



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Diplomatic Footprint Review

November 2022

EDRMS Ref: s47E(d)

A longstanding problem

s47E(d)

Alex Oliver 2020 *Lowy Interpreter*

“It’s become fashionable, recently, to lament the parlous state of DFAT’s funding...Sadly, this is not a new problem. It’s one we exposed in the Lowy Institute’s 2009 *Diplomatic Deficit* report, revisited two years later, and on a monotonously regular basis thereafter. A decade later, the evidence those reports uncovered has not been addressed: that the resourcing of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has flatlined, not just in the past couple of years, but in a crushing bipartisan effort over more than three decades. During the same period, the country’s GDP has tripled, and its defence expenditure more than that. Yet Australia has around 90 fewer diplomats posted overseas in its small diplomatic network than it did in 1989...Australia...has one of the smallest diplomatic networks of all developed nations – ranked 27, in fact, among 61 OECD, G20 and Asian countries, and smaller than those of Chile, Portugal, Hungary and Greece.”

“It is a trite observation that Australia faces one of the most challenging international environments in a century. At a time when our instruments of international relations should be at their peak, they are – save for the very healthy Defence portfolio – at their lowest ebb ever ...These measures leave DFAT’s nominal budget at around the same level as in 2020, but when inflation is applied, even accounting for shrinking GDP forecasts, the real expenditure in 2024 will be less than that of 2014, a decade earlier. Year after year, DFAT is forced to do more with less.”

“We are skimping on diplomacy while investing heavily in defence. Expenditure on defence is on track to cross the ‘magic’ 2% of GDP this year, increasing steadily across the forward estimates. Yet funding for diplomacy will fall to just 0.08% of GDP by 2024 (yes, less than a tenth of one percent)...Australia’s international policy infrastructure is in danger of atrophy to the point of paralysis. We have had ample warning.”

Findings

s47C(1), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

With a much more contested and complex geostrategic environment and rapidly shifting regional dynamics, especially in areas of high importance to Australia such as the Pacific and Southeast Asia, posts must be properly staffed and resourced to protect our interests and enhance our influence. s47C(1), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

the locations of our posts are broadly appropriate. s47C(1), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

We remain down the **bottom of the “league tables”** of countries’ overseas diplomatic missions (19th ranked in the G20; 20th in the OECD; s47C(1) and s47E(d)

we are well represented in the

Indo-Pacific; s47C(1) and s47E(d)

s47C(1), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

The consistent message from all posts in every region has been not to attempt to do diplomatic missions on a shoestring – s47C(1) and s47E(d)

s47C(1), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

s47C(1) and s47E(d)

Levels and seniority should be kept under close review. s47C(1), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

Apprenticeships are central to our long term survival. s47C(1) and s47E(d)

we need to build overseas experience at junior levels (either with DFAT or relevant international organisations). s47C(1), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

s47C(1), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

the Diplomatic Academy will play an important role in pre-posting training.

Recommendations

1. s33(a)(iii), s47C(1), s47E(d)

We need facilities and programs on a scale to retain our strategic primacy s33(a)(iii), s47C(1), s47E(d)

2. s33(a)(iii), s47C(1), s47E(d)

3. s33(a)(iii), s47C(1), s47E(d)

4. s33(a)(iii), s47C(1), s47E(c), s47E(d)

5. s33(a)(iii), s47C(1), s47E(d)

6.

7.

