



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

DEPARTMENT OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND TRADE

Working in the
National Interest





SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is committed to the effective pursuit of Australia's national interest in an international environment that is complex and challenging.

Every member of our staff contributes importantly to fulfilling our responsibility to advance the national interest. We deploy our people in Australia and in our network of overseas posts to improve the security and prosperity of all Australians, to enhance regional and global cooperation and to promote a realistic and positive image of Australia internationally. The department's lead role in delivering government outcomes in foreign and trade policy and in consular and passport services is critical to achieving our goals.

The aim of this document – *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: Working in the National Interest* – is to provide a practical guide about what we do and why we do it. It describes key aspects of the

department's work, role, culture and values. It outlines what we do to achieve our goals – often in difficult and unpredictable circumstances.

This guide is intended to provide easily accessible information to the wider community about the department's role and capabilities and the services we provide to Australians both in Australia and overseas.

Michael L'Estrange
Secretary

May 2007



WHAT WE DO – OUR ROLE AND ASSETS

The department's role is to advance Australia's national interest. This involves working to strengthen Australia's security and enhance Australia's prosperity.

The department provides foreign and trade policy advice to the Government. We work with other government agencies to ensure that Australia's pursuit of its global, regional and bilateral interests is coordinated effectively.

DFAT is the lead agency managing Australia's international presence. We manage a network of 89 overseas posts in five continents and we have over 3400 staff - including locally engaged staff - located in Canberra, state and territory offices and overseas posts.

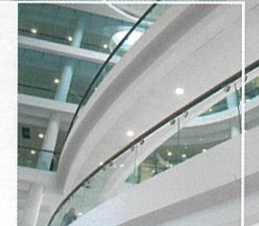
Our officers are highly skilled at their work which includes developing and implementing foreign and trade policy, negotiating international agreements and delivering high quality consular assistance. This business is often conducted in one of the 29 foreign languages in which DFAT staff are proficient. We have an information, communications

and technology (ICT) platform that allows us to transmit classified and unclassified messages quickly across our overseas network.

The department's objective is to reduce the risks and make the most of opportunities for Australia in our regional and global environment. Our purpose is to ensure that our structures – such as procedures for advising ministers, consular contingency planning, passport services, ICT platforms, staff deployment strategies, effective resource management and the scope of overseas representation - are carefully targeted to meet our goals.

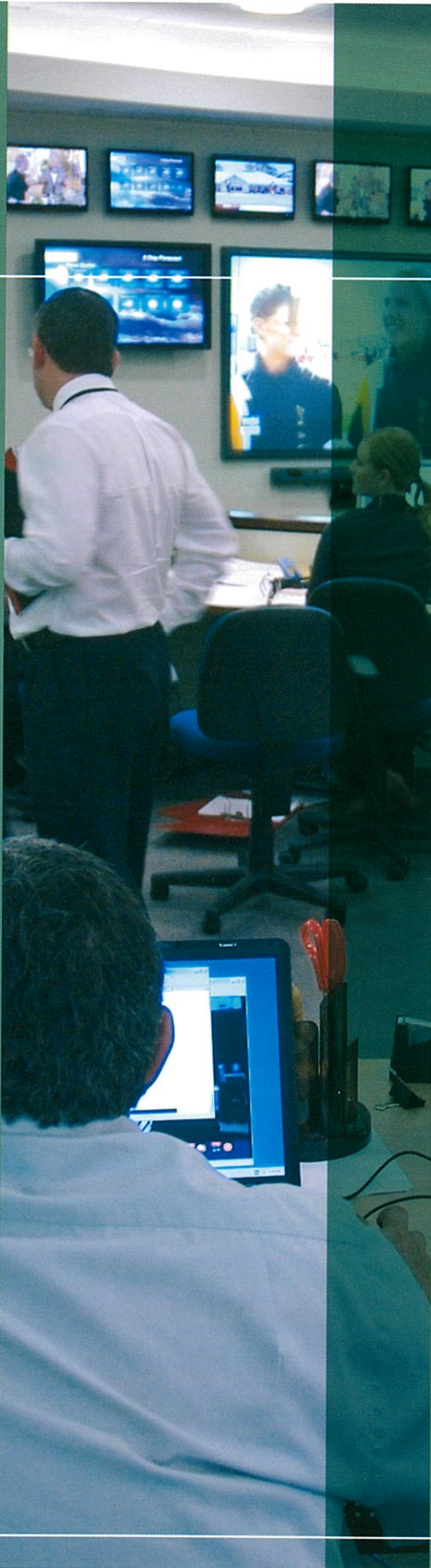


OUR PRESENCE ACROSS THE GLOBE



- Posts managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (89 posts).
- ▲ Consulates managed by Austrade (19 posts).
- Offices of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Australia (10 offices).
- ◆ In Honiara, the department maintains a coordination office for the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands.
- ★ In Ramallah, the Australian Government maintains the Australian Representative Office.
- ✚ In Taipei, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry maintains the Australian Commerce and Industry Office.

