Australia's Global Leadership and Foreign Policy 2017–2027

ACFID Submission to the Australian Foreign Policy White Paper Taskforce

February 2017

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Introduction

1. The purpose of ACFID's Submission to the White Paper on Foreign Policy is to present an overall narrative and framework from an ACFID and civil society perspective that we believe, if applied, would positively guide Australia's foreign policy over the next decade.

2. We contend that the state-based system of foreign affairs is increasingly facing non-state-based threats and that responding to them will require States to think and work in different ways if they are to secure ongoing stability and prosperity. The effects of climate change and environmental degradation, increasing natural disasters and extreme weather, sea-level rise, water and food shortages or price spikes, shifting disease patterns, and pandemics have economic and security costs. Moreover, they are indifferent to State borders, military might and economic power.

3. Similarly, increasingly entrenched extreme poverty and rising inequality are acting as brakes on economic growth while rapidly concentrating wealth and power in the hands of the few. This is stifling our economic growth ambitions and having negative ramifications for security: from citizen unrest and protests where people are seeking to claim their rights and which have sparked a major geopolitical crisis and associated movement of people (the Arab Spring and Syria); to the rise of nationalist and isolationist sentiments and the politics of populism and demagoguery, leading to a fraying consensus on key norms such as human rights which in turn sets the stage for popular uprising to reclaim those rights.

4. We believe that these cycles of insecurity and declining prosperity can be interrupted and a way forward to secure prosperity and security in the long term can be forged through the following: 1) Taking a values-based approach to foreign policy; 2) Building peace and human security; 3) Increasing inclusive and sustainable growth; 4) Prioritising multilateralism and human rights.

5. We further believe that the strongest tool we can deploy to these ends is our aid and development program. It is simultaneously a way of projecting our values and national character towards moral ends, and at the same time pragmatically and strategically addressing root cause problems that are undermining global efforts towards security and prosperity.

How to read this Submission

6. The Submission that follows is presented in five sections. Taken together, they constitute a framework for how we can strategically focus our foreign policy efforts and ways of working in the next decade to navigate the short-term challenges, while continuing to make lasting gains for our long-term and sustained security and prosperity.

7. Individual sections can be read on their own and will provide the reader with a high-level overview of why the perspective that we present is significant, what success would look like, in diplomacy and trade, and what the aid program can be doing to achieve further impact against the strategic objective.

8. As the peak body for Australia's overseas aid, development and humanitarian non-government organisations (NGOs) we have particularly focused on the role that development

can play in securing a more stable and prosperous operating environment for Australia in a decade of uncertainty and rapid change.

9.   We offer these ideas as indicative, rather than exhaustive, and welcome an opportunity to discuss any of these ideas further with members of the Government or the Taskforce.

About ACFID

10. The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) unites Australia's non-government organisations involved in international development and humanitarian action to strengthen their collective impact against poverty. ACFID's purpose is to lead and unite our members in action for a just, equitable and sustainable world.

11. Our vision is of a world where all people are free from extreme poverty, injustice and inequality; where the earth's finite resources are managed sustainably; and Australia is compassionate and acting for a just and sustainable world. We believe that this vision can only be realised through the collective efforts of civil society, governments, business and individuals concerned for our common humanity.

12. Founded in 1965, ACFID currently has 128 Members and 18 Affiliates operating in more than 100 developing countries. The total revenue raised by ACFID's membership from all sources amounts to $1.658 billion (2014–15), $921 million of which is raised from 1.64 million Australians (2014–15). 80 per cent of funding for ACFID Members is from non-government sources. ACFID's members range between large Australian multi-sectoral organisations that are linked to international federations of NGOs, to agencies with specialised thematic expertise, and smaller community based groups, with a mix of secular and faith-based organisations. A list of ACFID Member Organisations is at **Annex A.**

13. ACFID's Members adhere to a Code of Conduct which is a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice that aims to improve international development outcomes and increase stakeholder trust by enhancing the transparency and accountability of signatory organisations.

14. For more than two decades international NGOs have been engaging in foreign affairs and international fora which set and implement policies and agreements between nations. These include the various instruments of the United Nations, including the United Nations Security Council, the World Trade Organisation, human rights dialogues and negotiations, the International Labour Organisation, and economic fora such as the G20.

