

Asialink

Leaders in Australia-Asia Engagement



REPORT

# MAPPING OUR FUTURE IN THE ASIAN CENTURY

ASIALINK ASIA SOCIETY NATIONAL FORUM 2010



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## **REPORT**

# **MAPPING OUR FUTURE IN THE ASIAN CENTURY**

### **ASIALINK ASIA SOCIETY NATIONAL FORUM 2010**

The Forum outcomes captured three common themes:

- 1** That advancing Australia’s increasingly complex relationships in the countries of the Asian region requires more qualified Australians – and that Governments and all sectors must invest long-term in equipping Australians with skills and understandings for the Asian Century.
- 2** That we must act collegially in our Asia relationships in order to solve common problems and to achieve successful outcomes. This requires greater resourcing and development of people-to-people links and an emphasis on “networks of mutuality”.
- 3** That the wider Australian public still needs to be brought into a national “conversation” about the imperative of Australia-Asia engagement.



GLYN DAVIS

SID MYER



THE FORUM IN SESSION

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMEN

An election year is a particularly important time for reflection on Australia's Asia policy and our relations in the region. On 25 May 2010, Asialink and the Asia Society AustralAsia Centre hosted the National Forum at Parliament House, Canberra. This followed two similar Asialink events over the past decade, also held in election years.

We were grateful to then Prime Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd, and the Opposition Leader, the Hon Tony Abbott, for delivering important keynote addresses – both expressing strong support for Australia's strengthened engagement with Asia. An enduring bi-partisan national commitment to nurturing our vital relationships in the Asian region, and to ensuring Australians have the skills to communicate and negotiate future Asian issues, will be essential for a prosperous and secure Australia.

The Asialink Asia Society National Forum facilitates a non-government, informed contribution to Australia's long-term Asia planning. Leaders from across sectors review this country's progress and challenges in Asia, and deliberate on future strategies; in some cases new mechanisms are proposed to advance an effective Australian engagement with Asia.

In 2010, as this report indicates, we have made significant headway in *Mapping our future in the Asian Century*, but there is more work to be done. We are delighted to present to you our 2010 National Forum report with its recommendations for action in the key sectors of business, diplomacy and security, education, health and development, and the arts.

### **Mr Sid Myer**

Chairman, Asialink and  
Asia Society AustralAsia Centre

### **Professor Glyn Davis AC**

Vice Chancellor  
The University of Melbourne

# OVERVIEW FROM THE CONVENORS

## The 2010 Asialink Asia Society National Forum, *Mapping our future in the Asian Century*, brought together 130 specialists and stakeholders from business, the arts, government, academia and the health and development areas.

Both the plenary and breakout sessions were structured as conversations rather than speaker-audience events.

Apart from major speeches by the then Prime Minister, The Hon. Kevin Rudd, and Opposition Leader, The Hon. Tony Abbott, the High Commissioner for India and the Ambassadors for China, Indonesia, Japan and the Republic of Korea participated in a panel discussion (facilitated by Professor Milner).

Participants in the Forum had the opportunity for cross-referencing between sectors, and building relationships that may be vital in furthering Australia's effective engagement with the Asian region.

The Forum began with a report on the annual *PricewaterhouseCoopers Melbourne Institute Asialink Index*. The Index covers progress in Australia's Asian engagement in the areas of trade, investment, education, tourism, migration, research and business development, and humanitarian assistance. It shows that engagement with Asia is four and a half times what it was 20 years ago. This compares to an increase of just three times in our engagement with the rest of the World.

The National Forum, however, focused on issues and challenges arising in Australia's engagement with the region. Concerns raised included:

- by international standards, Australia performs poorly in the way we project ourselves in the region (soft power)
- very few Australians study in Asia
- investment, unlike trade, is an underdeveloped area of Australian economic engagement
- Australia's involvement in the Arts of the region is "sporadic and scattergun" and we are therefore largely excluded from the extraordinary cultural dynamism of contemporary Asia
- the study of Asian languages and Asian countries is faring very badly in Australia (even compared to a generation ago), despite the government's stress on the need for "Asia literacy"
- there is still a lack of broad Asia skills in Australian businesses from boardroom to staff.

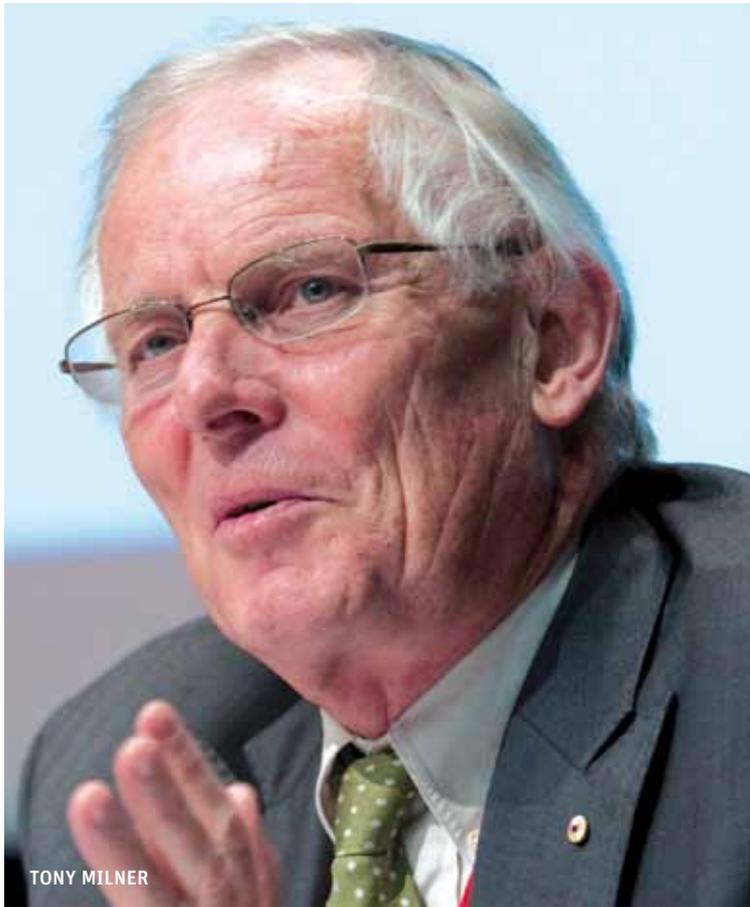
A significant positive feature of the discussion was the suggestion of a shift in perspective, at least at the leadership level represented at the Forum. In thinking about how Australia might achieve a more effective engagement, in reflecting on what it really means to become an active member of the regional community, Forum participants stressed the need for much more collaborative work, more partnerships.

This emphasis was present in discussion about the Arts and health, about regional (including middle power) cooperation in defence, about the need for a deeper business investment in the Asian region, and about the development of people-to-people links. The stress on collaboration was also there in a proposal to develop a regional research community.

Has there been a shift in Australian thinking? Are we seeing our relationships in the Asian region less through the prism of the US Alliance, or of an Australia acting primarily as the communicator of global/Western values (and often aid)? Those at the Forum tended to refer to a more independent Australia engaged with the Asian region in reciprocal and creative collaborations in multiple fields.

The most serious anxiety at the meeting concerned the danger of the Australian community not being prepared for the "Asian century". It is a concern about "Asia literacy", but not only within the education system. How far is the Australian community prepared for living in a region where the United States influence might be substantially reduced, where new demands may be placed on our defence capacities, where the English language might cease to be the main language of diplomacy and business?

There was a concern to make sure that the Australian leadership does not move too far out in front of the Australian community in thinking about what future Asian engagement may entail. This led to a call for a "national conversation" to address this issue, a conversation that would need to consider not just the broad dimensions of what the "Asian century" might bring, but also help the community to think about such concrete issues like our often xenophobic responses to international investment.



TONY MILNER

JENNY MCGREGOR



## How far is the Australian community prepared for living in a region where the United States influence might be substantially reduced... where the English language might cease to be the main language of diplomacy and business?

An advantage of a national conversation would be to make sure that the different sectors in Australia-Asia engagement keep in touch with one another, and see possible connections in the problems we encounter.

The Forum also identified the need for a second type of national conversation: one based on the strong need to build our public diplomacy efforts in the Asian region. Opinion surveys in Asian countries and Australia underline the problems existing at the level of people-to-people links, and confirm the urgency of this proposal.

It was stressed that our relations in the region are becoming increasingly complex, and that this requires greater resources to advance Australian interests in the soft power and many other areas. This is not merely a matter of funding: at present we lack the necessary skills base.

Here, as in so many aspects of our conversation, many at the Forum spoke of the crisis of “Asia literacy”. The fear, expressed repeatedly, is that we are really slipping backward and at a time when the task of preparing for Australia’s Asian future is dramatically more urgent than ever before.

### **Ms Jenny McGregor**

CEO Asialink and  
Asia Society AustralAsia Centre

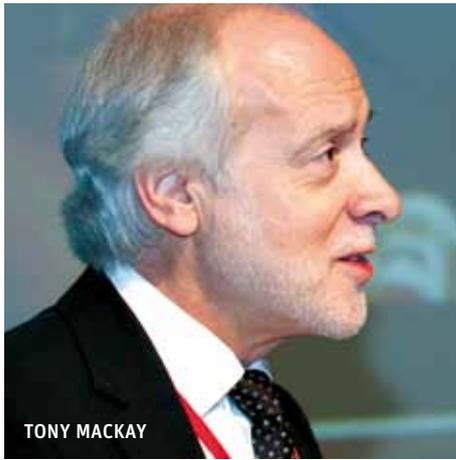
### **Professor Anthony Milner**

Basham Professor of Asian History at the  
Australia National University  
Professorial Fellow, the University of Melbourne  
International Director and Board Member, Asialink

PLENARY SESSION

# THE ASIAN CENTURY

Chairs Sid Myer and Glyn Davis



TONY MACKAY



PAUL DIBB



ROBYN ARCHER

The plenary session’s diversity of people and views underlined the extraordinary breadth of Australia’s engagement with Asia. Experts from across sectors – representatives of large corporations and industry groups, specialists from academia and government, members of the arts community, the education sector, and the health and development fields – addressed the crucial question of Australia’s readiness for the “Asian Century”.

