Australian diplomats we send to Asia'.

In international polls, Australia regularly ranks among the top countries to visit and to live, work and study in. However, our reputation is stronger in Group of Eight (G8) countries than in countries in our region. In a 2011 Reputation Institute poll, G8 countries ranked Australia 3rd behind Canada and Sweden, whereas non-G8 countries (including Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Korea) ranked us 14th overall (Reputation Institute 2011).

Our reputation in Asia remains strongly linked to our landscape and lifestyle, and does not fully reflect the intellectual, creative and commercial credentials of Australia today. Promoting a modern, innovative and multicultural image of Australia in Asia is a public diplomacy priority.

Our international reputation matters because it affects our policy influence, rubs off on Australian businesses, builds negotiating capital and helps to attract tourists, international students, and trade and investment opportunities.

#### **Travel, study, migration and work links**

A rich network of personal relationships links Australia to our region through travel, study, migration, work flows and volunteering.

Almost one million Australians are living abroad, of whom an estimated 230,000 reside in Asia (Hugo 2006). This includes Australians who are working, volunteering or

studying in the region (Box 9.6). Australians abroad have great potential as unofficial ambassadors and when back in Australia they bring knowledge and experience that enriches our society as a whole.<sup>2</sup> And the reverse is true: large numbers of people from the region live, work and study in Australia before returning to their home countries. Enabling young Australians to travel and work in Asia is a high priority since Australians abroad are important conduits for building capabilities and exchanging ideas.

#### **Box 9.6: Australian Volunteers International**

Since its founding in 1951, Australian Volunteers International has enabled more than 9,000 Australians to work in developing communities around the world, including 4,319 in Asia. Australia's first volunteers were graduates from the University of Melbourne who responded to a request from Indonesia for technical experts not only to share their knowledge, but also to participate in the life of the then newly independent society. The Government has provided funding for volunteer programs since 1965 and continues to provide significant support.

Australian Volunteers International is adapting its approach to volunteering in response to the changing international environment. It is partnering with the ANZ Banking Group to develop community engagement opportunities for bank staff, providing young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with overseas volunteering opportunities, and helping Macquarie University to create the only whole-of-university volunteer program in Australia by sending students to South and Southeast Asia. Australian Volunteers International is increasingly 'twinning' Australian and Asian organisations to share expertise, technology and strategic thinking through two-way exchanges.

Australia's working holiday maker program fosters cultural exchange and enhances people-to-people links with partner countries. We have formal working holiday maker program agreements with Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand that make it easier for young Australians to work and study there. Given the value of these arrangements in building connections between young people, we will expand Work and Holiday program agreements with countries in Asia over time, starting with an increase to 1,000 places in the Work and Holiday Visa program we have with Indonesia.

Links formed through study are another important channel for building people-to-people relationships. Australia's large number of overseas students reinforces our links to the region (Box 9.7). Some are funded through Australia's extensive Australia Awards program.

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<sup>2</sup> This was demonstrated by the contributions being made by groups, such as Advance, a global not-for-profit network founded in 2002 for Australians living and working overseas.

Students who return to their home countries are a particular source of goodwill for Australia, and Australia will do more to encourage stronger alumni networks of Australian-educated leaders in Asia. Prominent Australian alumni include Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr Marty Natalegawa; the founder of Asia's largest biotechnology firm, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw from India; the founder of China's largest manufacturer of solar panels, Shi Zhengrong; and Japan's first NASA astronaut and head of its National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation, Mamoru Mohri.

To consolidate the branding of Government scholarships and awards and to strengthen our alumni networks, we established the Australia Awards program in 2009.

Australia's official scholarship and awards program is worth \$325 million in 2011–12 and is much larger in scale than the Colombo Plan (Box 9.7). It is in our interests to continue to forge enduring links with the countries of Asia through these programs. We commit to 12,000 Australia Awards (Asian Century) over five years to nations in Asia. The awards will be for Australians to study in the region and students from regional countries to undertake study or professional development in Australia. Some awards will be extended to include work placements and support mid-career sabbaticals.

