



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

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28 February 2017

The Hon. Julie Bishop MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs

The Hon. Steven Ciobo MP
Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment

By email: whitepaper@dfat.gov.au

Dear Ministers,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the government's development of a new foreign policy white paper.

The University of Sydney is pleased to provide the attached submission in which we highlight some of our work as it relates to the development of key principles that we believe should underpin the development of Australia's foreign policy in 2017.

Our submission is intended to complement others from the higher education sector, including those made by Universities Australia and the Group of Eight.

We have also encouraged individual centres and academics from the University of Sydney to provide their own input in their areas of interest and expertise.

We hope you find this submission useful, and look forward to being involved in the further development of the white paper.

Yours sincerely,

(Signature removed for electronic distribution)

Michael Spence

Attachment University of Sydney submission to the Australian Government's Foreign Policy White Paper, February 2017



University of Sydney submission to the Australian Government's Foreign Policy White Paper

February 2017

The University of Sydney welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the development of the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper. In this submission we have elected to showcase some examples of our work in research and education that have had tangible impacts on Australia's safety, security, the economy and our international reputation.

These examples respond to all six of the **white paper discussion questions** presented in the call for public submissions, and support the following answers to each discussion topic from the perspective of our institution:

1. **National interests:** safety and security of our own population, in the Asia Pacific and globally; including food security and improved standards of living for nations in our region; continued economic prosperity; an enhanced reputation for mature and peaceful leadership in our region.
2. **Key relationships and global trends:** recognition of the importance of Asia in the coming decades; thought and action leadership on environmental safety and security; leadership in emerging technologies and services — especially in health, resources, education, finance, agriculture, engineering and advanced manufacturing.
3. **Maximising our influence:** exploring new options for soft diplomacy, including research collaboration, educating future regional leaders, and building partnerships and capacity for sustainable economic development in our region.
4. **Grasping economic opportunities:** recognition of the importance of international education to Australia's current and future prosperity; recognition of the past long-term impacts of research topics, often chosen through the individual interests of our talented people and their desire to resolve pressing local and international problems; recognition of the roles universities play in global industry in both research and development, and training of workers for the new economy.
5. **Threats to security:** recognition of the potential for universities to contribute understanding to these challenges; avoiding anti-intellectualism in the quest for answers to global threats.
6. **Our assets and capabilities:** recognition of our universities and other public good research institutions as intellectual and economic assets. Include our experts or their work in formulating our international strategies, and continue to strengthen the overall capacity of our universities to contribute positively to social cohesion and economic security through their core missions of education, research and knowledge translation.



We hope the government and others with an interest in the development of Australia's foreign policy will consider the below as but a few tangible examples of how the University of Sydney, and Australia's higher education sector in general, contribute to the promotion of these shared values and interests.

Drawing on these examples, we conclude by offering the following six **recommended principles for incorporation** into the white paper, in support of the Australian higher education sector's continuing ability to achieve international outcomes such as those described by our examples below:

1. **International education risk assessment.** Ensure that all Australian government decisions about foreign policy matters take into account their potential impact on Australia's international education exports, and particularly in relation to students from China and other key markets.
2. **People-to-people links.** Continue to work with Australian universities to increase the numbers of Australian students studying or otherwise spending time in Asia through programs like the New Colombo Plan. Work with Australian universities to expand programs to enable more outstanding students from developing countries, and other nations of strategic priority to the nation, to study in Australia.
3. **Asian language skills and cultural competency.** Work with state and territory governments, schools and universities to increase the number of Australian students who are proficient in at least one Asian language.
4. **Domestic higher education reform.** Progress domestic higher education reform to continue improving the quality and capacity of Australia's higher education system.
5. **Research investment and partnerships.**
 - Continue to grow investment in public-good research to help ensure that Australia's universities continue to produce internationally competitive research outcomes and perform well in global university rankings.
 - Support collaborative research between Australian and international research organisations, business and industry in areas of mutual strategic priority.
 - Grow Australia's investment in international development research programs in the region, and support cross-sector and inter-disciplinary development partnerships focused on achieving sustainable development in the region.
6. **Educational partnerships.**
 - Support Australia's universities to continue to strengthen their education linkages with organisations in Asia and elsewhere, and to establish campuses or virtual presences in countries of strategic priority.
 - Continue to pursue multi-lateral and bi-lateral trade agreements with Asian countries to facilitate the flow of students and researchers between countries, and the recognition of Australian education qualifications throughout Asia.
 - Help Australian universities to diversify the international student intakes from China into other key markets in Asia, South Asia and elsewhere over the long term.