Many were taking a step out of their usual sectors to listen to new perspectives. Participants considered the implications of a geo-political shift from West to East. What does Asia’s growing economic and strategic importance mean for Australia? And what might successful Australia-Asia relations look like?

There were many and varied voices, and a kaleidoscope of examples of Australia-Asia interaction – from the optimistic and creative exchanges of the arts and development communities, to caution in health and security, and a call for greater community understanding from business and education.

## ASIA OR ASIA-PACIFIC?

Use of the phrase, “the Asian Century”, was emphasised throughout the morning. Professor Hugh White told the Forum: “It’s a terribly significant feature of Australia’s national life that we’ve managed, throughout the two and a half centuries of occupation of this continent, to have as our closest friends states which have been, both successively, the richest and strongest countries in the world, and also the dominant maritime powers in Asia.”

“And what’s significant about that phrase – ‘the Asian Century’ – is that it carries an implicit recognition that we might no longer live in an Asia that remains dominated by our very close friends. The alternative phrase we sometimes hear, ‘the Asia-Pacific Century’, on the other hand, does not carry that recognition – it implies a hope or expectation that despite the immense power shift in Asia, America will still somehow remain dominant. I don’t think that’s a realistic hope.”



GEOFF GARRETT



HUGH WHITE

## Participants considered the implications of a geo-political shift from West to East. What does Asia's growing economic and strategic importance mean for Australia? And what might successful Australia-Asia relations look like?

The acknowledged need to develop strategies and mechanisms for dealing with emerging regional challenges brought participants to the idea of “community” and its centrality. Speakers continually referred to people-to-people links and the value of networks, already established.

“It’s too late when the problem has arisen to start developing your networks,” said Rob Moodie, Chair of Global Health, the Nossal Institute.

There was dramatic potential for pandemics “to cause enormous suffering and death, to really disrupt systems,” he said. “Whether that’s travel or tourism or economic systems completely.

“We need very strong ties across the region to be able to deal with these issues. These work when people already know each other.”

Two of Australia’s most noted strategic analysts expressed concerns about military pressures in Asia and the lack of similar mechanisms to mediate potential flash-points, while head of the US studies centre, Professor Geoff Garrett, said Asia was still a back burner issue for the US, although this was changing.

“Strategically, for Australia, these are central issues,” Professor Paul Dibb told the group. “We’re a maritime nation, the region we’re in will be increasingly dependent upon sea lines of communication, imports of iron ore, coal, energy and so on, and yet we have little in the way of transparency, nothing much in the way of preventive diplomacy and nothing in the way of conflict resolution.

“Unlike in Europe in the Cold War, unlike the situation between the United States and the Soviet Union – in our part of the world there is little, if anything, in the way of arms control and disarmament agreements. There are few hotlines – certainly few that are used or work. There is no open skies agreement,” he said. “And there is no multilateral avoidance of naval incidents at sea agreement.”

Professor Des Ball provided some sobering statistics: “Since the end of the Cold War, 20 years now, Asia’s proportion of world defence expenditure has basically doubled. More disturbingly, Asia’s proportion of arms transfers – in other words, actual acquisition of weapons systems – guns, bullets, ships, et cetera – has tripled from about 15 per cent, around the late ‘80s, 1990, to over 40 per cent today.

“Most of that activity is in Northeast Asia. China, Japan, South Korea, North Korea and Taiwan – just those five countries account for about 85 per cent of that total expenditure.”

### CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES

Richard Ribgy, Executive Director of the China Institute at ANU, said that for China and its leadership, there was a time when wealth and power were most typically represented by the United States.

However, “Iraq undermined the impression of the US as an indisputable military super power... Iraq has shown the degree to which military force alone does not suffice to achieve political goals. And then on top of that along comes the global financial crisis, and bang goes the image of the United States as the exemplar, *par excellence*, of all that one needs to do, admire, respect, copy and so on.”

Ribgy referred to a recent statement by a Chinese admiral which indicated a changing attitude. China is now effectively “saying ‘okay, the Japanese are a bit upset, and perhaps others as well, about the fact that we’re now sailing around in the East China Sea and elsewhere, in ways that we haven’t done for a long time. Well, they better get used to it.’ It’s not so easy for other people to get used to it.”

We have to do a great deal more in terms of acquainting Asia with how we work and acquainting our own society with how Asia works.



MARK JOHNSON



DIMITY FIFER



GENE SHERMAN

Professor Garrett said there had been remarkable continuity in US strategy toward China over 20 years. The view is that: “economic engagement with China is the best policy. It’s not only the best policy for both economies, it’s the best way to promote stability and peace in the region.”

The rise of Asian regionalism and regional institutions in the wake of the Asian financial crisis 10 years ago had been a very important phenomenon, he said. “From an American standpoint I think it’s fair to say that the US doesn’t want to be the last country to join Asian regionalism. It would rather have its own version of regionalism.”

### REGIONAL COOPERATION: “CONVERS-ASIANS”

Soft diplomacy, also known as public diplomacy, was a recurring theme throughout the morning, as was the need to find greater opportunities for regional cooperation. And these were sometimes areas in which Australia had fallen backwards.

Chair of the Australia India Council, John McCarthy, described current expenditure on public diplomacy as “derisory”, particularly in comparison to the resources dedicated to such programs by European nations.

“It’s also derisory when you take into account that our area of primary engagement is with countries with different histories and cultural and political traditions from our own,” he said. “The European’s area of primary engagement is with societies, cultures, which are, broadly, similar to their own. What this means is that we really have to do a great deal more in terms of acquainting Asia with how we work and acquainting our own society with how Asia works.”

Dimity Fifer, CEO, Australian Volunteers International, also urged a greater focus on soft diplomacy. “We’re very affirming of the benefits of the Colombo Plan, [but] I think we need to start talking about a post-Colombo Plan,” she said. “We’re not actually encouraging more Australians to link with the students who come from overseas on development scholarships.”

“We’re not encouraging deep, meaningful exchanges. We’re bringing people over, disconnecting them from those who are studying Asia. We need to be a lot more thoughtful about these long-term people engagements. That will be the basis of the future.”

Professor Andrew McIntyre, Dean, College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University, said that the interconnectedness of the region itself demanded greater cooperation on policy development and other issues.

“There’s ground for a lot of optimism here, because at the same time as we do, indeed, need to be making all sorts of quiet and serious preparations concerning security contingencies, Australia’s got good standing in the region and has had for a long time. This is a good time to be pushing on economic co-operation, environmental co-operation, health co-operation. There’s all sorts of areas out there where there’s good opportunities for this at the moment, and the time is right for it.”

For artist and curator, Aaron Seeto, Australia is not taking up enough opportunities. We need to be far more proactive and strategic. “We are seen to be too far away, too different, not there participating enough. We’re out of the loop.”

“In terms of cultural goods, as UNESCO defines them, Australia does not even register on the map of what is exported to China, and that’s 24 million. And we receive just two per cent of China’s export of cultural goods. The value of this, in the latest figures, is \$118 million of a total cultural export of China of \$5.9 billion,” he said.

Gene Sherman, leading art gallery director and philanthropist, said the changes in the arts world over 20 years had been monumental. In 1987, for example, there was no art market for Asian contemporary art at all.

“No-one bought Asian contemporary art. There were a handful of private collectors worldwide. There were almost no public institutions collecting the Asian art of today.” she said.

“And then, if you fast forward to 2010 – I’ve just been to Tokyo in March and I’m going to Hong Kong on Thursday – there’s a multiplicity of contemporary art museums, of Biennales –



AARON SEETO



ROBYN NORTON



HARINDER SIDHU

**Soft diplomacy was a recurring theme throughout the morning, as was the need to find greater opportunities for regional cooperation. And these were sometimes areas in which Australia had fallen backwards.**

Shanghai, Gwangju, Busan, Guangzhou in China – a multiplicity of commercial galleries, hundreds of them, private and institutional, being museums and corporate collectors, art auction houses. Sotheby’s and Christie’s hold dedicated auctions for the contemporary art of Asia.”

Singer, writer and artistic director, Robyn Archer, emphasised the value and place of the arts in creating deep and many layered dialogue between societies. In Hawaii for example, the University theatre course has had kabuki, noh and Chinese opera in translation as core curriculum since the 1920s. The music school teaches koto, shamisen and pipa, as well as violin and piano.

“And they do this because they see Hawaii as the natural meeting place of east and west, and so conducting a dialogue with Asia-Pacific is part of their duty and a responsibility to the region. They link this intelligent, continuous and rigorous cultural dialogue to the economic futures of the US in the Asian Century,” she said.

“There’s a beautifully curated talk fest going on in Singapore... It’s called *ConversAsians*. It’s the leading lights of Asian artistic vision. Australia is not there. We are not included. We are not currently part of the strengthening Asian cultural dialogue and identity, and we must be.

“Art can conduct safe public conversations about dangerous ideas, and it’s the first port of call in soft diplomacy.”

Research collaborations were also an important area of Asia-Australia cooperation, as University of Melbourne’s Simon Marginson said. It was in the area of research that Australia had the best opportunities for formal regional activity. This was where “our relationship is likely to be accepted most readily, because knowledge is the most international of all the commodities.”

## DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY

Professor Graham Brown, Foundation Director of the Nossal Institute of Global Health, said that it was in all of our interests to have better and healthier communities. “In fact, AIDS, TB and malaria were recognised during the Clinton Administration as actual threats to world peace because these are illnesses that lead to loss in economic income and increasing poverty.” This was taken further, with the Bush Administration’s huge contributions to try to reduce the deep burden of HIV, he said. “Health is a threat to that livelihood of the family and, of course, as health goes down the society becomes less and less able to cope.”

The Director General of AusAID, Peter Baxter, said that one third of Australia’s aid goes to Asia, and about 25 per cent goes to Papua New Guinea and the Pacific. The program invested deeply in education which, as well as skilling populations, created people-to-people links. A projected 6000 AusAID scholarship holders will be studying in Australia by 2015, and 3500 Australian volunteers have been funded to go abroad over the last five years.

Climate change collaboration was proving to be a new and independent strand of bilateral engagement. “It’s giving us a way to talk to countries about how they structure their economies,” said Harinder Sidhu, Chief Adviser, International Division, Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency. “Also it’s provided us with a way of engaging at the highest levels amongst leaders on these issues.”