#### **Box 9.7: International student flows**

In 2011, Australia had 550,000 enrolments by international students in our education institutions. Around three-quarters of these enrolments were from countries in Asia. China, India and South Korea were the top three source nations. Australia draws the second-largest number of tertiary students from Asia studying abroad, behind only the United States

This year, there are around 6,800 international students, researchers and professionals on Australia Awards, most of whom are from Asia. Australia's current inbound scholarship and awards programs are larger than the Colombo Plan scholarship program, which brought some 20,000 students from Asia to study in Australia over 35 years.

Increasingly, Australian students are studying abroad. In the five years to 2010, the proportion of Australian undergraduate degree students who studied overseas during their courses (from short-term placements to double-degree programs with partner universities) more than doubled, to around 12 per cent. More than 30 per cent of outbound Australian students studied in Asia. We will implement a suite of policies to boost the number of Australian students who take up an in-Asia study experience (Chapter 6).

Greater emphasis will be placed on maintaining lifelong links with and between scholarship and award recipients. We will strengthen the extensive alumni networks of Australian-educated leaders in Asia by providing a focal point for coordinating the networks through an Australia Awards Office.

We will also continue to support high-quality private-sector scholarships that bring future Asian leaders to Australia and encourage greater numbers of Australians to study in Asian institutions through grants and other exchange programs (Chapter 6). For example, the Hong Kong company Cheung Kong Group is a co-sponsor of the Endeavour Australia Cheung Kong Awards, which support undergraduate and postgraduate education exchange between Australia and Asia.

Students at university level are not the only ones who benefit from links within the region. A growing number of high school graduates benefit greatly from Asian exchanges during a gap year. And digital technology will boost online collaboration between students of all ages and backgrounds, as well as between researchers, businesses and community groups.

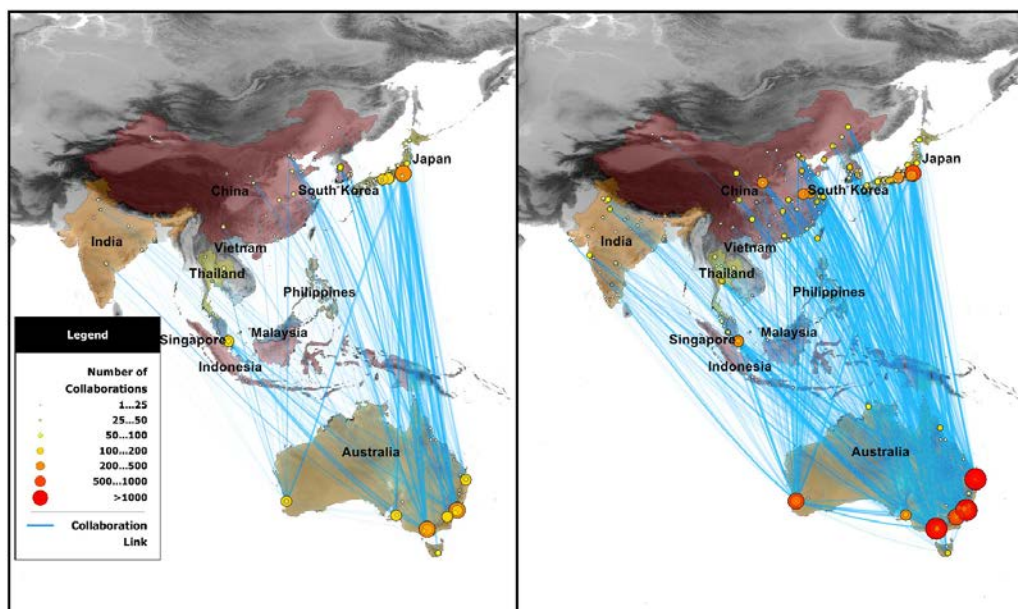
### Academic, scientific and professional links

A growing proportion of global scientific research is taking place in Asia. Partnerships with research and technology communities are crucial to supporting Australia's ability to access new ideas and to build our future competitiveness.