15. Australian NGOs contribute to Australia's public diplomacy and our staff and volunteers are the human face of Australia's values, interests and influence in the places where they work. As civil society has increasingly become adept at addressing both the structural and symptomatic elements of poverty, the work of international NGOs has had many more touchpoints with foreign affairs and States' policies on trade, labour and immigration.

Summary of key points and recommendations

Strategic Priority 1: Values-based diplomacy and Australia's aid and development
Key points

1. There is a set of resilient, Australian values that will resonate with the majority of Australians and will motivate Australian society to see itself as having an open-minded, generous, outward-facing approach to the world. Australia's foreign policy will have the support of the public when it reflects and projects those values.
2. Using a values-based approach helps us avoid short-termism and transactional approaches to foreign affairs. This is important if we are to navigate the uncertainty of rising isolationism, populism, nationalism and a multi-polar world order, and meet our goals.
3. Australian Aid is a key tool in both reflecting and projecting Australian values.

Strategic Priority 2: Increase peace and human security
Key points

1. The challenges we face are no longer those that can be avoided by strengthening borders and militaries. In facing challenges to security posed by climate change, pandemics and disease threats, humanitarian conflicts, people movement and migration, we need to broaden our concept of security.
2. The security of States increasingly relies on the security of individuals within States and the extent to which they live free from fear and violence, and free to live life with dignity. Addressing the insecurity of individuals requires a human security approach that can tackle major, external threats to security while also looking at structural insecurities and the ways to address them.
3. A human security approach would have the advantage of providing a conceptual frame to maximise the potential of the integrated Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), bringing coherence and clarity to the mutually-reinforcing nature of the work being done within diplomacy, development and trade.

Strategic Priority 3: Deliver sustainable and inclusive growth
Key points

1. Current pursuits of growth, with little attention to the distribution of growth's benefits or the impacts on the earth's support systems and finite resources, have led to a situation of inequality where our actions are acting as a brake on growth. Consolidating wealth and power in the hands of very few people, as opposed to increasing the growth for the poorest 20 per cent, is halting growth.
2. The economic impact of more frequent natural disasters, and the structural exclusion of women, people with a disability, old and young people, and those from sexual, ethnic, religious or racial minority groups is crippling the growth potential of the world economy.
3. An inability to shift to growth models that preserve the safe-operating space within our planetary boundaries and manage our demand on finite resources will quickly erode the prospect of ongoing prosperity into the future, with greenhouse gas emissions and environmental degradation also acting as drivers of insecurity.

Strategic Priority 4: Promoting multilateralism and human rights
Key points

1. These mutually reinforcing challenges to security and prosperity are not challenges that are unique to Australia, nor are they problems that can be solved by any one nation alone. A collective failure to adequately address these concerns has also driven a rise in the populist narratives of disempowerment and resentment with deeply xenophobic and 'me first' approaches promoted as the solution.

2. We must actively resist that direction, and bolster our pursuits for security and prosperity with collaborative and multilateral approaches. Australia is not a nation that will benefit from competitions of strength and 'winner takes all' mindsets.

3. Our power as an honest and neutral broker, able to speak into multiple audiences of traditional allies and trading partners, is also premised on our normative position in the world. As a liberal democratic nation we believe in, and uphold, human rights as central organising principles of our society. Civil society is a fundamental component of democratic societies and an embodiment of human rights principles.

4. In championing the application and upholding of human rights around the world, Australia should make a special priority of championing the role of civil society and the necessary legal, normative, social and political protections that enable vibrant civil societies.

Strategic Priority 5: Better communication of Australian foreign policy
Key points

1. The ways in which we currently communicate to the Australian public about Australian foreign policy are out of date and no longer hold meaning for most people. We need to remove the jargon from our communication – *rules-based order; middle power punching above our weight; globalisation and free trade* – and instead draw on the strength of widely shared values.

2. In using our values – *cooperative, democratic, egalitarian, desirous of peaceful social and political order, a fair go* – we can shape a plain-English statement of our purpose and objectives that will resonate and gain the support of most Australians.

3. The Aid Program is one of the most tangible ways that we both embody our values in practice, and achieve our key security and prosperity goals in the long term. We can do more to communicate the value of the aid program.

