



# Asialink

## ANNUAL REPORTS

2020+2021+2022







# Contents

<b>Foreward+ Welcome</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Asialink Signature Programs &amp; Events</b>	<b>5</b>
About Asialink	6
Key Impact Areas 2020-22	7
Asialink Leaders Program – Developing Asia Capable Leaders	8
Asian-Australian Leadership Summit – Elevating the Contribution Of Asian-Australian Leaders	8
Sir Edward ‘Weary’ Dunlop Asia Medal and Lecture	10
<b>Arts</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>Public Displays Of Affection: How Can Artists Rebrand Soft Power?</i>	12
知音 <i>Sonicbridge</i> – A New Digital Era Of Creative Exchange in the Region	13
Regional // Regional	14
<i>All A Part</i> – 10th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art	15
<b>Asialink Business</b>	<b>16</b>
Winning in Asia	17
Spotlight on Vietnam	18
Fostering Resilient Supply Chains	20
Risk And Reward: Opportunities For Australian SMEs In China	20
<b>Asia Education Foundation</b>	<b>21</b>
Asia Education Foundation	22
HarvestEd	23
Why Indonesia Matters in our Schools	24
VETConnect	24
PNG Australia Secondary Schools	25
<b>Diplomacy</b>	<b>26</b>
Virtual Dialogues	27
Asialink Insights – <i>Sharing Voices And Analysis From The Region</i>	28
Submissions To Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence And Trade References Committee	29
Cambodia Paris Peace Agreement	29
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>30</b>



# Reimagining Engagement with Asia

**As Australia navigates its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, productive engagement with Asia has never been more critical to our nation's prosperity and well-being.**

Throughout the global uncertainty of 2020 and 2021, Asialink took the opportunity to reimagine and innovate, embracing new technologies and ideas, and forging new creative partnerships.

In 2021, we put the spotlight on Vietnam and emerging opportunities there in the AgTech and FinTech sectors. While our e-commerce academies helped small and medium enterprises connect with new customers in Asia.

Our Asian-Australian Leaders Summit highlighted the substantial, and to date mostly untapped, potential of Asian-Australians to elevate our nation's ability to thrive in the Indo-Pacific.

We reconnected and sought the advice and expertise of our 1,000 Asialink Leaders Program alumni; many of whom lead corporations, governments, research and health institutes, NGOs and creative arts organisations in Australia and globally.

Asialink Arts' ambitious 知音 *sonicbridge* program re-imagined cultural diplomacy, people-to-people links and industry development through the exchange of Australian and Chinese experimental music cultures in a digital era.

Asia Education Foundation's School Education Program quickly harnessed new technologies to connect schools across Australia, Asia and the Pacific and launched HarvestEd, a program for Australian secondary school students expanding their perspectives, networks, and ideas on Australian agriculture

and our connections with Asia. The program is a cornerstone of Asialink's initiatives in agricultural education for global citizens.

Throughout 2020 and 2021, Asialink took a digital-first approach to hosting events, continuing to share insights, build capabilities and foster connections. We convened over 300 events, attended by more than 14,000 individuals, seizing the opportunity to reach more people than ever before through digital channels.

The 14th ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Dialogue, held in 2022, focused on the emergence of mini-lateral arrangements in the Indo-Pacific, such as the Quad, and ongoing geopolitical conflicts, including the situation in Myanmar.

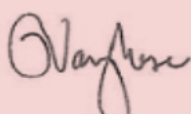
We launched our inaugural Asialink Indigenous Development Plan, outlining specific commitments to developing the strength and depth of the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, non-Indigenous Australians and our Asian neighbours, including all First Nations peoples throughout the Asia and the Pacific.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for the invaluable contributions of our former CEOs, Penny Burt and Jenny McGregor AM, and express our thanks to our partners, clients, alumni, and friends for their ongoing and enthusiastic support for the revitalisation of our programming. There is much to be excited about in this next chapter in Asialink and Australia's engagement with the region.

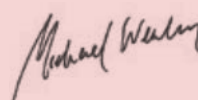
We are delighted to share highlights from 2020 to 2022 and convey some of the stories of the communities, individuals and organisations that we have engaged with through our work.



**Martine Letts, FAIIA HonLLD**  
Group CEO, Asialink



**Peter Varghese AO**  
Chair, Asialink



**Professor Michael Wesley**  
Deputy Vice Chancellor Global,  
Culture & Engagement,  
The University of Melbourne





5

# Asialink Signature Programs & Events

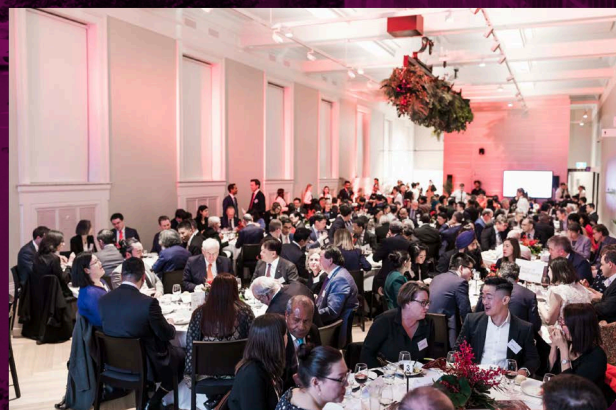


# Asialink is Australia's leading centre for creative engagement with Asia.

We develop insights, capabilities and connections through our programs in the Arts, Business, Diplomacy and Education.

Uniquely Australian, Asialink works with diverse communities in Australia and Asia to build a strong, shared future for all.

Asialink was established in 1990 as a joint initiative of the Australian Government's Commission for the Future and the Myer Foundation. Asialink is hosted by the University of Melbourne.