Anna Rose, founder of the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, said many of the volunteers at the AYCC were learning Mandarin for the simple reason that they knew China would be so important to solving environmental issues. She, like others in the field, works closely with youth climate activists across Asia – “weekly Skype calls to India, to China, Indonesia, other places.”

Private sector contributions to development were also of major significance. Andrew MacLeod, CEO, Committee for Melbourne, said “BHP Billiton is the third largest development agency in Australia, after the Australian Government and World Vision, but in front of the Red Cross, with their corporate objective of one per cent of pre-tax profit.”

The markets that will grow fastest are in the Asian region... The more people we have with Asian skills, the better we will do in meeting the challenges ahead.



“ANZ, for example, does an enormous amount of good work – particularly in Asia and the Pacific – on financial literacy programs as part of their community investment programs, and I think we’re at the point in time where we really need to bring business and aid together more in the realm of development investment.”

### MAKING THE MOST OF OPPORTUNITIES

Much discussion focused on Australia’s preparedness and what was perceived as a lack of broad community understanding of Asia, and of Australia’s interests there.

“We still struggle at times to get Australian investors, institutional investors, to buy into an Asian strategy – whereas for the overseas investors it’s just completely logical,” Graham Hodges, ANZ’s Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Acting Chief Executive Officer, told the group. “That goes to an understanding of what the opportunities are in the market.”

One of only three Australian members of the APEC Business Advisory Council, Mark Johnson, said Australia’s financial system was one of the most advanced in the world, covering the full life cycle of institutions “from money boxes to superannuation.”

Johnson, who is also chairman of AGL, Macquarie Infrastructure Group and the Australia Financial Centre Forum, said Australia’s opportunities lay in our distance from the financial crisis, and from “the 25 or 30 European and North American banks who were the instant facilitators of the crisis.”

BHP’s Geoff Walsh said resources were at the centre of most of Australia’s big relationships in the region. “For BHP, as a global company based here in Australia, we need people we can move around the world throughout their careers. So we need, clearly, a range of skills – but our biggest markets are in Asia. The markets that will grow fastest are in this region. The more people we have with those skills the better we will do in the challenges ahead.”

The lack of Asian studies and languages education in Australian schools was a major issue for many participants. The Asia Education Foundation’s Kathe Kirby told the forum that only a tiny proportion of Australian students learned anything at all about Asia in Year 12. “This is illustrated by modern history in one of our largest states, where two per cent of students chose to do Chinese [history], 65 per cent chose to do Germany, and 19 per cent chose to do Russia,” she said.

“What we’re actually looking at here is not, strictly speaking, student choice. It’s to do with the choices that their teachers make about the content in the curriculum.”

In our relationship with Indonesia in particular, popular misconceptions – an unwarranted anxiety and hostility – were a great concern.

“There’s been little success in dealing with it,” said Tim Lindsey, head of the Asian Law Centre at the University of Melbourne. “The obvious reason for this is the collapse of Asian studies in Australia and, in particular, Indonesian language, which as a language at risk in our schools, will probably vanish on current trends within 20 years,” he said.

Professor of Southeast Asian Studies at Murdoch University, David Hill, said enrolments in Indonesian plunged 24 per cent between 2001 and 2007. That decline continues. “Teaching staff regard themselves as fortunate if they can simply hold enrolments stable. In fact, at one of our leading institutions enrolments dropped 27 per cent in the single year between 2008 to 2009.”

# THE PRIME MINISTER'S ADDRESS

Extract from the speech by The Hon Kevin Rudd MP



**What you are doing through Asialink and through the Asia Society here in Australia is important. You have been embarked upon a long journey when it comes to this country's comprehensive engagement with the countries of our region.**

From 1976 to the present, the evolution of Australia's engagement with the region has been much wider and broader than that of security risks. The wider fabric of economic engagement has in fact become a much more significant part of our overall regional engagement. Beyond that again, cultural and person-to-person engagement has gone from thin flows of people to vast flows of people, and in both directions. This has been overwhelmingly for the good and Australia is a much richer country as a result. In terms of the economy, the fabric of our economic engagement is now vast, and it is textured. It includes large businesses and small businesses. The digital revolution, in fact, is transforming that as we speak.

What I sense in this emerging fabric of pan-regional cooperation is the continued search for new institutions to shape our future. So far, no pan-regional institution has been capable of embracing the security challenges we face now and into the future, the economic opportunities and challenges we face together, and what will be a necessary future dense area of cooperation: namely what we do together on the great challenge of climate change.

The fabric of cooperation and dialogue across the region is now very rich. But in terms of bringing together these various rivers of unresolved challenges for the future, the need for broader institutional underpinning of that, I believe, is necessary for our long-term future. I note, in particular, the positive steps taken recently by the ASEANs in extending the web of wider regional cooperation. They are to be congratulated for that.



One of the challenges Australia faces as a country is the development of a much higher level of Asia literacy. Some of you would know that I became engaged in the teaching of Asian languages in Australian schools, way back in the early 1990s. We began a program then called the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy. We embarked upon a program to extend the wider teaching of Asian languages and cultures across our region. Some progress was made from 1995 through until the beginning of the decade just passed. Regrettably our predecessors in government cancelled that program in or around 2002. Fortunately we've re-established that program as of 2008.

Today I'm releasing three new reports commissioned by the Australian Government on the teaching of Asian languages in schools. They indicate an alarming 22 per cent drop between the year 2000 and 2008 in the number of Australian students studying one of these four Asian languages from kindergarten to Year 12. At a time when our Asia literacy should have been growing stronger, in fact, it grew weaker; this is a trend we must reverse.

There has been strong interest across the education community since the program commenced on 1st January 2009 and states and territories have developed innovative plans to meet the 2020 target. We are on the cusp of a new Asian century. Our job is to be the smartest kids on the block, that is to have about us the wit, the wisdom, the cultural skills, the linguistic skills, the disciplinary skills to make a difference.

One of the most exciting things, I think, that is unfolding in recent times is this extraordinary explosion in creative and artistic talent right across the wider region. You cannot but visit Shanghai these days or other major regional cities and see an explosion of new creative art and talent of a type which frankly we've not seen in the previous century. Something new and comprehensively creative is emerging.

So to our friends who are representing foreign governments here – and I thank them for their attendance today – as Prime Minister of Australia, I would say to each of these governments and through each of their high commissioners and ambassadors how much we value the work [through which] we engage with your governments, both bi-laterally and multi-laterally, in fashioning this greater sense of community within wider East Asia and wider Asia, in the period that we have been in office.

I believe with women and men of goodwill across our various countries and cultures, as vast and diverse as they may be, and through the institutions and the strong fabric of bi-lateral relationships that we have nurtured, that we can in fact achieve an Asia Pacific century which is indeed a pacific century.

# THE OPPOSITION LEADER'S ADDRESS

Extract from the speech by The Hon Tony Abbott MP



It's good to have this opportunity to talk about the importance and the future of Australia's relations with the nations of Asia. Australia's external policies towards Asia and elsewhere should be based on a rigorous analysis of national interest. Such an analysis requires not just the standard security and economic considerations, but a values dimension as well.

Any disconnect between foreign policy and national values jeopardises the domestic support that is critical to achieving Australia's foreign policy objectives.

A key factor behind the previous government's success in Asia was Australia's economic management and strength. Along with Japan, we committed some \$3 billion in regional IMF programs to support Thailand, Korea and Indonesia through the East Asian financial crisis. It also allowed us to increase defence spending and to rebuild the Australian defence force.

This decision proved timely when Australia was asked to lead the INTERFET intervention in East Timor and subsequently deployed forces in the war on terror and in the Solomon Islands.

So how has Australia's standing in the region fared since the election of the Rudd Government? Since Mr Rudd included China, but excluded Japan, from his first overseas visit there is a sense that the relationship has been downgraded. The Prime Minister talks about a new strategic partnership with India, but won't overrule his party's ideological objections to selling uranium, despite emissions reduction and energy security benefits.



The resumption of people smuggling has, predictably, generated strains with Indonesia. And despite the Government's preparedness to downplay our values, for example, in agreeing not to meet the Dalai Lama and dropping the long established practice of annual ministerial visits to Taiwan, our relationship with China doesn't seem to have improved.

But perhaps the most striking example of the current Government's uncertain diplomacy in Asia is Mr Rudd's aggressive championing of his concept of an Asia-Pacific community. The proposal has seriously irritated many of our regional partners.

The Howard Government didn't attempt to preach to or to browbeat our neighbours with unilaterally conceived utopian visions of new regional architecture. Instead it listened to the region, identified where each country's interest coincided with ours and focused on the importance of deepening bilateral relations with individual countries. Our neighbours' appreciation of Australia's patient, pragmatic and bilaterally focused approach earned a dividend in their support for our inclusion in the East Asia Summit from its inception in 2005.

The next coalition government will focus on building a strong strategic partnership with Japan. We will also try to conclude the free trade negotiations with Japan. We will overturn Labor's ban on uranium exports to India and look to build stronger military to military links, particularly on maritime co-operation. We will build on the Howard Government's Lombok Treaty with Indonesia. We will seek to expand Australian relations with other Southeast Asian nations such as Singapore and Vietnam. We will work enthusiastically with China, where it's in our mutual interest that this happen.

But there's a domestic issue that shouldn't be ignored and that's the decline of the study of foreign languages, which constitutes a worrying erosion of our nation's broader international literacy. Paradoxically, in the far off and allegedly less sensitive 1950s, Australia was more culturally aware on one vital measure – the foreign language proficiency of those completing high school. In 1960, for instance, 40 per cent of Year 12 students studied

a second language, compared to just 14 per cent today. Other statistics should also cause concern. Fewer than five per cent now complete secondary school studying an Asian language. Baby Boomers who wished to matriculate and go to university had to do either mathematics or a foreign language, and many chose the latter. Since that compulsion was lifted in the 1970s interest has waned in the study of almost all foreign languages.

In the interconnected world of the 21st century young Australians have to be equipped with the skills to communicate with people and to understand issues and markets across the globe, and this is especially crucial with our major trading partners in the Asian region. Confident that English is the world's second language, we have become linguistically lazy, and other English speaking countries might be able to get away with this neglect, but we can't.