May 2007



WHY WE DO IT – OUR GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The department works to ensure Australia's national interests are protected and advanced in our bilateral, regional and multilateral relations. Our key **goals** and **strategies** are:

To enhance the security of Australia and Australians at home and overseas

- *by working with bilateral and regional partners and multilateral institutions to promote stability, democracy and good governance, particularly in our region*
- *by strengthening our bilateral relationships and regional and global cooperation to reduce the threat to Australians posed by terrorism, weapons proliferation and transnational crime*

To contribute to Australia's prosperity by promoting growth in Australia's economy, employment and standard of living

- *by creating economic opportunities for Australians, opening markets to Australian goods, services and investment, and improving the business environment*
- *by projecting a realistic and positive image of Australia as a partner in trade, a destination for overseas tourists and students, a reliable partner in business and a tolerant, open and egalitarian community*

To help Australian travellers and Australians overseas

- *by providing efficient and effective consular and passport services to Australians overseas.*



HOW WE DO IT - KEY ACTIVITIES

To enhance the security of Australia and Australians at home and overseas

We do so by

- maintaining and strengthening security relationships with key strategic partners
- strengthening dialogue and cooperation with regional partners
- combating international terrorism in cooperation with allies and regional partners
- contributing to countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction through strengthened international cooperation, standards and safeguards
- combating transnational crimes, including drug trafficking, money laundering and people smuggling through practical cooperation with other countries and multilateral institutions, including the United Nations
- supporting institution building and good governance with regional partners
- working with regional forums, including the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, the East Asia Summit and the Pacific Islands Forum to enhance their ability to strengthen the region's security
- encouraging expanding international application of universal human rights standards, the rule of law and democratic principles
- contributing to the development of a strong international legal framework, and
- maintaining secure government communications and strengthening security at Australia's overseas missions.



HOW WE DO IT - KEY ACTIVITIES

To contribute to growth in Australia's economy, employment and standard of living

We do so by

- promoting market access for Australian goods and services and the maintenance of the global rules-based trading system through the World Trade Organization and Australia's leadership of the Cairns Group of agricultural exporters
- negotiating free trade agreements (FTAs) that open markets for Australian business and investment and reduce trade barriers
- implementing FTAs to derive maximum benefits for Australian business, including through targeted trade advocacy programs
- promoting practical regional and international action to address global environmental issues, including climate change
- promoting free trade and investment, economic reform and an improved business environment in the region through APEC and other regional bodies
- working through multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to promote sustainable development, and
- providing information and assistance to Australian businesses trading and operating overseas.

To help Australian travellers and Australians overseas

We do so by

- advising and supporting Australians travelling and living overseas, as well as their families in Australia
- planning for and responding to major international crises or natural disasters in order to help Australians affected by them
- informing Australian travellers of the risks and threats they could face overseas and the extent of Australian consular assistance, and
- providing a secure and efficient passport service.

DELIVERING BEST PRACTICE CONSULAR AND PASSPORT SERVICES

The delivery of high quality consular and passport services is one of the Government's key expectations of the department.

We bring a number of assets to this task:

- staff located in Canberra, state and territory offices and across our network of overseas posts who are trained and experienced in dealing with consular issues
- consular access in 169 locations overseas through our posts, honorary consulates and consular cooperation arrangements with other countries
- a 24 hour seven day a week Consular Emergency Centre in Canberra
- up-to-date and accessible travel advice through the *smartraveller* website and telephone service
- response mechanisms that allow the DFAT Crisis Centre, consular hotline and emergency response teams to deploy within hours of major crises affecting Australians, and
- access to passport information and services through our overseas posts, state and territory passport offices, the seven day a week Australian Passport Information Service call centre and the passport website.



WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT OUTCOMES

Delivering whole-of-government outcomes that advance our foreign and trade policy and consular interests is central to the department's role. As the number of government agencies with international interests grows, the department's expertise and experience is critical to ensuring the coordinated delivery of policy and programs overseas.

An example of the department's effective contribution to government outcomes is our leadership of the multi-agency Inter-Departmental Emergency Task Force (IDETF), convened in response to consular crises overseas. Often involving ten or more agencies, the IDETF serves as the key coordination point for liaising with and directing emergency response teams, implementing public communications strategies and briefing ministers. They ensure that Government messages are delivered from Canberra and understood on the ground.