8. **The state of our chanceries and residences** is important; s33(a)(iii), s47C(1), s47E(d)

9. **Australian citizens abroad** need more services and protection. Multiple drivers – the COVID-19 pandemic; conflict; extreme weather; demand for mental health services - are all resulting in more, and more complex, consular cases. s47C(1), s47E(d)

10. s47C(1), s47E(d) **locally engaged staff.** They are an essential part of our network, s47C(1), s47E(d)

Pages 6 - 10 (incl) - exempt in full s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)



Regional Analyses

s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

Development programs, other policy tools and bilateral cooperation in multilateral forums are all becoming more important. Ministerial and senior officials' visits are more frequent, and our posts are expected to have stronger high-level relationships as well as better soft power influence – all of which take time and resources.

s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

Australia's ability to deliver high quality interventions – within the interlinked sectors of development, political, security and economic assistance – is a geo-strategic priority.

s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

Pages 14 - 17 (incl) - exempt in full s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)



s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

DFAT's economic, infrastructure and subnational development interventions must be well serviced with the requisite resources to deliver that assistance effectively s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)



Pages 19 - 23 (incl) - exempt in full s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

Southeast Asia is a central pillar of Australia's foreign policy. The government has committed to an ambitious agenda, including the development of a Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040. s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

Pages 25 - 35 (incl) - exempt in full s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

Trade can play a significant role in supporting environmental, labour, gender, and indigenous outcomes. It can stimulate the efficient production and trade of relevant goods and services, discipline the use of harmful subsidies and other protectionist measures, encourage more inclusive participation, and regulate global value chains.

Equally we need to ensure that the push for greater sustainability does not become an excuse for protectionism at a cost to our agricultural sector in particular. s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

The government expects Australia to have a profile and reputation as a constructive contributor and our like-mindeds expect Australia to pull our weight and burden-share. s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

Pages 37 - 41 (incl) - exempt in full s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

[REDACTED]

s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

The COVID-19 pandemic brought to the fore the values and interests both our multilateral engagement strategy and our Indo-Pacific strategy had in common s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

[REDACTED]

s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

It would also contribute to a pipeline of experienced, posted officers to enhance the additional resourcing required on international security issues on return to Canberra.

s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)

Pages 45 - 64 (incl) - exempt in full s33(a)(iii), s47E(c) and s47E(d)



Afterword

In September 2022 Secretary Adams commissioned this review of DFAT's overseas footprint, s47E(d)

Input was sought from posts (112 written responses received – s47E(d) and several telecons); non-government stakeholders (input summarized in Annex A) and other government agencies.

The work was carried out by Tim Kane, s22(1)(a)(ii) and Greg Ralph.



Annex A

**Summary of virtual meetings with external stakeholders
as part of the DFAT Review of the Overseas Footprint**

s47E(d)

September 2022

s47E(d), s47F(1) and s47G(1)



Pages 67 - 75 (incl) - exempt in full s47E(d), s47F(1) and s47G(1)

Pages 76 - 78 (incl) - exempt in full s33(a)(iii) and s47E(d)

Annex C

Australian Government Embassies, High Commissions, Consulates, Multilateral Missions and Representative Offices Managed by DFAT and Austrade

Location	City	Type
Argentina	Buenos Aires	Embassy
Austria	Vienna	Embassy and Permanent Mission to the United Nations
Bangladesh	Dhaka	High Commission
Belgium	Brussels	Embassy and Mission to the European Union
Brazil	Brasilia	Embassy
	São Paulo	Consulate-General*
Brunei Darussalam	Bandar Seri Begawan	High Commission
Cambodia	Phnom Penh	Embassy
Canada	Ottawa	High Commission
	Toronto	Consulate-General*
Chile	Santiago	Embassy
China	Beijing	Embassy
	Chengdu	Consulate-General
	Guangzhou	Consulate-General
	Hong Kong	Consulate-General
	Shanghai	Consulate-General
	Shenyang	Consulate-General
Colombia	Bogotá	Embassy
Cook Islands	Rarotonga	High Commission
Croatia	Zagreb	Embassy
Cyprus	Nicosia	High Commission
Denmark	Copenhagen	Embassy
Egypt	Cairo	Embassy
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa	Embassy
Federated States of Micronesia	Pohnpei	Embassy
Fiji	Suva	High Commission
France	Paris	Embassy and Permanent Delegation to UNESCO
	Paris	Delegation to the OECD
French Polynesia (France)	Papeete	Consulate-General
Germany	Berlin	Embassy
	Frankfurt	Consulate-General*
Ghana	Accra	High Commission
Greece	Athens	Embassy
India	New Delhi	High Commission