The scope for mutually beneficial research is considerable. Countries in the region, including China, India, Japan, Singapore and South Korea, have world-class research infrastructure and capabilities. China and Japan are home to two of the world's most powerful supercomputers. Despite its small population, Singapore has developed as a world hub of biotechnology research and development, particularly in pharmaceuticals.

Australia's connections with research communities in the region are strong and growing (Figure 9.1). Measured by the number of joint scientific publications, Australia is among the top 10 most important partners for China, Japan, India, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and all 10 members of ASEAN. Australian researchers are collaborating more with their international counterparts and the proportion of Australia's publications produced through international collaboration rose from less than 35 per cent to more than 45 per cent between 2000 and 2010 (Thomson Reuters 2011b). At the institutional level, the Chinese Academy of Sciences is now the single most frequent partner institution for Australian collaboration, as measured by publication data between 2004 and 2008 (Adams, King & Webster 2010).

**Figure 9.1: Scientific links between Australia and Asian nations**  
2002 2010



Sources: Thomson Reuters (2011a) and Scopus.

As the international focus on Asia intensifies, Australia will face more competition for opportunities to collaborate with the region's most capable researchers. Sustaining Australia's present links will need continued investment and stewardship by governments, our leading scientists, innovators and institutions.

Over time, Australia should broaden and strengthen our partnerships across the region to link with Asia's growth as a global science and innovation hub. We will use the National Broadband Network and digital technology to boost online collaboration between researchers, community groups, students, schools and universities in Australia with their counterparts throughout the region (Chapter 5).

Australia's professional collaboration with regional partners extends beyond pure research. Australia has broad and longstanding ties in fields as diverse as jurisprudence, and library and information sciences. Sustaining our commitment to these relationships is important for developing shared bodies of knowledge and experience, enabling the easy flow of ideas.

The Burnet Institute argues that 'the impact of these relationships that are developed over long periods of time, based on mutual interests and with a genuine sense of equality, trust and understanding, is difficult to measure but unarguably important' (Burnet Institute 2012).

We recognise the importance of these research and professional links, and science and research exchanges, and support a wide range of pathways to maintain and expand them.

## Connections through faith and community service organisations

Cooperation across national boundaries through faith communities can strengthen understanding within and between nations and help dispel misperceptions.

Across our region, many local and national interfaith organisations and networks have emerged and implemented a diverse range of programs and activities. In Australia, peak bodies—such as the Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils, the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry and the National Council of Churches—have integrated interfaith dialogues with the region.

These communities are promoting regional peace and cooperation. Regional interfaith dialogues, such as those held in Yogyakarta (2004), Cebu (2006), Waitangi (2007), Phnom Penh (2008), Perth (2009) and Semarang (2012), and similar initiatives, contribute to peace and understanding in the region by connecting faith communities in constructive and practical ways.

More generally, Australian communities are linked with Asian communities by groups with an interest in community service. These include groups such as Lions and Rotary and various development, environmental, human rights and other not-for-profit organisations. While many once had a traditional emphasis on aid, service groups are now increasingly focused on supporting shared visions, developing joint projects and promoting a greater two-way flow of knowledge and ideas.

We promote these connections in a wide range of ways, including by supporting regional interfaith dialogues, assisting organisations working for development and sustainability in Australia and across the region.

## Sport

Australia is a growing part of Asia's sporting culture. Many Australian sporting groups are strengthening their partnerships with regional groups, including in sports that have larger followings in parts of Asia than in Australia, such as badminton and table tennis. Australia is an active member of the Asian Football Confederation, and three Australian teams compete in the annual Asian Champions League. The Australian Open tennis tournament is the most watched tennis event in the Asia-Pacific region (Tennis Australia 2012), and the Northern Territory has hosted thousands of athletes from the region every two years since 1993 as part of the Arafura Games. India is a main driver of Twenty20 cricket.

