

Foreign Policy Speech

Australia is an open, liberal democracy, committed to our robust democratic institutions. We have the 13th largest economy in the world. We are export-oriented, and currently enjoying our 27th consecutive year of uninterrupted economic growth – a world record. We have considerable national strengths: a flexible, competitive and growing economy, formidable defence and national security capabilities, and a cohesive and resilient multicultural society – according to the UN, we are the most multicultural country in the world. These strengths are built on our values of freedom, equality and the rule of law. We are a regional power with global influence.

Our strength in innovation, creative industries and as an attractive tourism destination brings substantial economic benefits. They encourage visitors to our shores, allowing us to showcase Australia's natural beauty, world-class produce, dynamic economy and the tolerance and openness of our society. Our democracy, rule of law, strong economy, quality education, cutting-edge science, multiculturalism and environmental protections underpin our ability to attract capital and talent from around the world. This empowers Australians and Australian institutions to speak with confidence and credibility on the world stage.

As a prosperous country, Australia has a responsibility to contribute to global efforts to maintain a rules-based order, reduce poverty, alleviate suffering and promote sustainable development. The more that countries can provide economic opportunity for their citizens the more stable, and the less vulnerable to domestic and international challenges they will be. In this, we recognize the opportunities for Australia to become even more competitive, create and support more and better paying jobs, remain an attractive destination for foreign investment, and maintain our reputation as a reliable trading partner offering high quality goods and services.

Foreign Policy White Paper

Last year, the Australian government released its Foreign Policy White Paper – the first in fourteen years. The document is ambitious in guiding foreign policy officers to

shape external environments and maximise influence in our region. It sets out our interests, values and priorities, underpinned by guiding principles for our international engagement. The document also analyses the threats and risks, and the trends and opportunities that Australia faces over the coming decade and beyond.

Given our geography and global footprint, it is not surprising to note, that although we have global interests, our priorities are primarily in our region – the Indo-Pacific. We have long looked east across the Pacific and we have looked north, to the profound strategic and economic developments taking place across East Asia. Equally, there are great challenges and opportunities that present themselves across the Indian Ocean region – opportunities which Australia leverages through our membership in regional organisations such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association, which is currently under the astute chairing of South Africa.

Globally, Australia works to ensure that markets are kept open and trade continues to flow, that Australians will be secure, safe, and free, and that we will promote a world where rules are fair. It is in all countries' long-term interests to strengthen and defend an international rules-based order.

Major Power Relations

US/China - As a trading nation, having access to export markets is a critical part of Australia's economic architecture. Building new trade relationships with emerging markets is one way Australia can mitigate and protect itself from any overspill of China-US tensions.

Like all countries, Australia has never been able to meet all its needs domestically. We have always relied on outside powers to boost our economy as well as secure it.

Today's dilemma for Australia arises from tensions between our key security partner (USA) and our top economic partner (China). Australia works closely with China to spur economic activity through trade, and closely with the US on peace and security. Managing the intersect relationship between these two countries and the impact on the region is in our national interest. Australia's focus as outlined in the Foreign policy

White Paper regarding China will be on business ties and maintaining a steady relationship with Beijing; while with the US, Australia will continue to expand our security relationship to include regional allies like Japan and India. This is most evident through Australia's support for reviving the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue - an informal coalition between the US, Australia, Japan and India, and a bilateral agreement between Japan and Australia that enhances the transfer of military hardware between the countries.

South East Asia - Australia's closest neighbors lie in Southeast Asia. The friendship, reciprocal trade, closer cultural relations, stability, and people-to-people links are at the forefront of Australian Foreign policy. As a proud multicultural country, these qualities are quickly becoming part of the popular Australian outlook.

Australia remains a long-standing supporter of development and poverty reduction in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Our economic and security interests remain inextricably linked with the countries of Southeast Asia. Our bilateral engagement with these countries are strengthened by our engagement with ASEAN, the region's premier representative grouping. In 2016-17, Australia's trade with ASEAN countries amounted to over \$100 billion, more than with the US and Japan. Australia's regional and bilateral free trade agreements are pathways for Australian business to tap into ASEAN and the ASEAN Economic Community.

North Asia - North Asia's markets account for 60 per cent of Australia's goods exports and over 25 per cent of its services exports. North Asia provides almost 20 per cent of foreign direct investment into Australia. Australia maintains strong bilateral relations with north Asia including providing policy advice to ministers, supporting high-level dialogue and visits, and negotiating agreements. We are the only country in the world with Free Trade Agreements with China, Japan and South Korea.

Africa

The Australian government has long held the view that Australia has a national interest in the security, stability and prosperity of Africa. We have diplomatic relations

with all 54 African UN-member states, and memorandums of understanding with the African Union Commission as well as individual African countries on various issues ranging from science and technology to sports cooperation.

We have established ties with regional African organisations-accredited to the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community, the East African Community, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa.