**ABOVE & ABOVE RIGHT:**  
Inaugural Asian Australian Leadership Awards (2019)



# Key Impact Areas 2020-22

37,505 — participants engaged across Asialink programs and events

4,785 — registrations for webinar: *Anwar Ibrahim's Long Walk to Power and What Comes Next*

352,912 — Online Engagements for 知音 *sonicbridge* (a digital project)

6,128 — students engaged and connected across Australia and the Indo-Pacific through Asia Education Foundation's youth programs



**ABOVE:**  
Asialink Leaders Program (2022) Canberra Summit.

# Asialink Leaders Program — Developing Asia Capable Leaders

Celebrating its 27th year in 2022, the Program continues to grow a global network of outstanding Asia capable leaders from across all sectors of professional life.

In 2020, 2021, and 2022, the Leaders Program embraced the flexibility of online, hybrid and in-person learning experiences. Participants met with experts and thought leaders from across the globe, debating how to navigate disruption, adapt to rapid change in the region, maximise the potential of innovative technologies, and articulate a new narrative for Australia's Asia engagement.

When surveyed post program, 100% of the 2020 cohort identified that the Leaders Program had enhanced their Asia capabilities and over 86% said the program substantially improved their capabilities.

In 2022, the program connected with its Alumni and showcased their diverse achievements. Alumni living and working across the Asian region thoughtfully reflected on their experiences and key learnings. Others joined the Summits, Foundation Weeks and other sessions to share their expertise. Many mentored current program participants' workplace projects and helped shape future programming.

With more than 1,000 global professionals now in the Asialink Leaders alumni community, we are thrilled and very grateful to the many who have given back to the Program over the past three years.

## Asian-Australian Leadership Summit — Elevating the Contribution of Asian-Australian Leaders

Asialink is a proud convenor of the Asian-Australian Leadership Summit, alongside our partners The Australian National University and Johnson Partners.

The initiative seeks to showcase the richness and breadth of the Asian-Australian contribution to Australian life, and the untapped potential of this diverse community to drive Australia's future prosperity and connections with our region.

The Summit addressed the issue of the underrepresentation of Asian-Australians in leadership positions and celebrated the next generation of leaders.

In 2020, the Summit considered the impact of the pandemic on Asian-Australian communities, and the strong leadership needed to protect and enhance cohesion for the Australian community more broadly.

In 2021, we launched a new partnership with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and celebrated the third cohort of 40 Under 40 Most Influential Asian-Australians. Among the winners was Sam Kerr, the Matildas captain, and Sports category winner, who joined our alumni community of talented professionals. In 2022, the Awards reshaped the debate and confronted Australian's "bamboo ceiling" – the underrepresentation of Asian-Australians in leadership positions.

Vietnamese-Australian solicitor, advocate, organiser and Community Development Manager at Marrickville Legal Centre, Mrs Nguyen-Tu Le (below) was named the overall winner of the 2022 Most Influential Young Asian-Australian Awards, for her powerful contributions to the Asian-Australian Community.







“People think, ‘We don’t really need the arts, it’s not the most important thing’... But it is the most important thing if it nurtures people’s mental health, allows people’s bodies to move and allows people to escape – that’s extra important during the pandemic. [I] really want more Asian-Australians to embrace the arts... Take a risk and get into this industry. [The best advice I can give] is just to show up, because you don’t know who’s watching you... In 20 years’ time, I know I’ll still be in this industry. And I hope there’s another cohort of Asian-Australians who haven’t had to struggle so hard to be seen.”

Diana Nguyen, 2021 Asian-Australian Leadership Awards – Overall Winner



# Sir Edward ‘Weary’ Dunlop Asia Medal and Lecture

The Sir Edward ‘Weary’ Dunlop Asia Medal is presented annually to an Australian with a distinguished record of long-term commitment to improving Australia-Asia relations and enhancing the quality of life in our region.

The medal is awarded annually in memory of Lieutenant Colonel Sir Ernest Edward ‘Weary’ Dunlop, AC, CMG, OBE (1907-1993) – the famed Australian war hero and surgeon, remembered for his generosity and his leadership in advancing Australia-Asia relations.

University of Melbourne Vice-Chancellor, Professor Duncan Maskell, opened the 2021 Awards, commending Asialink’s long history of strengthening Asia-Australia relationships. A deeply moving Welcome to Country from academic and leading Indigenous advocate, Dr Lois Peeler AM followed.

The 2019 and 2020 medals were jointly awarded to cultural leaders and philanthropists, Carrillo Gantner AC and Ziyin Wang Gantner. The husband-and-wife duo were honoured for their dedication to strengthening ties between Australia and Asia, particularly their leadership in the fields of culture and performing arts.

Malaysian-born philanthropist Jason Yeap OAM delivered the Medal Citation.

Asialink Council Chair Mr. Peter Varghese AO said of Carrillo and Ziyin:

“Engagement with Asia needs to be so much more than the traditional pillars of security and commerce. It must also embrace the arts and the imagination. In Carrillo and Ziyin, Asialink honours two people who have made understanding Asia a lifelong passion. Weary Dunlop would have approved.”



The Hon. Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria, delivered the annual Sir Edward ‘Weary’ Dunlop Asia Lecture, which focused on the enduring power of personal, cultural and business relationships. The Governor pointed out how building ties and deepening cultural relationships and networks are key to assisting Australia to navigate its place in the world, particularly with our neighbours in Asia. Her passionate address, based on her personal experiences, centred around the strong human connections that provide the capacity for international engagement to flourish.

Highlights from 2022 included the speech delivered by The Hon. Julie Bishop, Australia’s first female Minister for Foreign Affairs and the first female Chancellor of the Australian National University, who was also the 2022 Sir Edward ‘Weary’ Dunlop Asia Medallist (above middle, with Diana Dunlop and Sid Myer AM). During her speech, she shared insights into the history of international relations and Australia’s relationship with the Indo-Pacific region, as well as the qualities of Sir Edward’s leadership and engagement with Asia. These qualities are particularly relevant in today’s critical and uncertain global landscape.