Our sporting connections can open doors and create links between people in the region (Box 9.8). Industry leaders in Australia and Asia often have close connections to sport through board appointments or team ownership, providing unique business networking opportunities. Sports in which Australia shares a connection with particular countries in Asia (such as football and cricket) provide obvious opportunities for businesses to develop links with Asian markets. This already occurs through sponsorship or team ownership. In the other direction, businesses and business figures from the region invest in Australian sport and the broader Australian economy through similar mechanisms.



### Box 9.8: Football diplomacy

When Football Federation Australia became a member of the Asian Football Confederation in 2006, for the first time Australia had a significant, ongoing sporting relationship with a large number of Asian and Middle Eastern countries, complementing our diplomatic and other links. Australians have competed against their Asian counterparts in a variety of sports, but those links have tended to be limited to particular countries (most notably, cricketing ties with the Indian subcontinent) or have occurred only occasionally. By contrast, Australian teams now play regular competitive matches against teams from throughout the region.

As countries in Asia continue to develop and as their middle classes continue to grow, football will become increasingly popular. More than 80 million people in Asia played football in 2006. By 2020, that number may be more than 380 million. More people will watch games. Professional football leagues will continue to develop and there will be a steady shift in professional football leadership to Asia creating considerable business and other opportunities.

Our football engagement with Asia is not limited to national teams and A-league clubs. State representative teams make regular visits to China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam and they often travel and play outside capital cities. Club teams from Asia often visit Australian States, Territories and regions, particularly Western Australia, northern New South Wales, Victoria and the Northern Territory (FFA 2012).

In 2015, two major sporting events will be held in Australia—the International Cricket Council Cricket World Cup and the Asian Football Confederation Asian Cup. In addition to players and officials participating and supporters visiting, hundreds of millions of people in our region will watch these games using many different technologies. Such events offer opportunities for Australia to build on our international reputation for delivering major sporting events, and to promote Australian tourism, trade and other interests in Asia.

### Cultural connections

Cultural connections across a range of areas can be powerful forces for bringing people together. Exchanges through culture build understanding and foster cultural appreciation. The people-to-people links forged through arts and culture can open up new business, training and market opportunities and are an integral part of strengthening political and trade relationships.

#### *National objective*

25. Australia will have stronger, deeper and broader cultural links with Asian nations.

Australia's arts and cultural community is increasingly connected with Asia. Australia has a dynamic Asian–Australian arts scene and our leading cultural institutions and major performing arts groups have strong relations with Asian partners. There is extensive collaboration between some smaller arts and cultural organisations and at an individual level.

Our major performing companies have a long history of successful tours to most Asian countries. These tours involve not only performing Australian works and interpretations for Asian audiences, but also often include artist exchanges and ongoing company partnerships resulting in lasting collaboration.

Australia's creative sectors allow us to connect with the region in new and clever ways that provide commercial and innovation benefits (Box 9.9).

#### **Box 9.9: Digital ninjas from Down Under**

Fruit Ninja is a game in which players slice fruit with a blade controlled by swiping their fingers across a smartphone or tablet screen. The flagship product of Brisbane developer Halfbrick Studios, it is the no. 1 paid application in Taiwan, Germany and Russia, and the no. 2 in China, the United States and Australia.

Halfbrick is now one of the world's leading independent game-app developers. Fruit Ninja has reached 300 million players worldwide and amassed more than 20 million paid downloads.

Working at the crossover of culture, technology and design, companies such as Halfbrick demonstrate what is possible when creativity and energy come together.

But more needs to be done. Australia's arts and cultural engagement should be strengthened across all of Australia's major regional relationships. And we can do better in encouraging cooperation and exchanges of expertise and specialists with cultural institutions from Asia, including through training and capacity building and through the creative use of digital technology.

We support the arts community through a range of pathways including the provision of competitive grants for international touring, coordinating an Australian presence at major arts events such as the Korea International Art Fair, and assisting organisations such as Asialink which promotes collaboration between Australian and Asian artists through a long-running residency program. We encourage the arts community and arts institutions, including those in regional Australia, to look to Asia when planning programs and future growth strategies.

