

Coordinator, International Development Policy

Development Policy Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

New International Development Policy

Thank you for the opportunity to offer input on the New International Development Policy.

The Asia-Pacific Development, Diplomacy & Defence Dialogue (AP4D) stems from the insight that in a difficult and contested world Australia needs to use all the arms of statecraft to influence regional and global developments. It creates a new dimension in Australia's international policymaking by bringing together the skills and experiences of the development, diplomacy and defence communities to achieve insights, develop ideas and promote collaboration around shared interests.

AP4D is fully supportive of the Terms of Reference statement that the "policy will be whole-of-government and outline the use of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and non-ODA to advance a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific, alongside Australia's diplomatic, economic, defence, and security engagement." Australia's development policies are most effective when coordinated with the other tools of statecraft and aligned toward common objectives. Indeed, this is an answer to a key question posed in the Terms of Reference: "How can Australia best utilise its national strengths to enhance the impact of our development program and address multidimensional vulnerabilities?"

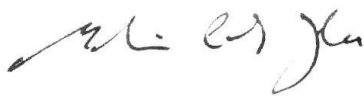
Articulating Australia's development policy in whole-of-government terms is an important first step towards integrated planning where all the tools of statecraft are aligned towards shared objectives. The critical next step is ensuring that the right systems, structures and supports are put in place in order for that integrated vision to be realised.

Drawing on input from AP4D's Advisory Group and almost 250 development, diplomacy and defence experts consulted for AP4D's options papers on a shared future with Southeast Asia and the Pacific, this submission offers recommendations on pursuing an integrated vision through the New International Development Policy. Views expressed cannot be attributed to any individuals or organisations involved in the process.

Key points of the attached submission are:

- Australia's New International Development Policy should link with other arms of statecraft, ideally as part of an integrated framework.
- The mechanisms and structures by which the 'whole-of-government' vision will be implemented should be clearly outlined.
- There are specific issues where development can link with other arms of statecraft.

Yours sincerely,



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Asia-Pacific Development, Diplomacy & Defence Dialogue Submission to the New International Development Policy

Australia's New International Development Policy should link with other arms of statecraft, ideally as part of an integrated framework

For development objectives to be achieved in the future complex world, coherence between security interests, economic interests and issues of development such as justice and the rule of law must be found. Key political figures agree that Australia must use all of the tools of statecraft at its disposal to shape the world.

*"We are committed to making aid and international development, **an essential part** of not only our international policy, but broader national security policy. It is something that I am passionate about, and **will be at the heart of our policy-making**... Quite frankly, the better I do in my job as International Development Minister, the easier it is for me to be the Minister for Defence industry. Putting this at the heart of our national security policies is critical and gives great ownership across all governments and aid policies, which means that we can get more resources for it."*

– Minister for International Development and the Pacific and Minister for Defence Industry Pat Conroy MP ([remarks to the Australian Council for International Development National Conference](#), 27 October 2022)

*"Maximising our influence means we need to use all the tools we have. Military capability matters... But we need more than that. **We need to deploy all aspects of state power** – strategic, diplomatic, social, economic... Foreign policy must work with other elements of state power to succeed – in this **the whole is greater than the sum of the parts**. Chief of the Defence Force, General Angus Campbell, has observed that the ADF, as an instrument of hard power, is best at shaping our environment and deterring behaviour that is counter to our interests: 'when it partners with all of the other elements of national power and in particular with our diplomatic service'."*

– Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator Penny Wong ([speech to the ANU National Security College](#), 23 November 2021).

A comprehensive, integrated planning framework will provide Australia with a strategic grand narrative and a unified approach to international relations that ensures its overarching policies, big programs and key agencies are pulling broadly in the same directions. Absent a coordinated, whole-of-government approach there is a danger that each arm of statecraft remains inward-looking: at best putting a ceiling on Australia's ability to influence; at worst enabling siloed dynamics whereby departments and agencies work at cross purposes.

In the United Kingdom, the government now produces an [Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy](#) rather than separate white papers. Noting the grey-zone and hybrid nature of contemporary security challenges, the Review outlines why "responding to state threats can no longer be viewed as a narrow 'national security' or 'defence' agenda. We must bring together the elements of our work across this Strategic Framework at home and overseas, and all the instruments available to government, in an integrated response."

While Australia currently has separate planning processes for defence, diplomacy and development, any measures to weave these together would be welcome. The Department of Defence is currently undertaking a Defence Strategic Review, which will be a “holistic consideration of Australia’s Defence force structure and posture” as informed by a 2020 [Defence Strategic Update](#) that recommended “working more closely with other elements of Australia’s national power.”

The New International Development Policy process should communicate with the Defence Strategic Review to inform each other and integrate perspectives. Development and defence have a clear shared interest in regional stability and security goals, and the concurrency of the two processes offers an opportunity to inform one another through cross-pollination. As well as contributing to strategically coherent planning in this instance, such integration also offers an opportunity to begin translating the growing appetite for more integrated policymaking into institutionalised practice, thus benefitting not only Australia’s development program, but the overall foreign policy apparatus.

The mechanisms and structures by which the ‘whole-of-government’ vision will be implemented should be clearly outlined

The New International Development Policy aims to “set the long-term direction” of Australia’s international development cooperation, “a vital element of our support for a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific.” This framing acknowledges the important role that all the tools in Australia’s statecraft toolkit play, including but not limited to the development program. Indeed, the Terms of Reference state that the “policy will be whole-of-government... alongside Australia’s diplomatic, economic, defence, and security engagement.”