Now, the Prime Minister has promoted Asia literacy as a key goal of his government, but there is little reason to think that the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools program, launched two years ago, will reverse current trends. The next coalition government will work with the states to reconsider and to reinforce the weightings and other incentives that are supposed to encourage high school students to stick with foreign languages. Our ultimate objective should be to ensure that every student has at least some familiarity with other languages and that a significant percentage has studied a foreign language through to school leaving.

Ladies and gentlemen, it's always a good time to focus on the links between Australia and Asia, and what we can do here in this country to strengthen them. Regardless of our relationships elsewhere, our destiny is unavoidably that of our part of the world. Deepening and broadening relations with the peoples and nations of the Asia-Pacific region will therefore always be a central responsibility of the Australian Government.

# DIALOGUE WITH THE HEADS OF MISSION



## The luncheon session took the form of a dialogue with Heads of Mission from Asia, facilitated by Forum Co-convenor Professor Tony Milner.

The 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations was represented by the Ambassador of Indonesia HE Mr Primo Alui Joelianto. The other participants were Chinese Ambassador HE Mr Zhang Junsai, Indian High Commissioner HE Mrs Sujatha Singh, Japanese Ambassador HE Mr Takaaki Kojima and Republic of Korea Ambassador HE Dr Woo Sang Kim.

The discussion, held under the 'Chatham House Rule', focused on the priorities, the achievements and the issues arising in each of the bilateral relationships. How we might work productively on these relationships – and on the development of a genuine regional community – were topics of real interest to participants at the Forum. Comments made by different Heads of Mission were often quoted in the deliberations taking place in the second half of the day.

In thanking the High Commissioner and Ambassadors, Professor Milner commented that it was a special privilege to have a frank dialogue with the Heads of Mission of countries that are of vital importance to Australia. "We have paused in today's Australian conversation about engagement with the Asian region", he said, "and this dialogue has been the best possible way to achieve authoritative assistance from the Asian region itself."



The high-level business delegation threw its weight behind an ambitious program addressing constraints to Australia’s full engagement in the region. Focused on enhancing opportunities for Australia, the group of some of Australia’s largest companies and business associations developed a series of measures, recognising that the “Asian Century” does not mean business as usual.

There was a powerful sense that business has a key role in promoting “Brand Australia” – Australia’s image as a sound investment and good business partner. This image has been impacted recently by attacks against Indian students and a public debate over foreign investment.

In the case of investment, delegates argued that business can support government in urging greater transparency in the operation of the Foreign Investment Review Board and in helping dispel myths related to foreign investment. Graeme Samuels, Chairman of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, made the distinction between business behaviour and public perception. “In fact, we are open to investment, as we should be,” he said. “As business leaders you need to take steps to counter xenophobia. Years ago it was Japan. The most recent one is the fear of Chinese investment.”

## BUILDING ON STRENGTHS

Despite the acknowledged shortcomings of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), delegates noted the strengthening of business-government links and government-government links during the process of negotiations. FTAs were described by some as important strategic and political frameworks allowing for increased regional links. Delegates also discussed the relative lack of investment from Australia, in stark contrast to our booming trade relationships. Sid Myer, Chairman Asialink and Asia Society AustralAsia Centre, commented on the need for FTAs to more effectively tackle behind-the-border barriers to investment.

Building frameworks for greater market integration and engagement will allow Australian business to capitalise on existing strengths. Delegates identified strengths and advantages in the food industry, in financial services, and services generally.

Mark Johnson, Chairman, Australia Financial Centre Forum, urged the group to consider how our world-class financial products and services could be promoted more in our region. As the Asian market grows, the need for more sophisticated products and services increases.

This capability represents not only an economic opportunity, but also a responsibility to work with foreign regulators, to share technology and other expertise.

Graham Hodges, Deputy CEO ANZ, highlighted the importance of bringing together regulators from across the region. “In moving offshore we see different regulatory regimes. Australia has done reasonably well in regulation, but it may be worthwhile to have regulator to regulator conversations,” he said.

David Crombie, President National Farmers Federation, identified the advantages that Australia has in food production. “Agriculture of the future will focus on particular products. There will be an increased demand at the top end of the market: increased demand for higher protein and western style meals. This is an opportunity for Australia.”

## ASIA SKILLS

For Australian business to capitalise on such opportunities, we need a generation of young Australians equipped to communicate with our major trading partners and able to understand and solve global problems.

Alex Holcomb, General Manager, Working Capital Solutions & Asia, Westpac Institutional Bank, identified this as a problem of scale. Australia needs to move from small-scale solutions with individual businesses just muddling through, to embedding “cultural intelligence” and Asia skills right across the Australian workforce: “We need to industrialise Asia skills,” she said.

“We are moving from a trade oriented relationship to an investment oriented relationship,” said Howard Dick, University of Melbourne. “This will require better Asia skills.”



ALEX HOLCOMB



DEBRA HAZELTON



GRAEME SAMUEL



ROBERT KOK

## The “Asian Century” means different things for different sectors, but what it does not mean is business as usual.

Business can insist on staff whose dealings in the Asian region are respectful and based on sound knowledge, can reward those who do have these skills, can recognise the importance of “cultural intelligence”, and can implement strategies for more racially diverse workplaces, including in boardrooms.

Debra Hazelton, General Manager, Mizuho Corporate Bank, identified the need for greater ethnic and linguistic diversity at the most senior levels: “We need to have more diversity in the boardroom.”

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The business delegation identified ways business can make a greater contribution to Australia’s economic integration with the region. Asialink is committed to continuing to provide leadership on these issues and working with businesses and business groups to drive this agenda forward. Asialink will play a particular role in the Asia literacy area. Australian business needs to:

- 1 Articulate a clear vision for Australia’s business engagement in the region – one that is comprehensive, differentiated, sophisticated, respectful and balanced between markets and sectors.
- 2 Promote ‘Brand Australia’ – Australia’s image as a sound investment and good business partner.
- 3 Support government to make the case for inbound and outbound investment; helping to dispel myths relating to foreign investment in Australia.
- 4 Support a multi-level strategy to develop a more Asia literate/Asia ready workforce, from shop floor to boardroom. A deficit of Asia languages and cultural understanding was seen as holding back our economic and broader integration with the region.
- 5 Further advocate and support government on Free Trade Agreements, which are a key framework for building regional linkages. Future FTAs should do more to break down barriers to greater investment flows.
- 6 Identify Australia’s competitive advantages in order to maximise opportunities in the region. Key sectors of advantage include food industries, financial services and services generally. Key areas of functional advantage include compliance and regulatory environments. These strengths present potential for economic growth and the opportunity to work with foreign regulators, to share technology and build business networks in the region.

### PARTICIPANTS

- **Chris Barnes**, President, Australia Indonesia Business Council
- **Ardele Blignault**, Vice President Government Relations, GE Australia & New Zealand

- **Stephen Bolton**, National Manager of Employment and Training Advisers, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- **Don Boyd**, Group Deputy Chief Executive, Norton Rose Australia
- **Patrick Coleman**, Director, Policy, Business Council of Australia
- **Tim Cox**, Partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers
- **David Crombie**, President, National Farmers Federation
- **Prof Glyn Davis AC**, Vice Chancellor, University of Melbourne
- **Assoc Prof Howard Dick**, Professorial Fellow, Department of Management and Marketing, The University of Melbourne
- **Farida Fleming**, Director Applied Research and Analysis, Asialink
- **Bruce Goodwin**, Managing Director, Janssen-Cilag Australia Pty Ltd
- **Debra Hazelton**, General Manager, Mizuho Corporate Bank Ltd
- **Graham Hodges**, Deputy CEO, ANZ Banking Group
- **Alex Holcomb**, General Manager, Working Capital & Trade Solutions, Westpac Banking Corporation
- **David Inglis**, Chairman, Minter Ellison
- **Chris Jenkins**, Managing Director, Thales Australia
- **Mark Johnson**, Chairman, AGL Energy, Macquarie Infrastructure Group, APEC Business Advisory Council
- **Scott Keck**, Executive Chairman, Charter Keck Cramer
- **Cr Robert Kok**, Councillor, Solicitor & Notary Public, City of Sydney
- **John Larkin**, Assistant Secretary, South-East Asia Investment & Services Branch (AIB), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- **Andrew Low**, Chief Operating Officer, Head of Financial Institutions Group & Asia, Macquarie Group
- **Andrew MacLeod**, Chief Executive Officer, Committee for Melbourne
- **Andrew MacIntyre**, Dean, College of Asia and Pacific, Australian National University
- **Lesley Mathews**, Director of Business Development, NSW, Asialink and Asia Society
- **Sid Myer**, Chairman, Asialink and Asia Society AustralAsia Centre
- **Michael O’Sullivan**, Director, International Markets & Trade, Industry & Investment NSW
- **Stephen Pemberton**, Partner, Allens Arthur Robinson
- **Graeme Samuel**, Chairman, ACCC
- **John Simpson**, Strategic Adviser, Office of the CEO, National Australia Bank
- **Maree Slater**, Executive General Manager HR, Energy Australia
- **Frank Tudor**, Chairman, Australia China Business Council
- **Marion van Rooden**, Acting Deputy Secretary International Coordination, Dept. of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development
- **Fiona Wallace-Smith**, Executive Director, Asia Society AustralAsia Centre
- **Geoff Walsh AO**, Director, Public Affairs, BHP Billiton
- **Innes Willox**, Director, International & Government Relations, Australian Industry Group
- **Harrison Young**, Deputy Chairman, Asialink and Asia Society AustralAsia Centre

# DIPLOMACY AND SECURITY

Chairs Tim Lindsey and Richard Woolcott



**The National Forum’s breakout session of leading diplomacy and security experts roundly condemned a lack of “confidence-building” between Australia and Asia, and described Australian diplomacy as “hugely under-resourced”. Significantly, the group said cutbacks in expenditure on diplomacy were “against the national interest”.**

Professor Peter Leahy AC, Director, National Security Institute, University of Canberra and former Chief of the Army, stressed the subtle change globally “from the primacy of defence to the increasing importance of security, with its much broader agenda.” This change meant numerous government departments became involved, and such agencies like AusAID and DFAT required far greater resources.