11

Arts



# Public Displays of Affection: How Can Artists Rebrand Soft Power?

In March 2020, during the Asia Pacific Triennial of Performing Arts, Asia TOPA, Asialink Arts convened Public Displays of Affection: How Can Artists Rebrand Soft Power? (PDA).

Described as ‘a cross-sectoral conversation exploring the fundamental nature of ‘soft power’ agendas, and the status of cultural diplomacy, creative exchange and artistic influence across the Asia Pacific’, the PDA project put artists at the table with philanthropists, diplomats, government departments and scholars.

The title of the conference alluded to the discomfort many artists feel about the term soft power and hinted that international engagement might be recontextualised in ways that reflect reciprocity and the more organic characteristics of relationships.

Following the conference, Asialink circulated a report and invited stakeholders to contribute their reflections. These were discussed at a suite of roundtables which explored the ongoing frameworks to support intercultural engagements between Australia and the Indo-Pacific, and the power of arts and culture in forging people-to-people connections and strengthening regional ties.

The overarching theme from the PDA conference and subsequent roundtables, was a call to action, advocating for policy shifts and increased investment in reciprocity and long-term relationships to build increased partnerships, new markets, and audiences.

The Asialink report and roundtables were developed with the support and counsel of the conference Working Group: Danny Butt, Suzanne Fraser, Xin Gu, Katya Johanson, Justin O'Connor, Chaitanya Sambrani and Bala Starr. We thank them, and all conference and round table participants for their generous and patient contributions.

PDA was convened by Asialink as part of Asia TOPA 2020, and supported by Centre of Visual Art (COVA), University of Melbourne, and by the Master of Cultural and Creative Industries, Monash University.

**BELOW:**  
*Workshop participants at Public Displays of Affection:  
How Can Artists Rebrand Soft Power?, AsiaTopa 2020.*



**ABOVE:** *Public Displays of Affection: How Can Artists  
Rebrand Soft Power?, AsiaTopa 2020.*





## 知音 *Sonicbridge* – A New Digital Era of Creative Exchange in the Region

Transitioning physical creative exchanges to the digital realm, Asialink Arts showcased arts and culture as a dynamic and effective platform for international dialogues and cultural diplomacy.

Asialink Arts' 知音 *sonicbridge* program re-imagined people-to-people links and industry development through an online exchange of Australian and Chinese experimental music cultures over six months.

Melbourne based Indigenous musical duo, The Merindas, worked with Shii, an emerging electronic music artist based in Wuhan, China to collaboratively sketch a blueprint to continue cross-cultural exchanges in a digital age.

Through frequent online encounters and film recordings, the artists developed a dialogue around their creative lives, sharing stories of their personal inspirations, and the challenges they continue to face and must overcome in their respective cultural communities.

The 知音 *sonicbridge* dialogues were supplemented by a series of public events, that included film launches and an industry round table featuring industry leaders Myf Warhurst, Fred Leone and Nevin Domer.

Project partners, music industry artists and experts from China and Australia, explored the potential of the 知音 *sonicbridge* model to support emerging artists both in their home countries and abroad and to reinvigorate a music industry greatly impacted by the global pandemic.

知音 *sonicbridge* was an initiative of Asialink and Monash University, supported by the Australian Government through the Australian Cultural Diplomacy Grants Program of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

# Regional // Regional

In Australia and across the Pacific, regional communities are facing historic and contemporary social, cultural, ecological, and economic challenges.

Fluctuating migration between urban and rural centres, industrial decline and extreme environmental events are some of the circumstances that have led to transient and impermanent populations, limited employment opportunities and declining perceptions of liveability.

Arts-led regional regeneration projects, such as those in Japan, have a successful history in contributing to a region's economic, social, and environmental renewal through art and cultural tourism.

Inspired by Japanese post-industrial regeneration projects and similar, Asialink Arts *Regional // Regional* explored what Australia can learn from the different approaches taken to the problem of regional decline and the potential of art to regenerate Australian regional communities.

*Regional // Regional* is a 3-year program, launched in August 2022 that promotes collaboration between 30 creative producers and directors from esteemed regional and remote festivals and organisations across Australia, Asia and the Pacific. The goal of *Regional // Regional* is to address the imbalance in Asia Pacific's engagement in Australia that is often biased towards urban and metropolitan centres.

This program is designed to impact and increase engagement between regional Australian, Asian and Pacific festivals and arts organisations through cross-cultural exchange, knowledge sharing and collaboration leading to new work, programs and opportunities for regional communities.

*Regional // Regional* is supported by Yulgilbar Foundation, Circle 5, Australia Council (now Creative Australia), Creative New Zealand, Creative Victoria and Events Tasmania



“Asialink has proven to be a dedicated and effective partner, bringing engagement with international practise and perspectives to inform and enrich the cultural conversations we are able to have in regional NSW. Following the recent insights shared from Japan at The Spirit of Cementa '21 I have been given the opportunity to travel to Japan later this year though this program's partnership with Japan Foundation. We see this as is a crucial step in developing strong relationships and future cross-cultural long- term conversations and collaborations that will allow regional NSW to take a leadership role in developing cultural relationships and exchange with our peers in Asia.”

Alex Wisser, Founder & Artistic Director, Cementa, NSW



# All a Part – 10th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art

Asialink led a collaboration with the Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Griffith Asia Institute and West Space Arts to convene a series of three professional development forums titled *All a Part*.

The program included 20 speakers across 15 countries and coincided with the 10th Asia Pacific Triennial (APT10) exhibition at QAGOMA in Brisbane. The three sessions focused on the contested natures and narratives of *visibility and invisibility, communities and futures*.

*All a Part* provided a critical juncture for the coming together of the voices that have helped shaped the exhibition and to invite the broader Australian and international arts communities into the conversation. Over three consecutive weeks in 2022, artists, interlocutors, collaborators and curators from the APT10 discussed key conceptual frames that have emerged in APT10 and offered insights into the changing conditions and practices of artists in Australia and the Asia-Pacific.