People-to-people links

The international students we educate, and our international research collaborators, form strong interpersonal links between Australia and other nations, which persist for many years and can prove beneficial to our nation at unexpected times. Associate Professor Robyn Alders of the School of Life and Environmental Sciences Charles Perkins Centre says that: “One example comes from the Avian Influenza Pandemic of 2004 to 2009, when researchers in Australian and Indonesia were able to work together on the H5N1 virus with complete trust and understanding thanks to linkages made possible because the Indonesian researchers had studied in Australia and had maintained strong connections with their Australian supervisors/mentors and other colleagues.”

The importance of these links have both foreign policy and more general federal policy implications. Our researchers must retain the intellectual freedom, freedom of international engagement and funding security to enable them to forge links of genuine intellectual interest with colleagues in other countries. Our international students must feel welcome, must receive a high-quality and high-value education and must be well-supported in Australia in order to forge personal links here and return to their home countries with a positive attitude towards our nation and the education they received here. Any barriers and difficulties experienced by international students, or perceived injustices in respect to their domestic counterparts, are missed opportunities for Australia to engage in positive people-to-people links overseas.

Alumni influencers

Related to the above, many of our international student alumni go on to influential careers in government, the private sector and elsewhere and in these positions are able to advance values and interests at least partly promoted by their Australian education. We provide here just four examples from the thousands:

- Justice Weng Kwai Mah of Malaysia (USyd LLM (1986) Hon Fellow (1994)) is now a law firm consultant and former Justice of the second highest court in Malaysia, known for decisions such as declaring the Peaceful Assembly Act unconstitutional for criminalising freedom of assembly.
- Dr Baiqing Zhang of China (USyd PhD (1993)) is a Hubei province politician, Chairman of the association of returning overseas alumni in Hubei, and Deputy to the 11th people's congress of China.
- Ms Marissa Anita of Indonesia (USyd MMediaPrac (2007)) is an experienced TV journalist and Indonesia's leading quality television personality.
- Dr Sarah Cooper of the United States of America (USyd PhD (2010) Materials Physics) was one of the 2016 Silicon Valley 40 Under 40, an Insights Success 50 Most Empowering Women in Business, and a 2015 Silicon Valley Women of Influence.

As noted above, the international student experience plays a large part in the attitude these successful individuals will have towards Australia when they return to their home countries. Alumni influence is also an important area in which Australia's foreign policy can promote the soft diplomacy of education by, for example, expanding undergraduate, postgraduate and postdoctoral scholarship programs available to citizens of nations in our region that are no longer considered to be 'developing', or with whom, for other reasons, we would seek to be strategically involved – e.g. Indonesia.



International expertise

Australian experts are some of the best ambassadors we have for the shared values and interests of our nation. Their own interests, values and dedication provide rich material for Australia's engagement with other nations and with international organisations. Their expertise should be recognised as an opportunity for international engagement and advice in the development of foreign policy, and as a key intellectual and practical resource in response to specific situations of an international nature that may arise. Their recommendations, if incorporated into foreign policy and responses to international incidents, have the opportunity to improve outcomes in many different areas, including diplomacy, human health and quality of life, environmental protection, and Australia's international reputation.

Health disaster responses

The Marie Bashir Institute and Centre for International Security Studies (CISS) released the final report "Saving Lives: The Civil-Military Response to the 2014 Ebola Outbreak in West Africa", making key recommendations for future crises. The report analysed the role that various humanitarian agencies, the United Nations, and foreign and domestic military forces performed throughout the 2014 outbreak in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The report was co-authored by CISS member Dr Adam Kamradt-Scott, who led the fieldwork with researchers from the Queen Mary University of London and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Eight key recommendations were made for the handling of future large-scale health crises, including expanding the terms of reference for the UN High-Level Panel on Global Response to Health Crises to include civilian–military cooperation, and immediately and substantially increasing international investment to address capacity gaps in disaster management and national health systems.