Professor Paul Dibb, Emeritus Professor of Strategic Studies at the Australian National University, said spending on Defence now was \$27 billion compared with less than \$2 billion for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

For Professor Alan Dupont, Director of the Centre for International Security Studies, University of Sydney, the concept of security in the Asian region covered a raft of challenges, beyond traditional geopolitics. These included many new threats to stability such as food, water and energy security, pandemics, and population issues. “We have to move away from a portfolio approach to a more integrated approach... all of these challenges can cause political and economic insecurity, and social dislocation.”

He said Australia was moving towards a broader definition of national security and there were opportunities in this for a greater engagement with the region – in other words, security was not just about the Australian Defence Forces “going to pick up the pieces in a Bougainville, it’s also about AusAID’s role in preventing conflicts from happening.”

Others were concerned that we not go too far in “securitising” our foreign policy: If we see Indonesian relations only through the paradigm of security, for example, we miss the broader relationship building that is necessary.

Proximity does matter, according to Bill Paterson, Australian Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism. He said the Southeast Asian region in particular is a region of primary strategic interest to Australia. “Behind solid economic growth figures, not all is going well in Southeast Asia,” he said.

“We need to do a lot more to assist in building governance and institutions – we are doing work in law enforcement, the justice sector and prison reform in Indonesia, for example – to back up the popular commitment to democracy. But the needs across the region are large, and investment in this is an investment in the stability of Australia’s neighbourhood”.

Low levels of Australian investment in the region were largely a result of business “having a rough time dealing with corrupt systems”. If the region were able to develop transparent and accountable institutions and systems, with good regulatory structures, the risk assessments would be more positive.

Chair of the Australia India Council, John McCarthy, urged a far greater emphasis on education and wider diplomacy measures. “We need to do a lot more about the knowledge of Asia here and the knowledge of us there. All the countries of our primary focus – except the US – are in Asia.”

According to a number of participants, there had been an excessive reliance on government to government relationship-building which had led to a hollowness in engagement. “The antidote is to give more power to the non-government sector,” said ANU’s Dr Greg Fealy.

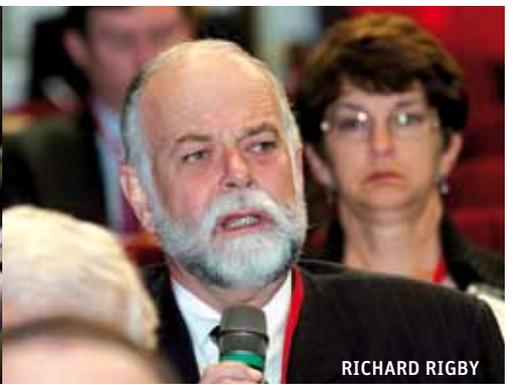
There was also the internal – or domestic – dimension to security and diplomacy. Social cohesion and immigration specialist, Professor Andrew Markus, emphasised that “the Pauline Hanson constituency has not gone away”, as evidenced by recent violence against Indian students. Our leadership at government level was not “thoughtfully engaging” on issues of social harmony, he said.



ALAN DUPONT



NICH FARRELLY



RICHARD RIGBY

## Security experts urge a greater priority be given to Australia's diplomacy – even at the expense of Defence.

Professor Des Ball noted that our Defence forces spent at least \$500 million annually on direct regional engagement, on staff colleges, joint exercises, coalition operations. “Depending on what you include in there, it could amount to at least one-third and perhaps even one-half of the whole DFAT budget. I would argue that this needs to be comprehensively, systematically and thoroughly reviewed.

“Given that we have got these resources in the Defence portfolio... let’s do a proper review to determine whether we are getting our money’s worth – what is the best way to use this money to engage Australia in the region? There’s much more adventurous and imaginative things we could be doing with that money.”

### RECOMMENDATIONS

It was agreed that Australia’s future security depended on an ability to deal with rapid changes in Asia. In a statement issued to the plenary summary, the group stressed two national priorities which required urgent attention:

- 1 In the context of diminished Western dominance, keeping the United States engaged in the region remains important. But we need to build middle power coalitions – a view also expressed in the National Forum’s Heads of Mission luncheon dialogue. Coalitions can be built through mechanisms such as confidence-building measures.
- 2 There is a strong need to build our public diplomacy efforts. It was agreed that we are spending enough on defence. Now it is time to spend more on public diplomacy. This was defined as including people-to-people links, Track II endeavours, non-government alliances, cultural and other cooperation. We need to get much better at projecting Australia in Asia and improving and broadening our understandings of the Asian region in Australia. We need more resources to manage our increasingly complex relationships with countries in the region, including middle power coalitions, and we need qualified people – and that means increased support for Asia literacy.

### PARTICIPANTS

- Prof Desmond Ball, Professor, School of International, Political and Strategic Studies, ANU
- Hugh Borrowman, First Assistant Secretary, South East Asia Division, DFAT

- Dr Malcolm Cook, Program Director – East Asia, Lowy Institute
- Jennifer Conley, Director, Corporate Affairs, Asialink
- Dr Richard Denniss, Executive Director, Australia Institute
- Prof Paul Dibb AM, Emeritus Professor of Strategic Studies, The Australian National University
- Ian Dudgeon, President, Canberra Branch, Australian Institute for International Affairs
- Prof Alan Dupont, Director of the Centre for International Security Studies, The University of Sydney
- Nicholas Farrelly, Associate Lecturer, School of International Political and Strategic Studies, The Australian National University
- Dr Greg Fealy, Fellow and Senior Lecturer, College of Asia and the Pacific, ANU
- Prof Mobo Gao, Director Confucius Institute and Professor of Chinese Studies Centre for Asian Studies, University of Adelaide
- Prof Geoffrey Garrett, Chief Executive Officer, The United States Studies Centre
- Prof Peter Leahy AC, Director, National Security Institute, University of Canberra and former Chief of the Army
- Prof Tim Lindsey, Director of the Asian Law Centre, The University of Melbourne
- Prof Andrew Markus, Pratt Foundation Chair of Jewish Civilisation, Monash University
- John McCarthy AO, Chair, Australia India Council, Former Australian High Commissioner to India & Special Representative to Sri Lanka
- Hamish McDonald, Asia-Pacific Editor, The Sydney Morning Herald
- Dr Katherine Morton, Fellow, College of Asia and the Pacific, The Australian National University
- Andrew O’Neil, Director, Griffith Asia Institute
- Ambassador Bill Paterson PSM, Australian Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Dr Richard Rigby, Executive Director, China Institute, ANU
- Harinder Sidhu, Chief Advisor (International), The Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency
- Richard Smith AO PSM, Australia’s Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan
- Tony Walker, International Editor, The Australian Financial Review
- Prof Hugh White, Head, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, The Australian National University
- Richard Woolcott AC, Founding Director, Asia Society AustralAsia Centre



TONY MACKAY



KRISHNA SEN



SUE MANN

HELEN WILDASH

## Australians need Asia skills and understandings in order to leverage opportunities, minimise risk and resolve global issues in the Asian Century. That was the view of the working group – a group of 25 of Australia’s most influential education leaders.

Representing universities, national school curriculum and accreditation bodies, government and non-government school leaders, and education stakeholders, including parents and young people, the group called for an inter-generational – and substantially increased – Government investment in Asia studies and languages education.

Co-Chair, Tony Mackay: “After two decades of intensive work in school education to advance Asia literacy we know the choice we have. We either invest seriously in achieving Asia literacy through school and higher education or fail to equip young Australians for their future in the Asian Century.”

There was a real sense among the group that “we ought to grasp the opportunity to cost and fund an integrated action plan for the schools sector, and further and higher education sectors, to achieve that objective.” Mackay added: “When we say ‘cost and fund’, we don’t mean the current 62 million. We mean a serious investment of national funds adequate to the task.”

The then Prime Minister, and the Opposition Leader, both expressed robust support at the Forum for Australia’s engagement with Asia, and especially for improved Asia skills for Australians.

### SCALING UP INVESTMENT

The group acknowledged that despite significant work done to progress Asia literacy since the 1980s, school education in Australia remained largely Euro-centric – reflecting the nation’s heritage of the past 200 years, rather than its future.

Asia Education Foundation’s, Kathe Kirby, reported that currently only 18 per cent of total students studied an Asian language, and fewer than six per cent in Year 12. “Indonesian and Japanese are currently in decline, most Year 12 students of Chinese have a Chinese background, and Korean is taught to very few. About 50 percent of schools include studies of Asia in their curriculum but few students undertake studies with Asian content in Year 12 History, Geography, Literature, the Arts or even Economics.”

Professor Barry McGaw told the forum that all Education Ministers had affirmed – in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians – that Australians needed to become active and engaged citizens with an ability to relate and communicate across cultures. This goal underpinned the development of the new Australian Curriculum that required Asia-focused knowledge and intercultural understanding in all learning areas, he said.

“We know in Maths what it means to become more expert as you go through 12 years of schooling. But what does it mean to develop some level of intercultural understanding in Grade 3, as opposed to Grade 12? We’re working on that now,” he said.

Concern was expressed about the capacity of education systems to supply qualified and confident teachers to achieve these objectives for Asia literacy, without significant investment right now. “And it’s not just supply: building demand in the community is a major challenge,” said Andrew Blair, President, International Confederation of Principals. We need to leverage the strong support provided by the Business Alliance for Asia Literacy.

### DECLINING KNOWLEDGE BASE

Co-Chair, Prof Krishna Sen, University of Western Australia, said universities were producing the next generation workforce, and future policy makers and researchers, all of whom needed to be at the forefront of knowledge about Asia. “This requires embedding Asia-related material in a range of discipline areas, as well as teaching of Asian languages and ‘Asian Studies’,” she said.

However, there is a dramatic decline in student enrolments in Asian studies and Asian languages in the tertiary sector. Professor David Hill, Murdoch University, said enrolments in Indonesian fell 24 per cent between 2001 and 2007. “This is not something the government is unaware of... but no action has been taken.”

A national plan was needed to ensure that all Australian tertiary students had access to studies of Asian languages and cultures. It would not be adequate, he said, to focus on just a small number of institutions – or to focus largely on China, as was now the case.

Professor Simon Marginson, The University of Melbourne, said 80 per cent of international students in higher education were from



DAVID HILL



JOHN FIRTH



KATHE KIRBY

## “We have a choice: invest seriously in achieving Asia literacy through school and higher education, or fail to equip young Australians for their future in the Asian Century.”