Three interconnected themes centred on the contested natures and narratives of *visibility and invisibility, communities and futures*, were explored through presentations, panel discussions and screenings with time and space provided for discussion and networking. Admission was free.

Twenty bursaries were made available through open call to emerging Australian based artists and arts workers, to encourage attendance and participation, with the aim of developing connections, seeding future collaborations and investing in international engagement.

*All a Part* was made possible by the collaborative curatorial and conceptual development of partners at QAGOMA and its team behind the 10th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Asialink Arts and the Griffith Asia Institute.

Asialink is grateful for the assistance provided by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts (now Creative Australia), its arts funding and advisory body.



## LEFT:

Lee Paje,  
The Stories that Weren't Told,  
2019,

Collection:  
QAGOMA, Purchased 2021  
with funds from Terry and  
Mary Peabody and Mary-  
Jeanne Hutchinson through  
the QAGOMA Foundation,  
© Lee Paje





16

# Asialink Business



# Winning in Asia

***Winning in Asia: Creating long-term value*** was launched in August 2020 by the then-Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, the Hon. Simon Birmingham. The launch attracted an online audience of almost 1,000 participants from Australia and across the Region.

A report ‘by business, for business,’ *Winning in Asia* tackles some of the commonly held misconceptions about the challenges of doing business in Asia and offers the latest, evidence-based insights about who is succeeding, why they are succeeding, and importantly, what lessons we can learn from them.

The report draws from more than 300,000 data points and features leading insights from authorities on doing business in Asia, including Boston Consulting Group, Ellerstun Capital and Cooper Investors, as well as numerous case studies and interviews with a range of corporate leaders and subject matter experts.

Overseen by a taskforce of pre-eminent Australian business leaders, the research findings sharpen the focus on the importance of building knowledge of geopolitical influences, current local business context and content, and developing cross cultural capabilities.

Downloaded over 13,000 times, the *Winning in Asia* report continues to attract widespread media and public attention, shape national discussion, and inform business leaders, policy makers and investors.

*Winning in Asia* is the result of a partnership between Asialink, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA), the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CA ANZ) and The Sid and Fiona Myer Family Foundation.

“I commend the report’s comprehensive, strategic approach to outlining how to win in Asia. The 14 strategies identified are relevant to business, to government, to intermediaries, business councils and industry groups. It provides a roadmap for us all to work collaboratively to increase the dividends from working with Asia.”

Former Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, the Hon. Simon Birmingham MP



# Spotlight on Vietnam

Buoyed by an influx of investment, the fastest growing middle class in Southeast Asia, a resilient GDP, and a young population that readily embraces new technology, Vietnam is one of the Asian region's most dynamic markets, and an increasingly important strategic and economic partner for Australia.

Through Asialink Business, we are supporting businesses and organisations to deepen their understanding of, and ability to harness opportunities in this exciting and emerging market, including in emerging technology-driven industries.

## Unlocking Vietnam's fintech potential

Whilst Vietnam has suffered from COVID-19, the pandemic has also accelerated the uptake of digital services. In 2020, HealthTech, EdTech and FinTech fuelled growth of 29% in the country's digital economy.

To support Australian businesses to navigate this rapid growth, in October 2021, Asialink Business launched an innovative series of capability development programs designed to support Australian FinTechs to expand into Vietnam.

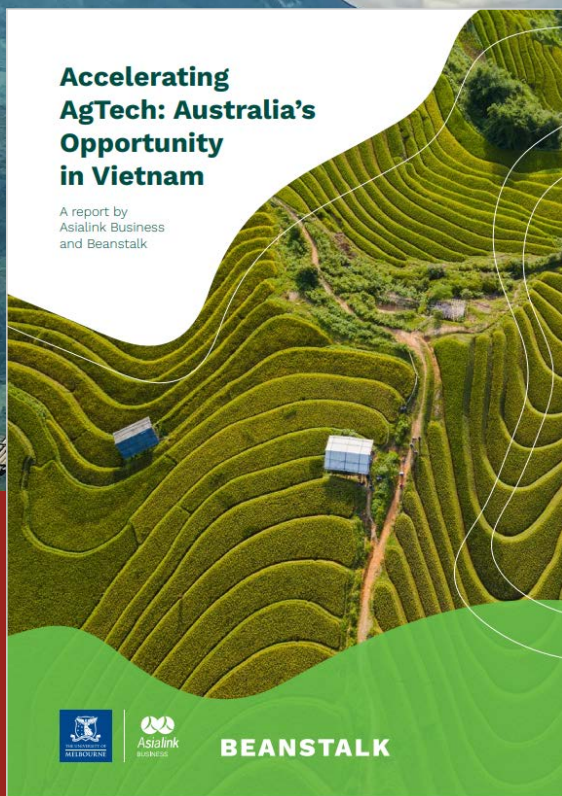
The launch was hosted by the CEO of Asialink Business, Leigh Howard, and featured insights from the Hon. Dan Tehan MP, Australian Minister for Trade, Tourism, and Investment.



“There are huge opportunities for Australian fintech companies to invest into Vietnam and to work with companies in Vietnam in partnership. What we need to make sure is that Australian companies are playing their part in capturing some of the opportunities that are available in the market... Making sure we work in partnership is a key part of that and using all the built-up knowledge and technology that we already have here in Australia in the FinTech area.”

**The Hon. Dan Tehan MP**, Minister for Trade, Tourism, and Investment





## Accelerating Australia-Vietnam AgTech Opportunities

In September 2021, Asialink launched *Accelerating AgTech: Australia's opportunity in Vietnam*, a report by Asialink Business and Beanstalk AgTech.