Formal government-to-government cultural agreements can support cultural exchange and collaboration between nations, such as the formal agreement on cultural cooperation between China and Australia. These agreements provide incentive to grow relationships through a range of arts and cultural activities that link Australians with our Asian neighbours. For example, *Imagine Australia*, the Year of Australian Culture in China, together with its counterpart program, *Experience China*, is the biggest bilateral cultural exchange program ever held between the two

countries and comes as we celebrate the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations. And in 2011, Australia marked the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations with South Korea with the Australia–Korea Year of Friendship. In 2012 and 2013, we joined with some of India’s best cultural festivals and venues to stage events across India as part of OzFest.

Over time, Australia’s cultural links should grow and prosper through both private endeavour and government support. The mindset should be that Australian organisations should become fully part of the region through two-way collaboration and partnership arrangements.

The Government’s consideration of the Review of the Australia Council will ensure that the Australia Council is well placed to respond to the arts and culture sector into the future. We will also revamp the Australia International Cultural Council to ensure a strategic approach to cultural diplomacy and deliver support to Australian artists and cultural organisations to undertake international cultural exchange. The reforms could include a greater role for external peers in determining the council’s strategic direction and the prioritisation of cultural diplomacy objectives and artistic excellence when assessing applications for funding.

## Media

Media is central in shaping perceptions and enhancing communications between Australia and the region, and the information revolution offers unprecedented opportunities to connect in new ways. This is illustrated by the current popularity of *Junior Masterchef Australia* in Indonesia, and the parallel exchanges that the show has prompted through social media.

Asia has a dynamic, crowded and fragmented media environment with over a hundred 24-hour news channels operating across the region, a proliferation of new international channels and major growth in the use of digital and mobile technologies. At the end of 2011, Asia had an estimated 932 million internet users and the Asia–Pacific region had an estimated 2.9 billion mobile phone subscriptions. India now has more than 800 television channels (from only two in 1990) (Indian MIB 2012) and Indonesia has 43 million Facebook users (IWS 2012).

Our engagement with the region must acknowledge and respond to the rapid pace of change in media technologies and consumer behaviours: modern coverage of news and information is now practically instantaneous and transcends borders. As an illustration, Tourism Australia’s new ‘There’s Nothing Like Australia’ campaign advertisement in China had 20 million digital downloads over three months to September 2012.

The content and coverage of the region in Australia’s media need to improve. This is the responsibility of media organisations themselves. It is an important part of the whole-of-Australia approach to building links and engaging with Asia that is needed. We will explore opportunities to convene third-party expert panels with leading

media organisations and journalists to discuss the scope and quality of coverage of Asian countries and developments in the region of importance to Australia.

We will also support collaboration between regional media services; we will work with the media industry through its representative bodies such as press clubs, foreign correspondents associations and media and journalism schools, to ensure that Australians receive more day-to-day news about major events and issues from across the region. In addition, we will continue to encourage two-way media exchange programs with the region to build knowledge.

Within Australia's public broadcasting service, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) Charter obliges it to transmit to other countries programs to encourage awareness of Australia and an understanding of Australian attitudes on world affairs. At the same time, both the ABC and the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) have a role in reflecting a modern vision of Asia back to Australia through their correspondents in Asia and in the Asia-Pacific News Centre. This includes SBS's role as a news provider to Asian-Australian communities in their languages.

We will request the boards of the ABC and SBS to examine how to promote more extensive coverage of the Asia region in all aspects of their content and programming, with special attention to news and information coverage, to ensure their content reflects the depth and diversity of our regional connections.

The scale and pace of change in Asia presents great opportunities for Australia. Right across our nation—in governments, businesses, unions, educational and cultural institutions and broad community groups—we need to become even more innovative, efficient and adaptable. All of us will need to work smarter to maximise prosperity.

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