Strategic Priority 1: Values-based diplomacy and Australia's aid and development

Values-based diplomacy, aid and development
Recommendation 1.1 Australia's diplomacy and development assistance program should be based upon a clearly articulated set of national values and communicated and practised on this basis. **Recommendation 1.2** Within Australia's foreign policy architecture, international aid and development should be assigned the same level of priority as defence, trade and diplomacy as a means to achieve Australian security and prosperity.

Strategic Priority 2: Increase peace and human security

Peace and human security
Recommendation 2.1: The White Paper should acknowledge the intersection between threats to security and prosperity, and adopt a human security approach which enables a broader range of security concerns to be identified and addressed. **Recommendation 2.2:** The White Paper should explicitly encourage a multilateral approach to building human security, and position Australia as a champion of such an approach. **Recommendation 2.3** The White Paper should explicitly recognise climate change as a threat to security and prosperity and recommend a climate change strategy to guide diplomacy, trade and development.
Foreign Policy Imperative 1: Tackle climate change

Recommendation 2.4: The White Paper should recommend that urgent action be taken to combat climate change by:
 	
    2.4.1 Developing a climate change strategy for managing climate risks and tracking climate effectiveness in foreign policy particularly via the Aid Program;
 	
    2.4.2 Directing 60 per cent of climate change development assistance towards adaptation and resilience, including support for community-based adaptation initiatives, particularly in the Pacific;
 	
    2.4.3 Taking an integrated approach to poverty alleviation and climate resilience, in recognition that poverty is a key driver of vulnerability to the impacts of climate change;
 	
    2.4.4 Scaling up Australia's public climate finance contributions to $600 million in 2017–18.

Humanitarian conflicts

Recommendation 2.5: Australia should maintain a focus on fragile States while scaling up support for conflict prevention and resolution by:
 	
    2.5.1 Developing a rigorous policy framework to guide efficient, effective, timely and accountable responses to protracted crises, including through multi-year funding agreements that strategically address the root causes and chronic indicators of crisis;
 	
    2.5.2 Increasing support for the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions relating to women, peace and security and the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012–18, including through a dedicated budget allocation;
 	
    2.5.3 Increasing funding support for women's organisations, networks and coalitions generally, and those that address the Women, Peace and Security agenda;
 	
    2.5.4 Maintaining a focus on bilateral aid directed to fragile States with a focus on programming to improve aid effectiveness, build civil society capacity; and strengthen institutions and the business environment.

Movement of people
Recommendation 2.6: Australia should address root causes of people movements and contribute to global processes to address people's movements within and across borders by:

2.6.1 taking a rights-based, equitable and humane approach to people on the move;

2.6.2 Responding at scale to regional spikes in violence, human rights abuses, or conflicts to restore the necessary conditions for human security and prevent voluntary or forced people movements;

2.6.3 Demonstrating leadership by proactively supporting the establishment of a regional protection framework for asylum seekers and refugees in South East Asia, through re-energised engagement with new or existing multilateral fora;

2.6.4 Addressing children on the move as a unique category, regarded primarily by their status *as children*, and ensuring that the protections of the Convention of the Rights of the Child are fully upheld;

2.6.5 Increasing Australia's humanitarian intake to 30,000 by 2018–19 with flexibility to accommodate spikes in regional or global refugee numbers.