AgTech is poised to reshape Vietnam's agricultural sector, creating exciting commercial opportunities for Australian agricultural innovators. The report analyses the latest trends and identifies opportunities for Australian and Vietnamese AgTech innovators to share expertise, tackle common challenges, and boost quality, sustainability, and productivity.

The report features case studies from Australian AgTech innovators such as Orlar, a local Brisbane River startup that uses an organic Australian rock to grow strawberries and other pollutant-free fruit and vegetables in innovative vertical farms. Orlar's hydroponic technology has been taken to Da Lat, in Vietnam's central highlands, with its resultant organic produce now making its way to Vietnam's grocers and premium restaurants.

With agriculture already a cornerstone of the Australia-Vietnam relationship, *Accelerating AgTech: Australia's opportunity in Vietnam* promotes a new dimension to the collaboration to support rural economies and enhance competitiveness.

# Fostering resilient supply chains

The geopolitical tensions and steadily rising shipping and fuel costs are placing global supply chains under unprecedented strain. These factors have resulted in rising costs, shipping delays, fluctuating inventory levels and business disruption.

In September 2021, Asialink Business launched the research report *Disruption & Innovation: Reshaping Regional Supply Chains*, in collaboration with major transportation and logistics company, Toll Group, to help Australian businesses meet current supply chain challenges and unlock future growth potential.

The research underpinning the report indicated that supply chain uncertainty was hitting small business hardest. To remain competitive, businesses across Australia and Asia need to invest in building resilient supply chains that can keep pace with the explosion of e-commerce, and rapidly changing consumer expectations around reliable delivery times, and sustainability. Technology investment, including automation, connected sensors and data analytics, is critical to supply chain transformation.

## Risk and Reward: Opportunities for Australian SMEs in China

*Risk and Reward: Opportunities for Australian SMEs in China*, a landmark 2022 report that provides answers to many of the questions Australian SMEs have about what it takes to succeed in doing business in, and with China. As China has become a more complex market with increased geopolitical and operational risks, combined with heightened competition and rapidly changing consumer preferences, Australian SMEs need to develop strategies to successfully leverage opportunities and mitigate risks when doing business in China.

This comprehensive report shares key insights from Australian SMEs that are taking innovative approaches to navigate and succeed in the Chinese markets. It highlights how they are adapting their strategies and operating models in the face of rapidly evolving markets and consumer trends – to win their corner of the market.



**Download the report:**





21

# Asia Education Foundation





# Asia Education Foundation

## Building Relationships through Intercultural Dialogue and Growing Engagement (BRIDGE)

Throughout 2020-2022, the BRIDGE Schools Partnership program continued to strengthen the relationship between Australia and Indonesia and increase the quality of education. The BRIDGE Program is led and implemented by Asia Education Foundation's BRIDGE team based in Australia and Jakarta.

In 2019, Asia Education Foundation (AEF) entered into a new three-year funding agreement (2019-2022) with the Australian Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to deliver activities with an increased emphasis on partnership establishment, support and stakeholder engagement. Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, BRIDGE pivoted from in-person delivery with reciprocal in-country visits to a suite of online professional learning activities for educator participants and key education stakeholders.

Sixty Australian and Indonesian primary and secondary school teachers (20 per calendar year), from urban and regional schools, participated in the online program. The Professional Learning Program for participants from both countries was designed and delivered in partnership with White Light Education with a focus on: establishing comprehensive school partnership

foundations, intercultural understanding and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, synchronous and asynchronous ICT and language, using the Zoom platform. Participants were guided through detailed partnership planning framed by the development of a collaborative project via a dynamic Design Sprint process. Despite not being able to visit each other during this period, these BRIDGE Partnerships continue to work together online and now, in 2023, have started to visit their partner schools with BRIDGE supplementary funding.

In addition, virtual workshops were facilitated to increase Indonesian educators' awareness of Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) and provide wider BRIDGE stakeholders from the Ministries of Education and Religious Affairs and District Education Offices with the opportunity to obtain new pedagogical and managerial knowledge.

These complementary activities contributed to the ongoing achievement of BRIDGE End of Program Outcomes with an emphasis on cross-cultural understanding, establishment of sustainable school partnerships and improved professional practice of participating educators.



# HarvestEd

Asia Education Foundation supports Australian school leaders, teachers and students to develop the knowledge, capabilities and networks to build a dynamic and inclusive Australia and contribute to a shared, prosperous future in Asia and the Pacific..

AEF's 2021-2022 HarvestEd program for secondary school students in Victoria and Queensland explored Australian agriculture's present and potential future links with Asia.

In Victoria, HarvestEd was supported by the William Buckland Foundation and engaged a group of schools across Greater Geelong. The innovative program featured a series of online sessions and face-to-face workshops hosted by program partner the National Wool Museum. Students examined the past, present and future of agriculture in Geelong, Australia, and the Asian region. Focusing on agricultural trends and predictions, sessions introduced new

technologies and innovations such as precision technology, vertical farming, bioscience, robots, and drones. Students explored and debated solutions to the pressing issues of population growth, scarcity of natural resources, climate change and food security and wastage for the Asian region and more broadly.

In Queensland, HarvestEd was supported by the Department of Education and reached students in remote and regional towns and centres. Delivered through an online platform, HarvestEd brought secondary students together with professionals in Queensland agricultural industries, many with links to the Asian region.

Some of the students commented on the opportunities through HarvestEd to “learn about the diverse number of jobs in agriculture” and that “everything in agriculture is connected through trade and the world.”



# Why Indonesia Matters in Our Schools

Australia and Indonesia are tied together by geography and history and there are ongoing efforts at the highest levels to shape a future together through cooperation on trade, security and innovation.

Young people make up more than half of Indonesia's population. Their dynamic technology innovation, passion for the environment and creativity offer rich opportunities for collaboration with young Australians.

Yet at the same time, Indonesian language learning in Australian schools is in sharp decline. The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority shows only 755 students studied Year 12 Indonesian across Australia in 2019 — 50 per cent less than in 2006.