Location	City	Type
	Chennai	Consulate-General
	Kolkata	Consulate-General
	Mumbai	Consulate-General
Indonesia	Jakarta	Embassy
	Jakarta ASEAN	Mission
	Bali (Denpasar)	Consulate-General
	Makassar	Consulate-General
	Surabaya	Consulate-General
Iran	Tehran	Embassy
Iraq	Baghdad	Embassy
Ireland	Dublin	Embassy
Israel	Tel Aviv	Embassy
Italy	Rome	Embassy and Permanent Mission to the FAO
	Milan	Consulate-General*
Japan	Tokyo	Embassy
	Osaka	Consulate-General*
Jordan	Amman	Embassy
Kenya	Nairobi	High Commission
Kiribati	Tarawa	High Commission
Korea, Republic of	Seoul	Embassy
Kuwait	Kuwait City	Embassy
Laos	Vientiane	Embassy
Lebanon	Beirut	Embassy
Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur	High Commission
Malta	Malta	High Commission
Marshall Islands, Republic of the	Majuro	Embassy
Mauritius	Port Louis	High Commission
Mexico	Mexico City	Embassy
Mongolia	Ulaanbaatar	Embassy
Morocco	Rabat	Embassy
Myanmar	Yangon	Embassy
Nauru	Nauru	High Commission
Nepal	Kathmandu	Embassy
Netherlands	The Hague	Embassy
New Caledonia (France)	Noumea	Consulate-General
New Zealand	Wellington	High Commission
	Auckland	Consulate-General*
Nigeria	Abuja	High Commission
Niue	Alofi	High Commission

Location	City	Type
Pakistan	Islamabad	High Commission
Palau, Republic of	Koror	Embassy
Palestinian Territories	Ramallah	Australian Representative Office
Papua New Guinea	Port Moresby	High Commission
	Lae	Consulate-General
Peru	Lima	Embassy
Philippines	Manila	Embassy
Poland	Warsaw	Embassy
Portugal	Lisbon	Embassy
Qatar	Doha	Embassy
Russia	Moscow	Embassy
Samoa	Apia	High Commission
Saudi Arabia	Riyadh	Embassy
Serbia	Belgrade	Embassy
Singapore	Singapore	High Commission
Solomon Islands	Honiara	High Commission
South Africa	Pretoria	High Commission
Spain	Madrid	Embassy
Sri Lanka	Colombo	High Commission
Sweden	Stockholm	Embassy
Switzerland	Bern	Diplomatic Mission/Embassy
	Geneva	Permanent Mission to the United Nations
	Geneva	Permanent Mission to the WTO and Consulate-General
Taiwan	Taipei	Australian Representative Office
Thailand	Bangkok	Embassy and Permanent Mission to ESCAP
	Phuket	Consulate-General
Timor-Leste	Dili	Embassy
Tonga	Nuku'alofa	High Commission
Trinidad and Tobago	Port of Spain	High Commission
Turkey	Ankara	Embassy
	Çanakkale	Consulate
	Istanbul	Consulate-General
Tuvalu	Funafuti	High Commission
Ukraine	Kyiv	Embassy
United Arab Emirates	Abu Dhabi	Embassy
	Dubai	Consulate-General*
United Kingdom	London	High Commission
United States of America	Washington DC	Embassy
	Chicago	Consulate-General
	Honolulu	Consulate-General

Location	City	Type
	Houston	Consulate-General*
	Los Angeles	Consulate-General
	New York	Consulate-General
	New York	Permanent Mission to the United Nations
	San Francisco	Consulate-General*
Vanuatu	Port Vila	High Commission
Vatican City	Vatican City	Embassy to the Holy See
Vietnam	Hanoi	Embassy
	Ho Chi Minh City	Consulate-General
Zimbabwe	Harare	Embassy

* Posts managed by Austrade and providing consular services