In 2015, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, The Hon. Julie Bishop MP, established the Australia-based Advisory Group on Australian African Relations (AGAAR) whose sole purpose is to provide advice to the Government on advancing and diversifying Australia's relationship with Africa. In December 2016, the group released an Africa-strategy recommending, amongst many other things, that the Australian government expand our diplomatic footprint in Africa. In June 2017, Australia's new embassy in Rabat, Morocco was opened.

Our engagement with Africa is driven through high-level bilateral meetings between Australian and African leaders, Ministers and officials, including attending the annual African Union Summits as well as high-level events such as Investing in African Mining Indaba in South Africa and the Australia-Africa Week and Africa Down Under in Perth. There has been a steady stream of visitors in both directions, including Foreign Ministers and Presidents.

Trade

Africa is seen as the next frontier of the global economy. Australian business and investment interests in Africa - worth tens of billions of dollars – are quickly catching on to this trend. Australian investment in Africa is growing particularly in the resources sector. There are over 200 ASX-listed companies operating in 35 countries across Africa. Africa remains the single biggest market for Australian Mining, Equipment, Technology and Services (METS) companies outside of Australia.

Australia's two-way goods and merchandise trade with Africa was valued at \$7.6 billion in 2017, while Australian investment in Africa is estimated to be worth around \$30 billion. South Africa is Australia's largest export market in Africa with two-way trade totalling over A\$2 billion in 2016/17. In the same time, Australian merchandise exports to South Africa grew 7.5%, while exports of services grew by 1.2%.

It's not just about the resources sector, Australian involvement in African economies is also reaching into other areas including agriculture, education, health, financial and professional services, retail and the arts. Tourism is also an area for growth, with tourists on both sides of the Indian Ocean including either Australia or Africa on their bucket lists.

We (the High Commission and Austrade based in South Africa) provide support for Australian commercial interests, mainly through advocacy, economic and public diplomacy, and Ministerial and government official meetings.

Human Rights

Human rights underpin peace and prosperity. Everyone has the right to fundamental freedoms and to live their lives with dignity.

Nelson Mandela showed us what could be achieved through resilience, conviction and an unbending commitment to equality and non-discrimination. His life and legacy speak to the need for constant attention in combatting discrimination and the structural barriers that entrench it.

Australia does not claim to have a perfect human rights record, nor do we deny that discrimination occurs on our shores. We acknowledge that the gap between Indigenous Australian and non-Indigenous Australians remains unacceptable, and that Indigenous Australians continue to experience racism and discrimination. We measure our progress on a regular basis to better identify the areas of immediate priority. Through the 'closing the gap' process, we restate our commitment to advancing human rights, and ending racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance globally.

Female empowerment is a top priority in our foreign policy. Through our development assistance, we support improved access to education, sexual and reproductive health services, employment and financial services for women and girls. We strive to end violence against women and girls, and work with partners to encourage women to be leaders in their communities and parliaments.

Australia remains committed to a strong multilateral human rights system. We continue to support the independent mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. We promote efforts to strengthen the Human Rights Council and the wider human rights system. We are currently a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council for the 2018–2020 term, and are committed to:

- advancing the rights of women and girls
- promoting good governance, democratic institutions and freedoms of expression, association, religion and belief
- promoting the rights of people with disabilities
- advancing human rights for indigenous peoples around the globe
- promoting national human rights institutions and capacity building, and
- advocating for the global abolition of the death penalty.

Humanitarian

Africa and Australia share an interest in promoting the global rule of law and enhancing stability through peacekeeping and strengthening the resilience of societies. We increasingly face similar security challenges, including the wide-spread threat of terrorism; piracy; threats to cyber security; the strategic impact of climate change; organized crime in a range of areas including drug trafficking, money laundering and people smuggling.

There is already growing defence and security cooperation with African countries on counter-terrorism and in developing strategies to prevent individuals radicalising. Australia provides training to Defence personnel from African countries through a

range of courses with a peacekeeping focus. We also regularly deploy Royal Australian Navy vessels with multinational forces patrolling the seas off the continent.

African countries remain important to Australia, especially in the multilateral system, particularly on peacekeeping, conflict prevention, and responding to humanitarian crises. Australia works closely with a range of international organisations to protect and support refugees and displaced people, including the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Our focus is primarily on protection efforts for women and girls, and people with disabilities, because they are particularly vulnerable during conflicts and natural disasters.

We have pledged to provide strategic airlift support for UN peacekeeping operations in crises and to build the capacity of troop contributing countries in our region. We have committed to increasing our global humanitarian funding to provide additional assistance to support displaced people as close to their homes as possible, so they can return home when conditions allow. Australia supports the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework trials, which are helping to equip refugees with skills and training.

We will continue to engage closely on peace and security issues in Africa, building on the positive legacy of our term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2013 and 2014.