Strategic Priority 3: Deliver sustainable and inclusive growth

Sustainable and Inclusive Growth
Recommendation 3.1: The White Paper should recognise that current growth patterns threaten long-term prosperity and should prioritise an explicit focus on *sustainable and inclusive* growth as the means of achieving prosperity in the decade ahead.
Foreign Policy Imperative 2: Apply the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for an integrated approach to security and prosperity
Recommendation 3.2: The White Paper process should explicitly acknowledge the SDG Framework as a contribution to holistic foreign policy approaches by Australia and deliver on its aims by: 3.2.1 Strengthening the means of implementation for the SDGs by lifting aid levels to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent ODA/GNI by 2030, in line with international commitments; 3.2.2 Scaling up efforts to explore and support innovative public and private finance models for sustainable development in collaboration with the private sector, civil society and academia; 3.2.3 Delivering stronger data, monitoring and accountability for the SDGs in partnership with Pacific Governments and ensure that domestic data collection and reporting systems for the aid program are aligned to the SDGs; 3.2.4 Investing in a research funding scheme to support applied research and partnership between DFAT and Australian and regional research institutions on tackling inequality and sustainability; 3.2.5 Delivering on the principles of the SDGs, including 'leave no one behind', 'universal application' and 'multi-sectoral collaboration and partnership'.
Address income inequality
Recommendation 3.3 Australia should improve the social and economic conditions for the poorest in society by: 3.3.1 Ensuring that the bulk of Australia's aid investments are focused on low-income countries, countries with low rates of human development, fragile States, conflict and post-conflict States, and countries with persistently high gender inequalities; 3.3.2. Furthering a focus on aid delivered within fragile and conflict affected States, where the development of two billion people can be bolstered;[1] 3.3.3 Fostering income and opportunity growth for the poorest 40 per cent of people, particularly targeting groups such as women, children, people with a disability, indigenous people, and ethnic and sexual minorities.
Tackle intersectionality
Recommendation 3.4: Australia should ensure that the poorest and those facing multiple, reinforcing disadvantages are supported to participate and benefit by: 3.4.1. Resourcing fully the disability inclusive development Strategy 2015–20; 3.4.2. Prioritising programs that explicitly seek to engage marginalised communities including those excluded on the basis of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ethic, racial or religious status; 3.4.3. Supporting initiatives to help people transition from informal to formal labour market participation; 3.4.4. Using holistic and integrated program approaches that support economic participation by addressing relevant social, legal, political or cultural impediments;

3.4.5. Developing and resourcing a youth strategy for the aid program.

Recommendation 3.5: Australia should take a multidimensional and holistic approach to achieving women's full inclusion in the familial, communal, economic, and political spheres by:

3.5.1. Developing and implementing pre-investment tools that require policy, and all activities, to outline the different impacts by gender, during their design phase;

3.5.2 Investing in the Individual Deprivation Measure to better identify the differentiated social and economic deprivations faced by individuals in developing countries;

3.5.3 Increasing the support for sexual and reproductive health and rights within the aid program and in policy engagement with partner governments;

3.5.4. Tackling the persistent and extremely high incidence of violence against women and girls in Melanesia;

3.5.5. Ensuring that gender equality outcomes are prioritised in initiatives across the entire portfolio of DFAT, including infrastructure and trade, areas that have traditionally performed badly in terms of gender;

3.5.6. Increasing investments where gender is the principle focus by building on the long-term, sustained and programmatic model of Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development;

3.5.7 Increasing support for women's organisations in partner countries that are on the front line working with communities to tackle gender discrimination.

Pacific labour mobility

Recommendation 3.6: Australia should support stronger integration of Pacific citizens into the global labour market by:

3.6.1. Supporting the labour mobility potential of Pacific Island nations through programs focused on skills-development, technical education and certification in high-touch economies;

3.6.2. Using Australia's Aid for Trade allocations to support countries which currently have the lowest labour mobility opportunities: Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu; atoll-countries most exposed to the impacts of climate change; and other Pacific nations.[2]

Focus on environmental challenges

Recommendation 3.7: Australia should support development partners to address their vulnerability to natural disasters by:

3.7.1 Increasing investment in disaster risk reduction and resilience programming to at least 5 per cent of ODA;

3.7.2 Adhering to appropriate environmental and social safeguards in infrastructure investments; and following disasters, using a 'build back better' approach;

3.7.3 Developing capability to respond to urban disasters and deliver urban risk reduction programming to combat vulnerabilities of urban and peri-urban areas;

3.7.4 Working with partners to restore and rehabilitate natural environmental mechanisms protecting against storm surge, flooding and erosion.

Refer also to Recommendation 2.4 Tackle climate change.