Asia. Australia was a major educator of students from China, and Education was the third largest export industry after coal and iron ore. However, “lack of capacity in Asian languages holds us back.”

Others lamented that so few Australian students chose to study in Asian universities, in comparison to their international peers who were gaining a competitive edge. Marginson advocated Australia developing a regional Asian research initiative. “It could span the whole gamut of research from medicine to life and physical sciences, engineering, social sciences and humanities... in the research area our relationship is most likely to be readily accepted, because knowledge is an internationally valued quality.”

The group agreed that, in the 21st century, Australia’s human capital was the key to our future. We require an Australia capable of fully engaging with its region. This will require a re-imagining of the Australia that must impact on curriculum content in Australian schools and universities.

Anna Rose, Co-Founder of the Youth Coalition for Climate Change, said “we’re running out of time to get education about Asia right ... climate change action is a really important new avenue for engagement with the region. We need to bring young people together to do this, and they will need Asia literacy.”

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Achieving an Australia capable of fully engaging with its region requires an enduring bi-partisan Federal Government commitment to build Asia literacy in both school and higher education.
- 2 To achieve Asia literacy for every young Australian will require an equal focus on Asian studies and Asian languages.
- 3 All Australian governments must significantly scale-up current investment and commit to a National Asia Literacy Action Plan for both the school and higher education that sets targets, commits adequate resources and undertakes regular reporting of progress.
- 4 A National Asia Literacy Action Plan for schools can benefit from the current major education reforms including a national curriculum for Australian schools and the establishment of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership.
- 5 A National Asia Literacy Action Plan for universities would ensure that Area and Cluster funding offers opportunities for national collaboration in Asia education spread across disciplines, countries and universities, and supports the establishment of a regional research network.
- 6 Australia must invest in building demand for Asia literacy through students, their parents, business and the wider community. This requires skilful articulation of the rationale for Asia literacy including prosperity, social inclusion and, especially important to young people, a sense of a common humanity and a shared future.

### PARTICIPANTS

- **Andrew Blair AM**, President, International Confederation of Principals
- **Sharryn Brownlee**, President, Central Coast Council of Parents and Citizens’ Association
- **Michele Cody**, Executive, Australian Primary Principals Association Inc.
- **Prof Robert Conway**, Member, Australian Council of Deans of Education; Dean, School of Education, Flinders University
- **Ian Dalton**, Executive Director, Australian Parents Council
- **John Firth**, Chairman, Australian Curriculum, Assessment and certification Authorities, CEO, VCAA
- **Juanita Healy**, Assistant Executive Director, Curriculum Support, Department of Education and Training, Western Australia
- **Prof David Hill**, Professor of Southeast Asian Studies, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Faculty of Arts and Education, Murdoch University
- **Kathe Kirby**, Executive Direction, Asia Education Foundation
- **Tony Mackay**, Chairman, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
- **Sue Mann**, CEO, Education Services Australia
- **Prof Simon Marginson**, Chair of Higher Education, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne
- **Prof Barry McGaw**, Chairman, Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority (ACARA)
- **Prof John O’Toole**, Chair, National Curriculum Advisory Panel: The Arts, The University of Melbourne
- **Prof Field Rickards**, Dean, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne, chair of Asia Education Foundation
- **Kathryn Robinson**, President, Asian Studies Association of Australia
- **Anna Rose**, Co-founder, Australian Youth Climate Coalition
- **Angela Scarino**, Chair, National Curriculum Advisory Panel: Languages
- **Prof Krishna Sen**, Dean, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science, University of Western Australia
- **Tim Smith**, Executive Officer, National Catholic Education Commission
- **Sheree Vertigan**, President, Australian Secondary Principals’ Association
- **Ameeta Mulla Wattal**, Principal, Springdales School, Delhi India
- **Dr Georgina Webb**, Acting Branch Manager, National Curriculum Branch, National Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Group, Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- **Maureen Welch**, Director, Asia Education Foundation
- **Helen Wildash**, Executive Director, Curriculum, South Australian Department of Education and Children’s Services, member ACARA

# HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Chairs Rob Moodie and Graham Brown



The Health and Development breakout discussion took place against the backdrop of a rapidly changing global health landscape. SARS, H1N1 Influenza, and other pandemic threats require a new level of public health preparedness – demanding cooperation and coordination across sectors and geographic boundaries. The traditional view of global health as a purely development issue was acknowledged as severely outdated.

Changing patterns of disease challenge our security. Pandemics remain an issue, but rapid and often unplanned urbanisation in megacities in the region has seen a sharp rise in the prevalence of non-communicable diseases. These include chronic cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, chronic respiratory illness, cancer and mental illness. These are diseases that confound western attempts to control. In the absence of well-conceived intervention, the costs of chronic care will prove catastrophic to the already burdened and fragile health systems of developing countries in our region.

Professor Tony McMichael, National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, Australian National University, said the region was increasingly becoming a centre for the emergence of new viral diseases, as populations grew, people movement increased, and commerce intensified.

“National and international agencies must link their data and share understanding of this infectious disease threat. Concern about health risks from demographic, climatic and environmental changes in the Asian region should not be just an add-on item,” he said. “It is fundamental to the future health of all populations.”

“Asia’s health is our health”, was the underlying theme informing discussion for the Health and Development stream. Future prosperity and on-going development in Australia and the Asia Pacific were seen as inextricably linked to the economic, social, political and security stability of our region.

“We can’t have a secure region without the health and development sectors working closely with national security policy makers and Diplomacy,” said Marc Purcell, Executive Director of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).

The fostering and brokering of collaboration across all sectors was crucial for finding the solutions to key issues, for the delivery of services, and for our wider engagement with the region. Whatever the types of partnerships – people-to-people, organisation-to-organisation, whole-of-government, multi-sectoral, and multi-level – new, cooperative approaches to health and development practice was the only way forward.

The group argued, however, for a new approach to partnerships – a shift away from the old concept of dependence, to one based on mutual respect and interdependence.

“Australia is only starting to understand the importance and to realise the need for respect as a way of solving issues – our science, for instance, may not be the only way forward,” said Professor Beverly Raphael, Professor of Psychological Medicine, Australian National University.

The group stressed that countries such as China were investing heavily in long-range planning and programming in the science and health fields.

“The trap of falling into client/patron ways of delivering aid is not acceptable in China,” said Dr Chris Morgan, Principal Fellow, Centre for International Health, Macfarlane Burnet Institute for Medical Research and Public Health. “We need to be equal partners with local ownership. We need to focus on what both sides don’t know about the issues as yet – and learn together.”

Professor Rob Moodie, Chair of Global Health, No ssal Institute University of Melbourne, said there were many things we as a country were not doing well, for example obesity, harm from alcohol and mental illness.

“We need to rethink and reshape regional partnerships to deal with common problems. We need networks of mutuality.” Genuine listening to partners’ needs and challenges was essential, and required a deeper understanding of the diverse cultures in our region.



PETER BAXTER

KATE ARMSTRONG

JULIA FRASER

## “Asia’s health is our health”: Experts say a new, more collaborative, approach is critical to solving future issues

“We need to listen carefully to our neighbours. If we don’t understand the cultural issues, what drives the ways people live and work in the region, we can’t make progress. We need to find new mechanisms to grow this understanding,” Associate Professor Chee Ng, Director International Unit of Psychiatry at The University of Melbourne, Co-Director of Asia-Australia Mental Health, said.

“It’s in everyone’s interests to have healthy populations,” said Lyndal Trevena, Associate Dean (International) and Director of the Office for Global Health, University of Sydney.

While recognising the diversity of the Asian region, it was agreed that the evolving nature of societies – for example, as they struggle to cope with megacities, where unique and new problems will arise – has resulted in enormous common and mutual health and development problems. Many of these have significant and damaging impact across all aspects of society, especially on maternal and child health. The group agreed there was an urgent legitimacy for health and development issues to be on the agenda at existing regional meetings and forums, or as an essential plank in the process of regional architecture renewal, alongside economic and security conversations.

“We need an increase in the amount of education and community awareness of health and development issues to improve outcomes and understanding of the region,” said Professor Graham Brown, Foundation Director, Nossal Institute for Global Health, University of Melbourne.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Effective and strategic health and development relationships between Australia and Asia are vital to the success of our engagement in other significant areas, including business, the arts, education, security and diplomacy. As such, Health and Development needs to be represented in existing and future regional forums.
- 2 The current ways Australia delivers its international aid needs to be reworked to take into account changing patterns of disease and socio-economic status of nations.
- 3 Australia must reshape engagement in the health and other sectors to develop real collaboration based on mutual respect and with outcomes that focus on solving problems that affect us all.
- 4 Australian governments and institutions must support, through adequate funding, initiatives to educate ourselves and assist our regional neighbours in building basic health literacy as a way to improving outcomes for all sectors.

### PARTICIPANTS

- **Prof Warwick Anderson AM**, CEO, Australia National Health and Medical Research Council
- **Dr Kate Armstrong**, CEO, CLAN International
- **Peter Baxter**, Director General, Australian Agency for International Development
- **Prof Graham Brown AM**, Foundation Director, Nossal Institute for Global Health, The University of Melbourne
- **Benedict David**, Principal Health Advisor, AusAID
- **Dimity Fifer**, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Volunteers International
- **Kerry Flanagan**, A/g Deputy Secretary, Department of Health and Ageing
- **Paul Harris**, General Manager Government and International Engagement, CSIRO
- **Julia Fraser**, Associate Director Asialink Asia Society
- **Assoc Prof Rajiv Khanna**, Director, Australian Centre for Vaccine Development
- **Prof Abd Malak AM**, Executive Director, Workforce and Organisational Development, Sydney West Area Health Service
- **Prof Bruce McKellar**, Regional Chair, International Council for Science, The University of Melbourne
- **Prof Tony McMichael**, Professor, National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, The Australian National University
- **Mark Metherell**, Health Correspondent, Sydney Morning Herald and The Age, Canberra Bureau
- **Dr Chris Morgan**, Principal Fellow, The Burnet Institute
- **Prof Rob Moodie**, Chair of Global Health, Nossal Institute for Global Health, The University of Melbourne
- **Antonio Mozqueira**, Assistant Director, Office of the Chief Scientist
- **Assoc Prof Chee Ng**, Director, St. Vincent’s Mental Health Service
- **Prof Robyn Norton**, Principal Director, The George Institute for International Health
- **David Paroissien**, Program Manager, Leadership and Community Health Programs, Asialink
- **Paul Power**, CEO, Refugee Council of Australia
- **Dr Sam Prince**, John James Private Hospital Canberra
- **Marc Purcell**, Executive Director, Australian Council for International Development
- **Prof Beverley Raphael AM**, Professor Population Mental Health and Disasters, University of Western Sydney
- **Prof Penny Sackett**, Chief Scientist, Office of the Chief Scientist
- **Prof Lyndal Trevena**, Associate Dean (International), Sydney Medical School, The University of Sydney
- **Prof Anthony Zwi**, Convenor, Global Health Faculty of Medicine, The University of New South Wales

# THE ARTS

Chairs Robyn Archer and Alison Carroll



**Spear-headed by performer and festival director, Robyn Archer, the Arts and Culture sector group had significant representation from Commonwealth and State arts policy and funding bodies, key arts organisations and infrastructure, artists, academics, curators and directors.**

The arts were acknowledged as central to Australia’s future engagement with Asia and integral to the development of an Asia literate Australia. Indeed cultural engagement was seen as fundamental to how Australia must project itself. ‘Soft-power’ – or ‘persuasive influence’ – is used in increasingly sophisticated ways by other Asian countries and in other regions.