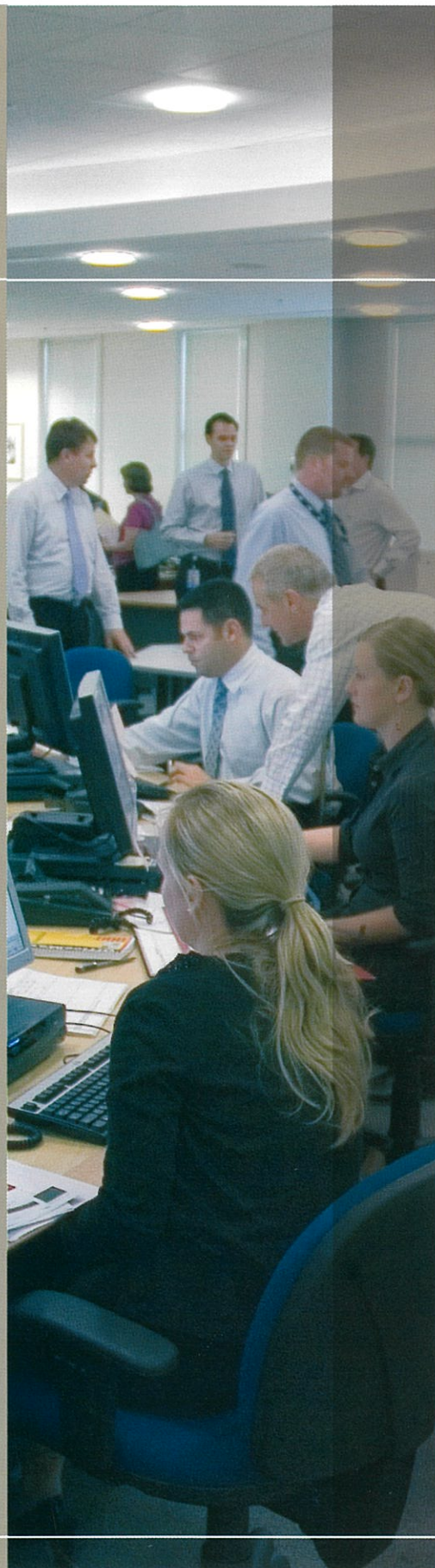
The department also coordinates whole-of-government approaches in other areas such as international security, the environment and trade negotiations.

PROMOTING A POSITIVE IMAGE OF AUSTRALIA

The department's public diplomacy (PD) activities project a positive and contemporary image of Australia and promote a clear understanding of Government policy and programs. They are tied explicitly to advancing our broader foreign and trade policy goals. Our role in PD programs includes coordinating activities such as:

- trade advocacy programs in key markets to promote free trade (with Austrade)
- Australia's participation in world expositions and international education fairs (with a wide range of federal and state government agencies)
- the International Media Visits Program, the Special Visits Program, and the International Cultural Visits Program that bring decision makers to Australia to enhance their understanding of Australian society and policy, and
- major cultural promotions in target countries (with the Australia International Cultural Council, the Australia Council and other cultural bodies).





VALUES AND CULTURE

Our professionalism stems from the commitment of all our staff to uphold and promote the Australian Public Service Values and Code of Conduct, the department's Code of Conduct for Overseas Service and the Code of Conduct for locally engaged staff overseas.



The department's ability to deliver high quality foreign and trade policy outcomes is based on:

Our commitment to

- Australia, its people and values
- the highest standards of ethical and personal conduct as representatives of Australia
- the protection of classified and other sensitive information
- integrity and fairness in our dealings with colleagues and the public
- sound corporate governance, and
- understanding different cultures, both in Australia and overseas

Our ability to

- think strategically and make sound judgments that advance Australian policy
- communicate Australia's national interests clearly
- provide high quality and timely advice to the Government

- deliver high quality service to Australians at home and overseas, and
- adapt quickly and effectively to meet new challenges and operate in new environments

Our leadership and outcomes-oriented culture that allows us to

- get the best from people
- help staff reach their potential through training and development, and
- recognise and reward high achievement

Our 'working smarter' practices that help us to

- set clear priorities
- manage time efficiently
- identify and deal with emerging issues, and
- balance our work and private lives.



LOOKING AHEAD - RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The department's operating environment will continue to pose risks and offer opportunities.

The unpredictable nature of the external environment has the potential to affect Australia's security and economic interests. We need to manage strategically our staff, our network of overseas posts and our communications systems to mitigate these risks while striving to reach our key goals and objectives in the national interest.