Without nation-wide policies, up to date data, funding and support, Indonesian is now an at-risk language in Australian schools.

In 2021, AEF launched 'Why Indonesia Matters in Our Schools: A Rationale for Indonesian Language and Studies in Australian Education' to provide a compelling contemporary argument to reverse the trend of Australia's declining study of Indonesia and Indonesian language capability in our schools.

AEF's Rationale calls for Australians to "take another look at Indonesia", the fifth largest economy in the world and our most populous and largest neighbour. The Rationale makes strong links to common interests of Indonesian



and Australian young people and the rich possibilities of working together now and into the future.

The Rationale was developed with the support of the Australia-Indonesia Institute at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and included wide consultation with schools, educators, business, diplomacy and civil society in Australia and Indonesia and the commissioning of a Literature Review by Dr Michelle Kohler from the University of Adelaide.

Australia's Ambassador to Indonesia, Her Excellency Penny Williams PSM, launched the Rationale in October 2021 in an online event that attracted participation from around Australia and Indonesia.

## VETConnect

VETConnect was an online professional learning program for VET and skills subject teachers in Australia and India. It aimed to enhance teacher skills, integrate industry perspectives, and improve the quality of school-based VET and skills-based offerings. VETConnect supported the Government of India's New Education Policy 2020 and flagship Skill India initiative, as well as strategic industry and skilling priorities within the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Australia and India.

The VETConnect program was conducted from August to November 2022. It involved

20 teachers from 14 schools in India and Australia, focusing on supporting rural and regional schools. The program comprised four phases of synchronous professional learning, with 20 hours of training. 86% of participating educators reported improved professional skills and knowledge in VET education. The Action Research project was crucial to the program's success, with participating teachers implementing new strategies into their classroom, sharing knowledge with colleagues and developing collaborative relationships between schools in Australia and India.



# PNG Australia Secondary Schools

From 2020-2021 AEF continued to support strong links between high performing secondary schools in PNG and Australia through the PNG Aus Secondary Schools (PASS) initiative.

Funded by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, PASS aims to strengthen PNG's secondary education and deepen relationships among next gen leaders from PNG and Australia. The program strengthens STEM and English language skills, youth leadership and further develops capabilities required by all our young people globally, such as respectful collaboration, intercultural understanding, ethical practices and advanced digital skills.

Launched in 2019, PASS was initially designed as a face-to-face program that saw 75 Australian secondary school students, teachers and principals visit PNG and 100 PNG participants travel to Australia to be hosted by their partner schools. In 2020 the Covid 19 pandemic demanded a pivot to online support and collaboration. The program was particularly challenged by low levels of internet connectivity in PNG, and long periods of remote learning by students and teachers in both countries.


Despite the challenges, powerful new learning opportunities emerged. Between 2020-2021, the AEF brought together expert partners including the Australian Film Television and Radio School, Zoos Victoria and the National Gallery of Victoria to deliver an innovative online program for Australian and PNG schools.

This included:

- ▶ **Partnering the Australia Pacific Climate Partnership** to hold a full day online design sprint for students from 24 schools across Australia and PNG to tackle the challenge of how their communities could build better climate resilience to storms.
- ▶ **O Lida Meri** - a professional learning program for female provincial education leaders across PNG to build women's education leadership skills. This program led to the development of a leadership program for senior girls in PNG schools.
- ▶ **Tokstori Bilong** - in the first weeks of the Covid 19 pandemic schools across Australia and PNG developed a creative response to share their communities' experience of Covid 19. Students wrote and performed songs, made and shared videos to support education about Covid 19, displayed art works and set up digital friendship groups in a poignant coming together to share a common global challenge.
- ▶ **Citizen Scientists** - a STEM program where students in PNG and Australia contributed to an actual global research initiative to track birdlife in their communities and explore challenges impacting bird species.
- ▶ **Digital Skills Builder** - a self-managed learning program for teachers and students in PNG to build their skills using digital devices and platforms.

AEF won the tender in November 2021 to deliver the education initiative for a further two years. The contract was further extended to support AEF partnering with the Australian Council of Education Research to support the development of PNG's first STEM Curriculum.





26

# Diplomacy



# Virtual Dialogues

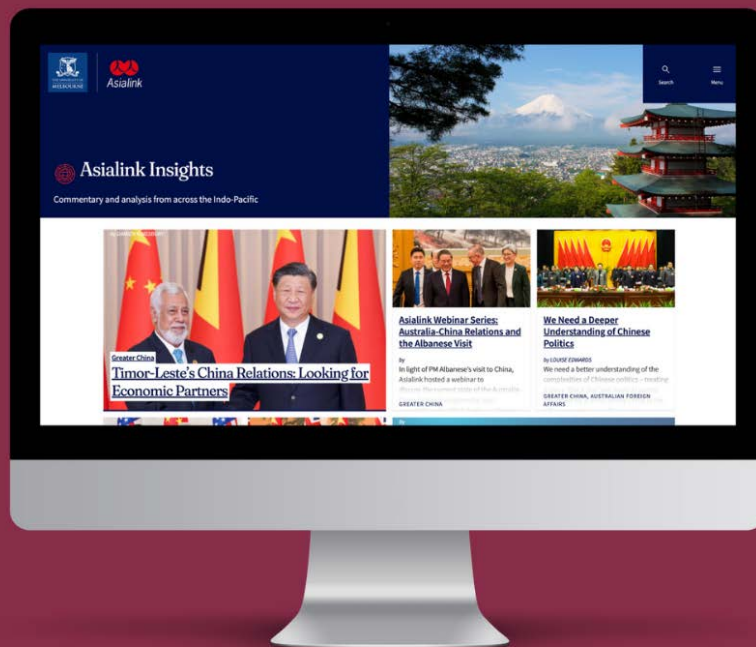
Asialink Diplomacy continued its collaboration with long standing partners in the region to deliver a program of important bilateral and multilateral virtual Dialogues.