Beyond peacekeeping, Australia also contributes to the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, which aims to prevent a return to conflict in countries at risk. We cooperate with countries in the Gulf of Guinea and the Horn of Africa, and with organisations such as the UN Office for Drugs and Crime and the Regional Fusion and Law Enforcement Centre for Safety and Security at Sea on anti-piracy measures.

Bridging the poverty gap

To respond to the challenge of global poverty, Australia has committed to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs). We understand that economic growth alone will not guarantee prosperity and stability. That is why we focus on poverty reduction and promoting the participation in the economy and society of the most economically marginalised, including women and girls, and people living with disabilities. Our policies and programs focus on innovation and encourage private sector-led growth and job creation, and helping partner countries improve governance, education and health, and enhance productivity in agriculture, fisheries and water. We help build the infrastructure and capacity that developing countries need to benefit from trade. We promote gender equality because empowering women and working to bridge gender disparities would significantly boost per capita incomes.

International Rules-based Order

We place a high priority on protecting and strengthening the international rules and norms that guide the conduct of relations between states. Strong rules that help constrain the exercise of coercive power contribute to global security.

Australia has a long record of helping to develop the rules-based global order, beginning with the establishment of the United Nations in 1945, whose underlying principles of maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, and achieving global cooperation have guided the foundation of our foreign policy. Australia continues to play a leading role in setting new rules and norms in areas as diverse as the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Arms Trade Treaty, digital trade, internet governance, global health standards, and regional approaches to irregular migration and human trafficking. Our record has given us credibility and standing in the international community that we can leverage in pursuit of future rules-based initiatives.

We remain committed to preventing the use of chemical and biological weapons, including through our chairing of the Australia Group. The Australia Group was established in 1985 to help member countries identify those exports that need to be controlled so as not to contribute to the spread of chemical and biological weapons,

thus fulfilling their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention fully.

Australia will encourage efforts to disrupt and prevent the financing of proliferation of nuclear weapons. We will continue to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, especially through the 2020 and 2025 NPT review cycles. We advocate a patient and pragmatic approach in a complex security environment in which it is difficult to achieve significant nuclear disarmament.

Resource management

Australia, like all countries has finite energy and resources, not to mention finite political capital. Therefore, when we look at current global agendas we need to focus on the essential issues like global financial stability, global economic sustainable growth, global poverty, climate change, and global security. We have to ask ourselves whether we are properly focusing and harnessing the energies of global institutions to deal with core global problems.

As a continent surrounded by three oceans, we have a fundamental interest in the legal regimes and norms that govern the oceans. Our maritime Exclusive Economic Zone, including waters surrounding our offshore territories, is the world's third largest. Our marine resources are vital for our economy. Today, the world's oceans face multiple stresses, including climate-driven changes, pollution, over-exploitation and habitat destruction. This is why Australia is a strong advocate for a new international agreement, under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in the high seas.

Australia also supports basic food security and efficient water management internationally. As a major global producer and exporter of energy commodities, Australia works collaboratively to support the availability of energy, as we know that access to reliable and affordable energy is crucial to trade, economic growth and

development. We will continue to provide development assistance to help partner countries maximise benefits from their natural resources and energy sectors.

Australia is world renowned for its expertise in water management – a “front of the mind” issue here in Cape Town. We share our water management expertise to help enhance agricultural productivity, support growing populations, improve health outcomes, strengthen economies and reduce poverty. We are working to launch the Water Innovation Engine with the Rockefeller Foundation and the World Bank to trial and develop new approaches to help improve affordable access to clean water and sanitation. The experiences of major Australian cities such as Sydney, Brisbane and Perth in managing drought and water shortages have been shared around the world, including with major cities in South Africa.

Diaspora

Australia is home to an increasingly influential African diaspora — almost 400,000 Australians were born in Africa. While South Africa and Egypt top the list of African migrants to Australia, there are large African communities from South Sudan, Mauritius, Ethiopia, and Somalia, just to mention a few.

The diaspora groups are active in maintaining links with Africa, including through significant remittances; participation in peace building and reconciliation processes; and investment in economic and human development. These people-to-people links have contributed significantly to building the relationship between Australia and Africa.

Conclusion

In today’s global and modern world, we are all connected – be it through economics, demographic change, security challenges, lifestyles, climate change and many more. It is in our interest as a society to build and maintain strong relationships that endure test of time.

Australia has a strong relationship with many African countries, spanning from diplomatic relations through to education to sports. These relationships have been built on the ability to engage in direct, frank and ongoing dialogue about our fundamental interests and future vision.

As I noted before, given our geography and global footprint, it is not surprising that although we have global interests, our priorities are primarily in our region - the Indo Pacific. Australia's commitment to Africa is based on the mutual economic, social and political interests Australia and Africa can advance together. We share experiences and expertise in ways that will make a unique and positive contribution to both continents. We work together and individually, contributing to development, to security and to global engagement. We collaborate to tackle global challenges from climate change to free trade. We are all part of the future we are forging for ourselves and it is in Australia's long-term national, social and political interests to maintain this relationship.

Thank you