Strategic Goal 4: Promoting multilateralism and human rights

Multilateralism and human rights
Recommendation 4.1: The White Paper recognises the benefit of Australia's leadership in championing the multilateral system, including supporting reforms for improvement to the various instruments of the United Nations; **Recommendation 4.2.** The White Paper makes the case for Australia's continued focus on defending universal human rights and protesting violations as a means of curbing instability and increasing human security; **Recommendation 4.3** The White Paper articulates the value in having a predictable and principled approach to human rights, inclusive and sustainable growth, and human security, upheld in relevant domestic policies as well as in foreign policy.
Foreign Policy Imperative 3: Support, and protect space for, civil society

Recommendation 4.4: The White Paper should clearly identify the role of civil society in protecting and advancing human rights and fundamental freedoms, and position Australia as a champion of civil society space around the world by:
 	
    4.4.1 Supporting reforms to global governance that make it more representative and inclusive, including specific space for civil society engagement;
 	
    4.4.2 Protesting violations of human rights and attacks on civil society;
 	
    4.4.3 Working closely with all sectors to achieve adherence to business and human rights standards in all industries;
 	
    4.4.4 Engaging partners around the world in developing and upholding enabling environments, legal, regulatory, policy and normative, for civil society.

Strategic Goal 5: Better communication of Australian foreign policy

Communicating Australian foreign policy
Recommendation 5.1: The White Paper process should be used to develop a values-based narrative for Australian foreign policy as a key communications tool. **Recommendation 5.2:** An over-arching, plain-English purpose statement for Australia's foreign policy should be developed that has bipartisan support and agreement.
Strategic communications

Recommendation 5.3: DFAT should prioritise communicating with the Australian public about why, how, and to what end we engage internationally by:
    5.3.1 Creating and resourcing a senior role for a Strategic Communications advisor for Australia's Foreign Policy;
 	
    5.3.2   Embedding communication's specialists across the Department to increase the ability of all areas to communicate with the Australian public;
 	
    5.3.3 Investing in high quality data and monitoring to learn lessons on how communications are being received by the Australian public.

Strategic Priority 1: Values-based diplomacy and Australia's aid and development

Recommendation 1.1 Australia's diplomacy and development assistance program should be based on a clearly articulated set of national values and communicated and practised on this basis.

Recommendation 1.2 Within Australia's foreign policy architecture, international aid and development should be assigned the same level of priority as defence, trade and diplomacy as a means to achieve Australian security and prosperity.

Why should Australia have a values-based foreign policy?

1. As global geopolitics emerge to reflect a more multipolar world order, the prospect of increasing numbers of flashpoints, stalemates and conflicts increases. Established, waning and emergent powers will seek to consolidate and increase their strength and, ultimately, will seek to pursue their own interests. For countries such as Australia to navigate the complex ties we have with a range of allies and trading partners, it is pivotal that we conceive of our interests in the long term and can avoid a series of short-term and entangling engagements by acting consistently to achieve our goals.

2. We believe that Australian values provide a strong framework for guiding our behaviour in foreign engagements and for evaluating our foreign policy choices over the next decade. Notwithstanding the need to be aware that outcomes may take some time, Australia will, invariably have short-term interests that need to be acted upon. In doing so, we believe that Australian values should be the bottom line, against which trade-offs are judged to be acceptable or not.

3. A values-based approach to foreign policy is a strong proposition because there is broadly an Australian character that is widely recognised, championed and supported by the Australian public. It consists of a range of attributes and is underpinned by our system of government, history and culture.

4. Australia is a liberal democracy founded on the rule of law, with a long tradition of national social policy focused on addressing the circumstances of people in need. Australia is also a nation built on migration which we have turned to our advantage in many ways, with society recognising the value in our diversity.[3] We have played a significant role in establishing a post-war global system of cooperation, protection of human rights and dispute mediation through the United Nations. As the only Western country surrounded by developing countries, successive Australian governments since World War II have implemented significant development assistance programs in Asia, the Pacific and Africa.

5. The reason that successive governments have treated this form of assistance as central to Australian foreign policy for 70 years is that that it directly reflects mainstream values held by Australians. These core values also underpin the social and political consensus shaping our

long-standing approaches to domestic policy.

6. Specifically, these values are: a fair go; consideration of equity for those 'doing it tough'; a democratic structure in which the concentration of power is limited; a desire to actively promote peace, stability and free commerce; and working with other countries to promote a rules-based international order. In sum, Australians have supported a prominent international development role in Australia's foreign policy for decades because it articulates the fundamental values and beliefs about who we are as a people.