We also require informed judgment, flexibility and carefully focused activism to take advantage of opportunities that arise in a dynamic international environment, including opportunities for expanded trade access, new security cooperation and enhanced dialogue with regional partners.

At home, we face the challenge of recruiting, retaining and training skilled staff. Maintaining the skills and organisational flexibility to deploy staff to deal with new challenges will remain a key priority. We will also need to continue to manage our resources effectively and efficiently.

Over the next three years, the department's goals will continue to reflect important elements of continuity. But we will need to pursue them in ways that are innovative and adaptable, and that meet the challenges of a changing global environment.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Cover: (left) Ambassador to East Timor Margaret Twomey monitoring the East Timorese Presidential elections, April 2007. (centre) Hugh Robilliard, Katy Lin, and Ruth Hill, 2006 Graduate Trainees. Photo: Greg Power, TRIK Photography. (right) Inter-Departmental Emergency Task Force meeting chaired by Rod Smith PSM, First Assistant Secretary, Consular, Public Diplomacy and Parliamentary Affairs Division, March 2007.

Inside cover: (left) The Secretary, Mr Michael L'Estrange AO. Photo: Michael Jensen. (right) Seventh Round of Australia-China Free Trade Agreement Talks led by Ric Wells (second from left) Head, China Free Trade Agreement Task Force, Canberra, December 2006. Photo: Norm Plant.

Page 1: (left) Participants in the locally engaged staff leadership workshop, October 2006. Photo: Howard Moffat/AUSPIC. (right) Craig Ferguson, Kayzad Namdarian, Megan Strid, Leo Zeng, Diana Shi, Stewart McBride and Krishan Prathapan, 2006 Corporate and Financial Management Trainees. Photo: Howard Moffat/AUSPIC. (bottom right) Ambassador to Afghanistan Brett Hackett with the Mullah of Tarin Kowt Mr Maulawi Harmadullah at the opening of the Reconstruction Task Force's Trade Training School, February 2007.

Page 4: (left) Staff working in the DFAT Crisis Centre during the Yogyakarta air disaster, March 2007. (right) Minister for Defence Dr Brendan Nelson, Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr Alexander Downer, US Secretary of State Dr Condoleezza Rice and US Deputy Secretary of Defense Mr Gordon England at the Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations, Washington, December 2006.

Page 5: (left) Technical Officer Peter Fox monitors the global communications network. (right) Ambassador to Indonesia Bill Farmer AO and Embassy staff paying tribute to the victims of the 2004 Embassy bombing, September 2006.

Page 6: (left) Minister for Trade Mr Warren Truss and Chinese Minister of Commerce Mr Bo Xilai at the Australia-China Joint Ministerial Economic Commission meeting, Sydney, October 2006. Photo: Jason McCormack.

Page 7: (left) Mark Rossiter and Nathan Sliwka in the Canberra Passport Office. Photo: Michael Jensen. (right) Ambassador to Turkey Jean Dunn with a young evacuee from Lebanon at the port of Mersin, July 2006. Photo: Stuart Clarke.

Page 8: Estelle Parker (second from left) with Australian Defence Force and Samoan Police Force members of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) undertaking community outreach, April 2007.



Page 9: (left) Mr Paddy Japaljarri Stewart, Chairman, Warlukurlangu Artists Association and Julienne Hince, then Director, Northern Territory Office. (centre) Ambassador to East Timor Margaret Twomey (third from right), Commander of the Joint Task Force in East Timor Brigadier Mal Rerden (second from left) and other Joint Task Force members present sporting equipment to Sao Miquel primary school, Australia Day 2007. (right) Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr Greg Hunt.

Page 10: Staff working in the DFAT Crisis Centre, March 2007.

Page 11: (left) Jacqui Rabel (second from left) and members of RAMSI undertaking community outreach, April 2007. Photo: John Taisia, Access Plus. (right) Ms Lucy Liu, Language Tutor, Tony Walter and Dr Ze Lin Li, Language Tutor, DFAT language training unit. Photo: Howard Moffat/AUSPIC.

Page 12: (left) Krishan Prathapan and Belinda Waldron, Corporate and Financial Management Trainees. Photo: Greg Power, TRIK Photography. (right) Louise Hand, Deputy Head of Mission, Jakarta and students from Muhammadiyah University in Yogyakarta, December 2006.

*unless otherwise indicated names and titles are in order of appearance from left to right.

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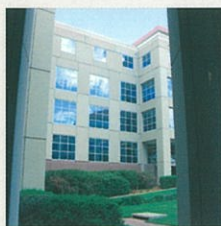
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