It was recognised that over many decades, Australian artists and organisations have developed strong partnerships and numerous projects throughout Asia. However, this engagement has been sporadic and poorly resourced. Without a pro-active and strategic focus, Australia risks being left behind and excluded from crucial regional cultural networks. These are already being established to meet the growing demands of this rich and booming sector.

Robyn Archer said: “We must communicate a clear strategy... to expand on existing activity and collaboration in the region”.

## THE ARTS IN ASIA ARE BOOMING

“Asia is booming in the contemporary Arts sector. There is no question that this is the case,” said Dr Gene Sherman AM, Chairman and Executive Director, Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation. The Australian cultural sector is now presented with major challenges and opportunities.

Libby Christie, Executive Director Arts Funding, Australia Council for the Arts, said the potential benefits to artists of increased networking and collaboration across the region were significant. “We need to create a framework for genuine and sustained engagement to support creative projects, the development of artists’ careers and the promotion of their work,” she said.

## AUSTRALIA MARGINALISED

In the absence of a committed strategic focus on our arts engagement with the region, Australia risks becoming marginalised and increasingly irrelevant.

Where once Australia was a source of models of best practice and policy ideas, our investment, involvement and presence has become ‘sporadic and scattergun’, and increasingly usurped. The Asian region, in contrast, has recognised the value and benefits of a strong commitment to the arts and cultural sector which has strengthened on both a country and regional basis.

Douglas Gautier, CEO Adelaide Festival Centre said the “Asian century” required concerted action from the Arts sector for a plan for the next 10 years. “We need to sit down with key organisations and nut out an agenda of things we can do. Relevant media such as SBS and the ABC also need to be there.”

The group agreed there was an opportunity to capitalise – for national as well as artistic reasons – on the myriad cultural exchanges, artist, curator and organisational relationships already formed. However, this will require a strategic approach, skills and resources. Further discussion is required on whether it is time to establish a specialist Australian international cultural body and whether a quota should be applied to ensure the resourcing and prioritising of Asian cultural projects.

In this breakout session there was much stress placed on reciprocity in the development of people-to-people relationships. An ‘audience development’ model for engagement with Asia – that is, a model based solely on market considerations, on increasing audiences and income for Australian-developed product – will only have limited usefulness. “This reinforces the idea that Asia exists externally from Australia. If we stick with this old model we are only a small part of the dialogue,” said Aaron Seeto, Director 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art.



DOUGLAS GAULTIER

FIONA HOGGART

LESLEY ALWAY



ALICE PUNG

## The arts were acknowledged as central to Australia’s future engagement with Asia, and integral to the development of an Asia literate-Australia.

### UNDERSTANDING ASIA

The Arts have a crucial role to play in improving Asia literacy, not just in cultural but also in other sectors, and across the community in general.

“Cultural knowledge and understanding is at the heart of many challenges within the region,” Penny Hutchinson, Director Arts Victoria, said. “The Arts sector needs to be front and centre. We have a huge role to play. We need to develop a framework to convince other sectors that our role is important and crucial. We need to map of what is going on now, then plan the future”.

Australia’s best hope for success would depend on utilising existing networks to develop partnerships across all sectors, including education and business, and across all levels of government.

“We need to reach out and work together on the ground,” said Fiona Hoggart, Director Cultural Diplomacy Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

A Steering Committee should be formed to develop a 10-year strategic plan for increased and effective cultural engagement between Australia and Asia. It is proposed that the plan will map the current status, identify key issues, goals and projects and recommend an agenda for action to 2020. The Steering Committee should be co-ordinated by Asialink. Following appropriate research and consultation, a report identifying recommendations will be presented to the Australian International Cultural Council.

The strategic plan should address the following priorities:

- 1 Develop equitable and collaborative relationships through people-to-people projects, mutual dialogue, reciprocity and active participation in Asian regional networks.
- 2 Act collegially and utilise existing networks to develop strong cross-sector partnerships between private, philanthropic and all levels of government, and across art-forms.
- 3 Improve the cultural literacy of the arts sector and its audiences to improve understanding and capitalise on the opportunities of the Asian century through education, public program and advocacy initiatives.

### PARTICIPANTS

- **Lesley Alway**, Board Member Opera Australia and the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art
- **Robyn Archer AO**, performer, writer, Artistic Director (Centenary of Canberra, Light in Winter)
- **Sarah Bond**, Director Visual Arts, Asialink
- **Alison Carroll AM**, Arts Director Asialink
- **Libby Christie**, Executive Director, Arts Funding, Australia Council for the Arts
- **Richard Evans**, CEO, Sydney Opera House
- **Douglas Gautier**, CEO and Artistic Director, Adelaide Festival Centre
- **Professor Dennis Haskell**, Chair Literature Board, Australia Council for the Arts
- **Fiona Hoggart**, Director Cultural Diplomacy, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- **Penny Hutchinson**, Director, Arts Victoria
- **Stephanie Johnston**, Director, Wakefield Press
- **Rachel Kent**, Senior Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art
- **Karen Lanyon**, Assistant Secretary, Public Diplomacy Branch Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- **Frances Lindsay**, Deputy Director, National Gallery of Victoria
- **Rupert Myer AM**, Chairman, National Gallery of Australia
- **Alice Pung**, Author
- **Alexandra Reid**, Executive Director, Arts SA
- **Aaron Seeto**, Director, Gallery 4A
- **Dr Gene Sherman AM**, Chairman and Executive Director, Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation
- **Prof Ted Snell AM**, Chair Visual Arts Board, Australia Council for the Arts
- **Mark Taylor**, Assistant Secretary, Arts Development and Training Department of Environment Water, Heritage and the Arts.
- **Dr Caroline Turner AM**, Senior Research Fellow, Australian National University
- **Prof Adrian Vickers**, Director Australian Centre for Asian Art & Archaeology, University of Sydney
- **Richard Watson**, General Manager, Asia Pacific Screen Awards & Manager Major Events Arts Queensland
- **David Whitney**, Director, Arts ACT

# SUMMARY

The 2010 Asialink Asia Society National Forum revealed a remarkable shift in Australia's thinking about Asia. As reports of each of the Sector sessions were delivered to the entire group at the conclusion of the day, Professor Tony Milner drew attention to a possible new "tone" in the discussion. There seemed to be a move away from "thinking about Australia as United States ally, Australia as aid-giver, Australia as the spreader of global and western values," he said.

"I don't mean we don't go on doing some of this, but the focus today is on collaboration. It was there in the Ambassadors' luncheon discussion, and it's coming through again in the reports from the different breakout groups. Do we have a new paradigm here for thinking about Australia-Asia engagement? Are we talking much more about Australia in collaborative engagements in the Asian region? This has come up in the arts, in the health area, in the discussion about investment and the call for a regional research community."

There were concerns about whether this new thinking was only present among people active in Australia-Asia engagement. The point was stressed that much work is still needed to bring the whole of the Australian community into a "national conversation" on these issues.

The need for such a process was underlined by a report from Dr Malcolm Cook, Lowy Institute Program Director for East Asia. He observed that recent opinion polling showed popular sentiments sometimes running counter to the facts and even Australia's national interests.

"When we asked Australians a couple of years ago how they viewed Indonesia, it was as though they had been under a rock for ten years. So many still thought it was controlled by the military and was a threat to Australia," he told the group.

Chairs of each of the Sector breakout discussions delivered their groups' recommendations (see Sector chapters for full details). These outcomes – though from diverse groups – captured three common themes:

- 1 That advancing Australia's increasingly complex relationships in the countries of the Asian region requires more qualified Australians – and that Governments and all sectors must invest long-term in equipping Australians with skills and understandings for the Asian Century.
- 2 That we must act collegially in our Asia relationships in order to solve common problems and to achieve successful outcomes. This requires greater resourcing and development of people-to-people links and an emphasis on "networks of mutuality".
- 3 That the wider Australian public must urgently be brought into a national "conversation" about the imperative of Australia-Asia engagement.