Food security and trade

Professor Robert Park is the Judith & David Coffey Chair of Sustainable Agriculture and Director of Cereal Rust Research at the University of Sydney's Plant Breeding Institute. His work on rust diseases of cereals continues one of the longest-running research projects in Australia. His group works closely with all cereal breeders in Australia to provide support in rust-resistance breeding. He is also actively involved in international rust research, notably via participation in the global effort to tackle a new race of stem rust, known as Ug99, which emerged in eastern Africa in 1999 and has since spread to Yemen, Iran and South Africa. The work of this group has also made a huge contribution to improved food security in South Asia. Professor Park was awarded an Alexander von Humboldt research award in Germany in 1995, and a Fulbright Senior Scholarship to the USA in 2010.

In recognition of his work in China, Professor Park was awarded the Friendship Award of China in 2009, the highest honour that the Chinese Government bestows on foreign experts who have made outstanding contributions to China. One of the most significant such contributions was his close involvement in a "super wheat" project undertaken with scientists in Henan. This project produced a series of wheat cultivars that between 2004 and 2009 were planted on more than 2 million hectares in the wheat zone of the Yellow River and Huai River valleys, increasing wheat yield by an estimated 2.5 billion kilograms, revenue by 260 million yuan (ca. \$49 million) and social benefit by 3.4 billion yuan (ca. \$640 million).

Gender and society

Professor Emerita Raewyn Connell of the University's School of Education and Social Work developed a theory of gender relations which emphasised that gender is a large-scale social structure, not just a matter of personal identity. Professor Connell is a founder of the research field relating to the social construction of masculinity, making her mark internationally with her book, *Masculinities* (1995, 2005), which is the most cited in the field and has been translated into nine languages. Professor Connell has been an advisor to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations Organization initiatives relating men, boys and masculinities to gender equality and peace-making.

Research and development

Our researchers, research groups and students make direct contributions to our international relationships and the safety, security and prosperity of our nation and region by way of the results of their incredibly diverse research projects and training of workers for the new knowledge economy. With respect to foreign policy and national higher education policy, of most value to our researchers are:

- opportunities to collaborate with, and receive funding from government, including DFAT;
- consistent and long-term funding sources for critical long-term projects;
- continued freedom of association with international peers;
- stable funding to support the movement of researchers and research students between countries;
- national security, defence trade, migration and visa policies that are well-integrated and strike an appropriate balance between the risks and opportunities that arise from the movement of people and ideas between countries;
- use of our researchers' expertise and their publications in the development of foreign and other policies.

Partnering with global organisations and institutions

Researchers from public and private organisations are increasingly collaborating on major "blue-sky" and applied research projects that are beyond the capacity of any single nation or company to progress effectively. Enabled by rapid advances in telecommunications, researchers based in Australia's universities are important contributors to many of these global research networks — extending the frontiers of knowledge and finding ways to apply the discoveries to develop new technologies and in some cases address some of the most pressing challenges of our times.

For example, a select and very small collection of labs worldwide, including the Quantum Nanoscience Laboratory at the University of Sydney headed by Professor David Reilly, is collaborating with Microsoft on quantum computing. Professor Reilly's group is world-leading in understanding the interface between quantum physics and the grand engineering challenges of building reliable quantum machines. The group is seeking to manipulate the strange behaviour of matter at the scale of a billionth of a metre to build a new generation of technological hardware.

The University has many other key international industry–research collaborative partnerships: for example, we have more than 120 unique formal agreements with higher education and research

institutions in China alone. Australia's overall approach to foreign policy is critical in providing an environment that supports the participation of our universities, other publicly funded research organisations and industry in research collaborations with international partners.

A mathematical model to predict genocide

The University of Sydney's Atrocity Forecasting Project aims to enhance our capacity for forecasting mass atrocities and genocide globally and in the Asia-Pacific region to provide tools for analysts and policymakers. This project looks at more than a dozen predictors of atrocities, including the occurrence of coups or assassinations, conflicts in neighbouring states, and a high rate of infant mortality. When compared against a commonly used tool developed by a CIA funded team, the Atrocity Forecasting Project results were not only accurate but outperformed this model. For the project's 2011–2015 forecast, the nation with the highest predicted risk of atrocities was the Central African Republic, which suffered sectarian violence between 2013 and 2015 that had not been widely anticipated. The project's 2015–2020 forecast has now been released.