These included:

- **The Australia-Republic of Korea Dialogue:** The dialogue marked the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Australia and the Republic of Korea. It brought together scholars, security analysts, and government officials across Australia and the Republic of Korea. Held in two stages in 2021, the initiative was a joint endeavour with the Australian Committee of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (AusCSCAP) and Ajou University in Seoul and was funded by the Australia-Korea Foundation at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The partnership continues until 2023.
- **The Australia-India Dialogue:** A continuing annual process led by AusCSCAP and Asialink and the Delhi Policy Group. Topics included Indian and Australian views of current regional security development, as well as the development of the Quad and the initiation of AUKUS.
- **Australia – China Dialogues:** In collaboration with CSCAP and through our Senior Advisors we contributed to a broad array of Australia-China focused Dialogues and Forums. For instance, in December 2021, Asialink delivered the University of Melbourne and Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Dialogue on Sustainable Cities. The Dialogue explored the potential of bi-lateral collaboration to help build more sustainable green cities.
- **The ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Dialogue:** The 13th meeting was held in December 2020 and primarily focused on US-China rivalry and the progress of regional trade mechanisms. A special meeting took place in May 2021 to discuss developments in Myanmar and to consider possible actions for ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand. The 2022 dialogue was conducted online, encouraging wide-ranging participation from government officials, academics, journalists and analysts from various background. The 2022 conversation was shaped by the emergence of minilateral arrangements such as the Quad and AUKUS, as well as geopolitical conflicts, including the situation in Myanmar.



**ABOVE:** Building the Future Together: 50 Years of Australia-China Relations Forum



## Asialink Insights - *Sharing Voices and Analysis from the Region*

Launched in 2020 as a thought leadership initiative of Asialink Diplomacy, *Asialink Insights* brings together diverse perspectives from across Australia and the Indo-Pacific. *Asialink Insights* provides expert analyses of the geo-political issues and tensions impacting policy makers and business leaders.

Featuring prominent regional voices, *Asialink Insights* authors have included former Japanese ambassador to Australia Sumio Kusaka, Singaporean academic and former diplomat Bilahari Kausikan; Times of India senior diplomatic Editor, Indrani Bagchi; Dang Cam Tu Deputy Director-General, Institute for Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies - Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam; Nurliana Kamaruddin, senior lecturer at the Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya and other emerging leaders from the region. Australian authors included former diplomats and Asialink senior advisers John McCarthy AO and Colin Heseltine; Australian Delegate of the G20 Women's Summit and former director of the Australia India Institute Tanya Spisbah and Asialink International Director, Professor Tony Milner AM.

In cooperation with the Australian Committee of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific, *Asialink Insights* published commentaries from around the Indo-Pacific, focusing especially on the impact of COVID-19 in the Indo-Pacific and the clash of regional perspectives regarding the 'rules-based order'. The series included fresh commentary from the region, highlighting the next generation of leaders. Overviews of these 'regional commentary' series, written by Greg Earl, Tony Milner and Ric Smith were published in the Australian Financial Review (and republished in Insights).

Thought leadership from *Insights* has been featured in regional mainstream media outlets including The Australian, the Australian Financial Review, The Straits Times, and The Jakarta Post.

Since launching in April 2020, *Insights* has reached over 200,000 readers from across the region, notably: Australia, Malaysia, China, the US, Singapore and Indonesia and is supplemented by Other *Insights*, podcast interviews showcasing a diverse range of voices and perspectives on the region's most pressing issues.

Follow #AsialinkInsights at  
[asialink.unimelb.edu.au/insights](https://asialink.unimelb.edu.au/insights)



# Submissions to Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee

## **‘Public Research into Foreign Policy Issues’**

The submission was led by Asialink Senior Advisor, John McCarthy, who also addressed the Committee, with contributions from the former CEO, Penny Burt and staff.

The submission argued the existential importance of Asia expertise and noted a “decline in research funding for Asia related topics” and in the learning of Asian languages – which risks “greater superficiality rather than sophistication in our knowledge of Asian developments.” The submission highlighted that within universities there is need for a “better conversation between those with area expertise on the Indo-Pacific” and those in other academic disciplines, such as International Relations. It further argued that, with respect to DFAT, “in-depth departmental briefing has withered”. There is a need for “senior policy officers” to give “in depth briefings on background without the requirement to paint every Australian policy move as an

unqualified success.” A further problem is the decline in the number of full-time Australian news correspondents in the Asian region. In its recommendations, the submission argued for the fundamental importance of Asialink, a “unique Australian institution whose mission is to focus on building Asia capabilities and engagement.”

## **Advancing Australia’s strategic interests through existing regional architecture**

Written primarily by AusCSCAP Co-Chairs, Richard Smith and Asialink International Director, Tony Milner, the submission drew in part on Asialink research. It argued the importance of inclusive ASEAN-led regional institutions – particularly given the development of more adversarial initiatives such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the QUAD. The authors of this submission were also asked to address the Senate Committee.

# Cambodia Paris Peace Agreement

## **Conference on the Cambodia Paris Peace Agreement and its implications for diplomacy, democracy, and peacebuilding in Southeast Asia**

2021 marked the 30th anniversary of the Paris Peace Agreements on Cambodia. The agreement, and the subsequent work of the United Nations Transitional Authority on Cambodia (UNTAC), brought an end to the ongoing conflicts that had beset the former Indochina since 1946, enabling Southeast Asia to enjoy significant regional stability for the first time since World War Two.

To mark this anniversary, Asialink and the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA) organised a 2-day closed-door conference on the Cambodia Paris Peace Agreement and its implications for diplomacy, democracy, and peacebuilding in Southeast Asia.