# MEDIA

## A NATION ADRIFT IN ASIA LITERACY

### While Rudd pays lip service to regional relations, the reality is dismal

GREG SHERIDAN  
FOREIGN EDITOR



KEVIN Rudd and Tony Abbott

gave import... week about... ment with A... getting by a nation... tought by Asialink... hools, the b... moting con... Australia and... There wa... ground betw... the shared c... ating an As... (Rudd made... which was at... the former A... dor to China, Stephen

In fact FitzGerald had no formal... checked... link Abbott would foster Asian ties... A COALITION government would overturn the ban on uranium exports to India and encourage Asian language studies to strengthen regional ties. In a speech to the Asialink Asia Society national forum in Canberra yesterday, Opposition Leader Tony Abbott said the Rudd government had failed to strengthen regional ties. "Indeed there has been at least as many small steps backwards as there have in the right direction," he said, adding the government had managed to antagonise Japan over whaling without saving any whales. "The next coalition government will focus on building a strong strategic relationship with Japan."

ground. Good on them for doing that of course, but what it means is that the most you can say for this program is that it will help kids retain their parents' language, nothing more. Certainly it is no part of mainstream Australian experience to learn Chinese. The four priority Asian languages are Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian

Beware of most-favoured nation pitfall

Asia-Pacific observed Greg Earl  
China's latest local ambassador Zhang Junxi gave a subtle performance in diplomatic self-deprecation on Tuesday as he headed an unusual joint presentation by diplomatic representatives from five of Australia's key partners. Revealing that Asialink conference organisers had asked the money from China, India, Indonesia, Japan and Korea to speak in alphabetical order to apparently avoid any other hierarchy, Zhang suggested he really should have been last in his country was actually the People's Republic of China. It's increasingly the first diplomatic



## LIBS PUT FOCUS ON LANGUAGES

terrorism, disaster, climate change, and the general promotion of trust and transparency of issues that require inter-state co-operation and this may be achieved through a regional rather than a national focus. Bringing officials to the table to discuss the possible domestic and regional issues for Australia to engage in is a good start. The highest level of co-operation at the highest level. Discussing the building of regional institutions, some commentators take a purely functionalist view, writing of "interlocking mechanisms", "testaments" and "design faults". But ex-

for the decline, Tony Abbott vowed yesterday that a Coalition government would lift Asian language study, recognising it was a crucial part of Australia's economic and cultural future. The Opposition Leader's conference in Canberra took more than 5 per cent of Australia's completed secondary education students studying an Asian language in 2010. He said 95 per cent of students studying Mandarin were in the 1960s, the Council was under in the region as "modern powers" (to quote a recent analysis by Amitav Acharya). According to a contemporary

## FOREIGN POLICY TONY WALKER

# Backs to the borders, focusing inward

Australia may be at war and holding candidates but in an election seasonally light or subdued, a foreign policy debate of any significance seems an unlikely prospect. Prime Minister Julia Gillard revealing details of her last night conversation with former leader Kevin Rudd - or what she really thinks about anything else. This is unfortunate because the world has become by degrees a lot more complicated in recent months and a debate would be useful to some of the issues - including Afghanistan, engagement with China and regional security. So we will have to make do with the published statements of the politicians - based for the most part - and take on trust their ability to learn on the job, as many of their predecessors have done with varying degrees of success. Julia Howard was a slow starter, but then came East Timor and 9/11 and Iraq, and the threat



Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott go almost hand in hand on foreign policy.

Special Australians to only about engagement. The meeting of Abbott's son of his look. suggests he has given thought to foreign. Australia has declined to all engagement with the different levels of engagement, with various countries, as well as for any sort of hierarchy. For example, a curious Asialink's "Asian century" theme topic was that built and crisis tended to feel fertile than, say, export security planners, with regional engagement. But ask those with an Indonesian business banker for the boom times 1990s. And while miners might own the China relations estimates Australia's interaction with Chinese investors then with many tries, providing a long with the ongoing paper could ride out a downturn medicines cycle. Asialink, based at the U. Melbourne, has a rare - bring the diverse fragments of Australia's Asian engagement one place, allowing one see the way other people

weighing, despite Rudd's proclaimed goal of providing "Asia literacy". This was another Rudd program that fell short hope. Tony Walker, professor of History at the Australian National University and an Adjunct Lecturer, believes that in Abbott's speech he may promise of a "competition" between the party on Asia, and what he describes as a "new kind of debate". Walker makes the point that "consolidating" in discussion about Australia's dealings with regions is desirable as the more focus is "new era" marked by China and India's continuing rise, some of climate change, Japan's role of climate change, and possible social constraints on a US security program, among any other developments. Asia is in flux, with an evolving regional architecture and important shifts in relationships, such as the recent easing of restrictions on traffic across the Taiwan Strait. But there is not much to indicate that either Gillard or Abbott has paid the slightest attention. This week's six newsletters for the month by Donnell consider status, and the views of other on world affairs could almost be translated. Gillard defined her foreign policy approach, in an interview with The Sydney Morning Herald some after her inauguration, in support for the US, support for the regional architecture.



flux but there is indication that Abbott has paid least attention.

# Coalition interest in Asia

Coalition government overturn the ban on exports to India encourage Asian languages to strengthen ties. Leader Abbott told the Asia Society National Forum in Canberra yesterday the Rudd Government had failed to strengthen regional ties. Indeed there has been as many small

expressindia.com Tue, 22 Jun 2010 - Weather | Home Blogs Cricket Astrology | Shopping Tenders Classifieds | Oz Oppn party favours uranium sale to India Agencies Posted: May 25, 2010 at 14:27 hrs IST Melbourne Australia's opposition Liberal party has vowed to make efforts aimed at overturning a ban on uranium exports to India. The Kevin Rudd government had 'tailed' in strengthening regional ties. Leader of the

## Bloomberg

### Australia's Abbott Wants Japan Trade Deal, Start of Uranium Sales to India

Australia will try to clinch a trade deal with Japan, boosting ties with its second-largest trading partner after China, and will set uranium to India under a Liberal-National government, opposition leader Tony Abbott said. The coalition will build a "strong strategic partnership" with Japan, including stronger military links and a coalition to end trade talks, and will "overhaul Labor's ban on uranium exports," Abbott said today in a speech to the Asialink-Asia Society forum in Canberra.

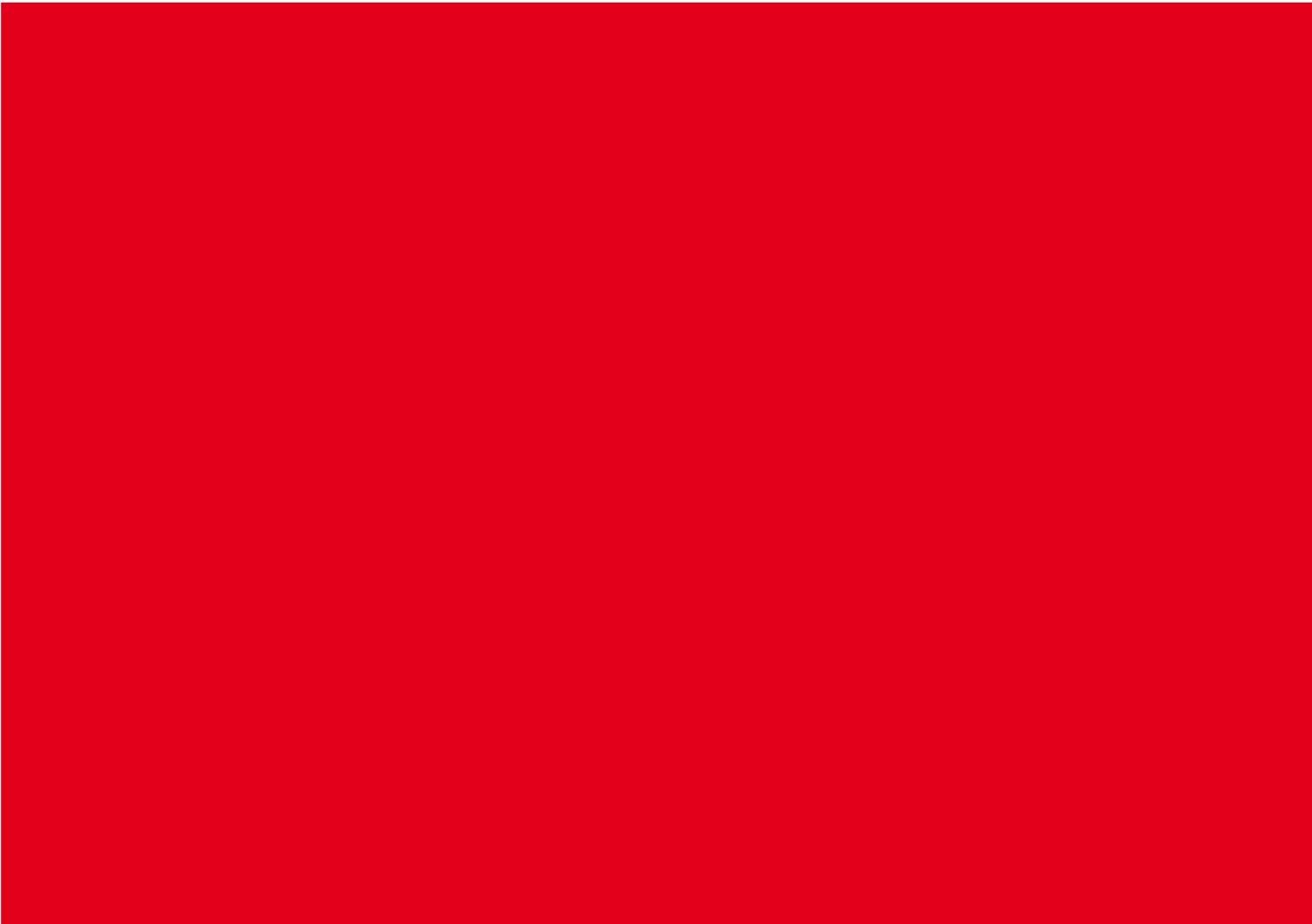
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## ASIAN LANGUAGES DECLINING IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

ASPAC initiative was also damaged by "excessive Australian nationalism". The report was more positive about the... The decline, Tony Abbott vowed yesterday that a Coalition government would lift Asian language study, recognising it was a crucial part of Australia's economic and cultural future. The Opposition Leader's conference in Canberra took more than 5 per cent of Australia's completed secondary education students studying an Asian language in 2010. He said 95 per cent of students studying Mandarin were in the 1960s, the Council was under in the region as "modern powers" (to quote a recent analysis by Amitav Acharya). According to a contemporary

ASEAN's first Dialogue Partner. In the early 1990s foreign minister Gareth Evans was praised for being sensitive to ASEAN for being points in his efforts to promote a broad security organisation, what became the ASEAN Regional Forum. The Coalition government took a positive and diplomatic approach to the creation of ASEAN + 3. When this grouping launched the East Asia Summit it demonstrated the potential for inclusiveness of East Asian regionalism, asking Australia and NZ along with India to join. There are careful deliberations under way to how best the US and Russia may be brought into this process and

## WE'D BE MORE SUCCESSFUL FINDING FRIENDS IN EAST ASIA



*Asialink*

*Leaders in Australia-Asia Engagement*