This strongly aligns with AP4D’s vision of an integrated, ambitious foreign policy which can generate long-term influence and engagement with the region and the world. Australia’s development policies are most effective when coordinated with the other tools of statecraft and aligned toward common objectives. AP4D endorses the framing of Australia’s New International Development Policy in such a way, but it is critical that the right systems, structures and supports are put in place so that such a vision can be realised.

Part of achieving this will be a whole-of-government strategic culture. Australia’s New International Development Policy should promote greater interchange of personnel to-and-from development, diplomacy, and defence policy and program domains (including from think tanks and the private sector). This would help to break down bureaucratic silos and build a deeper, whole-of-government culture. Australia’s development program should also promote joint scenario planning and interoperability exercises.

Australia’s development program has at times been criticised as insular and rigid, in the sense that it has been difficult for new ideas and innovation to take hold. The New International Development Policy process represents an opportunity for a step change in how Australia’s development policy is formulated and implemented. A culture of policy contestability, grounded in a dispassionate analysis of what will deliver the best results, should determine priorities and allocation of resources. This applies as much to whole-of-government engagement as it does internally.

The Terms of Reference state that “Our approach will be guided by Australia’s strengths”. Just as development experiences can inform diplomatic and defence practices, there are valuable lessons that can be learnt in the other direction. The [Defence Cooperation Program](#) stands out as an

example of a long-term, relationships-driven partnership that has paid clear strategic dividends, and that can and should be emulated beyond the defence sphere.

Examples of issues where development can link with other arms of statecraft

Shaping Australia's strategic environment is a job for all three elements of statecraft. Each has a distinct and complementary role to play, applying the right resources in the right combination to be most effective.

Looking at the development of countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific – an important objective that requires long-term, consistent and disciplined engagement – there are many opportunities for development to link with other arms of statecraft. Examples include:

- ***Economic recovery and growth***

Development can link with economic diplomacy to promote economic recovery and growth. Australia's development cooperation should focus on priority areas that promote sustainable growth and development such as health, education and economic cooperation. Labour mobility can be a focus of shared engagement and activity to improve existing programs to form the basis of long-term economic relationships. Development should integrate with Australia's economic diplomacy efforts to create sophisticated, modern and respectful partnerships that are genuinely collaborative.

- ***Cyber security and digital resilience***

Development can link with whole-of-government digital and cyber strategies. A cyber security strategy for development cooperation should be included in the new development policy. There is scope to build on existing initiatives on cyber security with additional capacity-building support. This could include working together with regional countries to agree on and build regional systems, standards and protection mechanisms in line with a shared commitment to open, secure platforms that enable the exchange of social, political and economic information, including those of citizens about their governments.

Australia should explore opportunities provided by digital technology and integrate them into development programs. This is particularly relevant in the education sector where there is significant scope to expand and improve online learning and teaching. Australian development cooperation should partner with platforms that support cultural and economic connectivity for communities to increase their reach, and focus on strengthening skills and knowledge through mentoring, training and upskilling to keep pace with the rapidly evolving digital technology.

- ***Sanctions***

Development can link with legal measures such as the use of Australia's updated autonomous sanctions regime. The aim would be to promote good governance and disincentivise democratic backsliding regionally by targeting regime figures guilty of corruption and human rights abuses while sparing citizens from the negative impacts of uniform sanctions. This could involve greater cooperative partnerships with civil society organisations across the region, helping to maintain human security partnerships with peoples across the region especially in countries where governments are not representative of their citizens. Development has an interest in and a key role to play in advancing this agenda.

- ***Civil-military relations and humanitarian response and disaster relief***

Development can link with defence to model effective civil-military engagement. Australia should develop a flagship civil-military-focused short course program designed for participants from military, security, civil society organisations and civilian agencies to enhance crisis coordination and whole-of-government management of security challenges.

It should also implement a Regional Military/Civil Society Framework to manage Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) across the region. Australia's development program has an integral role in planning for disaster resilience, and can support civilian-led crisis response by working with the other arms of statecraft to deliver coordinated end-to-end sectoral capabilities to agencies that provide a first response to human security issues. Consideration should be given to ensuring primary roles for civilian capability-development and military complementarity as 'last resort', thereby promoting a model and culture for a defined role for regional militaries within their civil societies.

- ***Infrastructure***

Infrastructure investment is an issue that engages development, defence and diplomacy. Australia's development program should focus on investing in infrastructure which supports economic growth over the long term. Infrastructure financing should increasingly be about maintenance of existing infrastructure, small-scale capital works and climate adaptation, with a focus on appropriate technology, utilising renewables and making use of local materials. Casting a gender lens on infrastructure is an important element in making cost benefit analyses.

- ***Peacebuilding***

Peacebuilding is another area where development, defence and diplomacy intersect. Australia should create more capacity for conflict resolution, mediation and peacebuilding, including by restoring the Conflict and Fragility team or setting up a Peace and Conflict unit within DFAT. Such services may be particularly valuable in cases such as secessionism and independence movements. While it is a politically sensitive issue, Australia needs to look ahead strategically to plan for any potential transition by Pacific territories to new political status.

Successful delivery of such initiatives are predicated upon closer coordination between Australian Government agencies with respect to achieving common defence, development and diplomatic outcomes in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.