Strengthening women's leadership in Timor-Leste

Through a subcontract with the Australian Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and with funding from DFAT, Professor Robyn Alders and her team from the University of Sydney have worked with the Timorese Department of Veterinary Services on the Timor-Leste Village Poultry Health and Biosecurity Program. The project focused on:

- building capacity in the sustainable control of Newcastle disease in village chickens in support of food and nutrition security;
- the introduction of community vaccinators;
- strengthening the effectiveness of local entrepreneurs associated with the village chicken value chain;
- improving understanding of feasible biosecurity practices under village conditions;
- effective participation of and communication with communities who spoke little Tetum with low levels of literacy; and, crucially,
- gender equity across program activities.

The program sought to involve men and women in all activities and at all levels. During the program our Program Coordinator, Dr Joanita Jong, was recognised for her work by Timor-Leste's Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and promoted to be the Director of the Directorate of Veterinary Services. She is now one of four women in a senior Ministry leadership team of 37 people.

Torture prevention program saves lives

University of Sydney researchers have developed an unprecedented approach to torture prevention, partnering with universities in Sri Lanka and Nepal to implement organisational changes in the police and military in those countries.

Despite extensive efforts to prevent torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment, these practices remain endemic in many parts of the world, particularly in the context of security and law



enforcement. Principal Investigator Professor Danielle Celermajer says, “unlike existing training tools, our method is not centred on simply approaching the problem of torture in terms of non-compliance with, or non-enforcement of, laws. Instead of a legalistic approach we want to apply what our research tells us about how social and cultural norms regarding the practice of torture are formed. We will be working on the values, behaviours and entrenched views of those involved in torture, understanding that only by shifting these can we change the treatment of prisoners and combatants.”

The project focused on sites where torture has long been systemic, in police and military institutions in Nepal and Sri Lanka. Reform efforts have led to some improvements, however, in certain parts of these institutions and countries, ill treatment of detainees remains fairly routine. The project has aimed to create new models of cooperation, with a view to developing sustainable and contextually sensitive solutions to entrenched human rights problems. "For the first time this research will bring together the best experts in the world from a range of disciplines to establish an understanding, based on their different perspectives, of how torture becomes embedded and normalised in institutions," Associate Professor Celermajer said. This international team's expertise comes from sociology, law, philosophy, political science, psychology and anthropology. They worked with researchers based in both target countries, who conducted research in to the military and police, as well as with NGOs and the victims of torture. The findings were translated into training modules for the police and military in Nepal and Sri Lanka.

The man who saved a million brains

Professor Creswell (Cres) Eastman of the Sydney Medical School has been instrumental in projects aimed at abolishing Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD) in the developing world. Over the past decades, Professor Eastman and his teams have worked in Malaysia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, China and Tibet to help prevent the disorders, which can affect the children of iodine-deficient mothers with a range of defects including mental retardation, deafness, and speech and physical impairments. His transformative work with populations in remote areas of China earned him the title of ‘the man who saved a million brains’. During his first visits to Tibet, Professor Eastman discovered that 13 per cent of the population were born with cretinism as the result of iodine deficiency. His current focus is on the recurring problem of IDD in Australian and Thai populations.

Summary of our recommended principles in relation to foreign policy and the higher education sector

Given the above, we suggest that the foreign policy white paper would benefit from incorporating the following principles in relation to the higher education and research sector:

- 1. International education risk assessment.** Ensure that all Australian government decisions about foreign policy matters take into account their potential impact on Australia’s international education exports, and particularly in relation to students from China and other key markets.
- 2. People-to-people links.** Continue to work with Australian universities to increase the numbers of Australian students studying or otherwise spending time in Asia through programs like the New Colombo Plan. Work with Australian universities to expand programs to enable more outstanding students from developing countries, and other nations of strategic priority to the nation.



3. **Asian language skills and cultural competency.** Work with state and territory governments, schools and universities to increase the number of Australian students who are proficient in at least one Asian language.
4. **Domestic higher education reform.** Progress domestic higher education reform to continue improving the quality and capacity of Australia's higher education system.
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 - Continue to pursue multilateral and bilateral trade agreements with Asian countries to facilitate the flow of students and researchers between countries, and the recognition of Australian education qualifications throughout Asia.
 - Help Australian universities to diversify the international student intakes from China into other key markets in Asia, South Asia and elsewhere over the long term.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission to the development of the Foreign Policy White Paper. The University of Sydney looks forward to working with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in this policy development phase and beyond.

Ends