7. As a further demonstration of this platform of community values, 1.6 million Australians support 130 Australian development NGOs with donations of $1 billion per annum to assist others overseas. Our universities are deeply connected to other countries through international students attending Australian institutions and Australian scholars engaged overseas. Similarly, Australian businesses engage in, and benefit from, international commerce and rely on being able to operate overseas without undue constraints. Diaspora communities link host and origin countries, and their work contributes substantially to economic, social and political activities in both societies. In short, Australia has been an outward-oriented and pro-active global citizen since the middle of last century.

8. Future Australian foreign policy, including its development assistance component, needs to be framed in a way that continues to be linked to this base within mainstream community values. Our foreign policy needs to demonstrate that successive national governments are still tied closely to those values.

9. This will contribute to ensuring vital domestic support for Australia's overseas engagements. If pursued in line with our values, Australians will see and support the merits of our diplomacy and international development assistance program. If our foreign policy and aid and development efforts continue to reflect a commitment to supporting those doing it tough, in our region and beyond, and to be directly helping to improve the circumstances of the most vulnerable and assist poor communities to lift themselves out of poverty, most Australians will continue to support this major pillar of Australia's foreign policy framework.

Why aid and development is a key tool of foreign policy

10. Australia faces a decade that will be characterised by the need to respond to pressing challenges including multipolar geopolitics, climate change, rising extremism, protracted humanitarian conflicts and associated people movements, increasing isolationism and protectionist sentiment, and entrenched poverty and inequality.

11. We believe that aid and development is one of Australia's strongest tool capable of being deployed to address these issues. Australia's aid and development is simultaneously a way of projecting our values and national character towards moral ends, and pragmatically and strategically addressing root cause problems that are undermining global efforts towards security and prosperity.

12. As States jockey for influence and the need to assert their power, these pressing challenges, common to all in the family of nations, will require a re-assertion of the norms that act as a constraint on power and limit the acceptable range of actors' behaviours to pursue their own

interests (see Strategic Priority 4: Promoting multilateralism and human rights). Leadership will be required to build the necessary conditions of cooperation to address problems that cannot be solved by any one nation alone. Similarly, leadership will be required to prevent the potential negative ramifications of these challenges from further realisation. Australia is in a strong position to play a role in both building cooperation and leading prevention.

13. Through aid and development efforts, we have built a strong reputation as being a cooperative and principled partner. We can use this asset and diplomatic skills to continue to promote cooperative and partnering approaches to foreign policy problems, bilaterally, multilaterally and through the United Nations.

14. Similarly, through our aid and development efforts, Australia can contribute to a preventive approach on issues such as conflict and insecurity, economic instability, climate change, inequality, and corruption and impunity. Taking a preventive approach to these problems would greatly contribute to establishing the conditions necessary for global long-term economic growth and social stability.

The mitigating potential of Australian aid and development

15. **Pacific:** In Pacific Island States our historical links and proximity compel us to assist relatively poor countries facing significant development challenges. Rapid resource depletion in the Pacific including forests and fish stocks warrant our urgent attention for future economic sustainability and social stability. The threats of climate change and associated extreme weather – which costs States significant proportions of GDP each time – demand our attention. The Pacific's growing youth population will require expanded opportunities for employment to prevent further deterioration of social stability.

16. **Asia:** Myanmar is making a historical transition to democracy. However, the long-held ethnic tensions and divisions between civilian and military leadership have not been adequately addressed. Australia must ensure that the ethnic and religious equality of all citizens is being upheld in that transition, and engage fully to shore up relations for the future.

17. Similarly, Indonesia and Timor–Leste should continue to be a focus for Australia to support their shifts away from authoritarian rule to democratic societies. These countries, despite having substantial relative wealth in resources or urban areas, have rising inequality and huge swathes of their populations living in poverty that require further development assistance.

18. Afghanistan provides a prime example of how States failing to provide basic services and governance for their citizens can drive people to support radical and extreme groups. In response to the global spillover of violent extremism being bred in that country, Australia joined the international community in providing troops and increasing aid and development. However, we have since cut that development support, failing to grapple with the ongoing potential of a revitalised and strengthened Taliban and Al Qaida if the Afghan people are not supported in their development.