Over four sessions, the conference brought together diplomats, scholars, government officials and those with personal involvement in the peace agreement process. It explored the successes and challenges that arose as the agreement was brokered and how peacebuilding efforts impacted movement towards democracy in the Southeast Asia region.

The conference was supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Defence.

# Acknowledgements

## Asialink Advisory Council (2022)

### **Mr Peter Varghese, AO – Chair**

Former Secretary,  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade,  
Chancellor of The University of Queensland

### **Professor Adrian Little**

Pro Vice-Chancellor International  
University of Melbourne

### **Professor Alan Pert**

Director, Melbourne School of Design  
University of Melbourne

### **Ms Annette Shun Wah**

Director  
OzAsia Festival Adelaide

### **Associate Professor Claire Roberts**

Art History, Faculty of Arts  
University of Melbourne

### **Ms Corrina Bertram**

Partner and Board Member  
KPMG Australia

### **Professor Duncan Maskell**

Vice Chancellor  
University of Melbourne

### **Mr Edward Myer**

Strategic Partnerships Manager  
Carsales.Com

### **Mr Innes Willox**

Group Chief Executive  
AiGroup

### **The Hon Lisa Singh**

Director  
Australia India Institute

### **Ms Martine Letts**

Group CEO  
Asialink

### **Professor Michael Wesley**

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Global Culture &  
Engagement  
University of Melbourne

### **Professor Paul Kofman**

Dean of the Faculty of Business and Economics  
University of Melbourne

### **Professor Sarah Biddulph**

Head of the Asian Law Centre, Faculty of Law,  
and Assistant DVCI China  
University of Melbourne

### **Mr Tarandeep Singh Ahuja**

Partner, McKinsey and Company  
Chair, Asialink Business Advisory Council

### **Professor Vedi Hadiz**

Director and Professor, Asia Institute and  
Assistant DVCI Indonesia  
University of Melbourne

### **Professor Yong Zhao**

Foundation Distinguished Professor in the School  
of Education at the University of Kansas  
Professor in Educational Leadership at the  
Melbourne Graduate School of Education

## Asialink Business Advisory Council (2022)

### **Mr Tarandeep Singh Ahuja – Chair**

Partner  
McKinsey and Company

### **Ms Catriona Jackson**

Chief Executive & Board Director  
Universities Australia

### **Mr Bao Hoang**

Founder and CEO Roll'd  
Member of the Commonwealth Government  
JobMaker Board

### **Ms Sue MacLeman**

Advisor  
MTPConnect

### **Mr Jason Chang**

CEO and Managing Director  
EMR Capital

### **Professor Paul Kofman**

Dean – Faculty of Business and Economics  
University of Melbourne

### **Mr Innes Willox**

Group Chief Executive  
AiGroup

### **Ms Martine Letts**

Group CEO  
Asialink



## Asia Education Foundation Advisory Council (2022)

### **Dr Jim Watterson – Chair**

Dean, Melbourne Graduate School of Education  
University of Melbourne

### **Ms Martine Letts – Deputy Chair**

Group CEO  
Asialink

### **Mr Andrew Smith**

CEO  
Education Services Australia

### **Mr David de Carvalho**

CEO  
Australian Curriculum, Assessment and  
Reporting Authority

### **Mr Edmund Misson**

Deputy CEO  
Australian Institute for Teaching and School  
Leadership

### **Mr Malcolm Elliot**

President  
Australian Primary Principals Association Inc

### **Mr Andrew Pierpoint**

Executive Director  
Australian Secondary Principals Association

### **Mr Daryl Buchanan**

Associate Chief Executive: Operations  
Independent Schools Australia

### **Mr Jason Borton**

Executive Branch Manager  
ACT Education Directorate

### **Dr Hilary Hughes**

Director, Community Languages  
& International programs  
Department of Education, NSW

### **Ms Kerry Hudson**

Executive Director, Teaching and Learning  
Services Department of Education, NT

### **Ms Robyn Rosengrave**

Executive Director, Curriculum, Teaching and  
Learning  
Department of Education, QLD

### **Ms Cathy Schultz**

Director, Curriculum Support  
Department for Education, SA

### **Ms Kathryn Wakefield**

Manager, Education and Training International  
Department of Education, Tasmania

### **Ms Linda Vaughn**

Executive Director, International Division  
Department of Training and Education, VIC

### **Mr Martin Clery**

Executive Director, Statewide Services  
Department of Education, WA

### **Mr Chris Higgins**

Director – Education  
Asia Education Foundation

### **Ms Jennifer Star OAM**

Director – International  
Asia Education Foundation

## Patrons (2022)

### **Mr Sidney Myer AM**

### **Mr Carillo Gantner AC**

### **Mr Baillieu Myer AC**

### **Professor Wang Gungwu CBE**

## Advisors (2022)

### **Dr Donald Greenlees**

Senior Advisor

### **Professor Louise Edwards**

Senior Advisor

### **Mr John McCarthy AO**

Senior Advisor

### **Professor Tony Milner AM**

Professorial Fellow and Senior Advisor

### **Mr Colin Heseltine**

Senior Advisor

## Leadership Team (2022)

### **Ms Martine Letts**

Group CEO, Asialink

### **Mr Leigh Howard**

CEO, Asialink Business

### **Dr Pippa Dickson**

Director, Asialink Arts

### **Ms Julia Gong**

Director, Confucius Institute

### **Ms Kamalini Kandasamy**

Director, Finance and Operations

### **Mr Chris Higgins**

Director – Education, Asia Education Foundation

### **Ms Jennifer Star OAM**





Director – International, Asia Education  
Foundation



Sidney Myer Asia Centre  
The University of Melbourne  
Parkville, Victoria 3010 Australia

**T:** +61 (0)3 8344 4800  
**E:** [info@asialink.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:info@asialink.unimelb.edu.au)

[www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au)

 @Asialink  
 @Asialink.au  
 @Asialink.au  
 @Asialink.au