19. **Africa:** Africa is expected to account for more than half of the world's population growth over the next 35 years. The continent overall has high rates of economic growth from a low base. Yet Africa has the most countries with the highest number of people living in extreme poverty

(less than $1.90 per day). The connections between Australia and the continent are strong: over 330,000 Australians were born in sub-Saharan Africa and another 51,450 from North Africa; and Australian investment in Africa is estimated to be worth around $30 billion. In 2015 the value of two-way trade was $8.5 billion; and 4,800 African students took up studies at Australian tertiary institutions in 2015, and there are over 5,000 Australian Awards alumni in Africa. It is a prudent investment to re-engage Southern and Eastern African counties using our development assistance program to augment these growing connections and help ensure human development.[4]

Strategic Priority 2: Increase peace and human security

Recommendation 2.1: The White Paper should acknowledge the intersection between threats to security and prosperity, and adopt a human security approach that enables a broader range of security concerns to be identified and addressed.

Recommendation 2.2: The White Paper should explicitly encourage a multilateral approach to building human security and position Australia as a champion of such an approach.

Recommendation 2.3: The White Paper should explicitly recognise climate change as a threat to security and prosperity, and recommend a climate change strategy to guide diplomacy, trade and development.

Why Australia should prioritise human security

1. Over the next 10 years Australia's security, and that of countries around the world, will be tested. When livelihoods, shelter and subsistence food supplies are decimated through natural disasters and extreme weather; when corruption and impunity concentrate power in the hands of the few; when citizens' voice and agency within society and government are crushed; and when conflicts drive people from their homes and there is no safe refuge to be found, the world is less secure.

2. This has been evident when we see how disease threats crossed borders in the 2016 Ebola outbreak. Syria has reminded us how conflict prompts people movements across borders, and a greater number of extreme weather events driven by climate change will pay no heed to national borders. These challenges tear at the fabric of human security and undermine the stability dividend of individuals living free from fear and want, and free to live with dignity.

3. These are threats that we can neither address alone, nor insulate ourselves from through isolation, conflict, borders or military strength. Recognising that Australia's security is premised on global security, it is both pragmatic and strategic to recast traditional notions of security based solely on defence, to encompass a human security perspective that recognises the true breadth of issues and challenges that can undermine security.

4. To protect Australia from adverse security implications, it is in our interests to help other States build their human security. Human security is defined as 'protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity'.[5] We should recognise that the security of States relies on the security of the individuals who inhabit them.

5. Adopting a human security lens would better link the various portfolios within DFAT: counter terrorism; people trafficking; human rights; development and humanitarian response capacity; health; bio-security; trade; and diplomacy. It may also provide conceptual clarity on how DFAT and Defence relate. The decision to integrate AusAID within DFAT was an acknowledgement of the need for better cross-portfolio clarity and the White Paper process

is an opportunity to deliver this more explicit focus on the inter-related and mutually reinforcing elements of security and prosperity.

Foreign Policy Imperative 1: Tackle climate change

There are no greater threats to long-term global prosperity and stability than climate change. Climate change is the perfect example of a common problem faced by all nations, particularly Australia. The World Bank's 2014 *Turning Down the Heat* report warns:

> *There is growing evidence, that even with very ambitious mitigation action, warming close to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels by mid-century is already locked-in to the Earth's atmospheric system and climate change impacts … [This] may now be unavoidable. If the planet continues warming … weather extremes considered highly unusual or unprecedented today would become the new climate normal – a world of increased risks and instability. The consequences … would be severe as crop yields decline, water resources change, diseases move into new ranges, and sea levels rise. The task of promoting human development, of ending poverty, increasing global prosperity, and reducing global inequality will be very challenging in a 2°C world, but in a 4°C world there is serious doubt whether this can be achieved at all.[6]*

The impact of climate change will also be felt in Australia's immediate region, the Pacific. Such effects are likely to include fresh water contamination, drastically reduced agricultural production, and inadequate food supply from reduced fishing stock, flooding and erosion. These experiences have the potential to trigger climate-induced, and climate-related, forced migration of people from their traditional homelands in small island States.[7]

The World Bank has found that the consequence of not integrating a climate change approach within development initiatives could be an extra 100 million people pushed into extreme poverty by 2030.[8]

Despite exposure and vulnerability, Australia's Pacific Island neighbours are amongst those least able to marshal the economic resources to address the consequences, and poverty is a key indicator of vulnerability to climate change.

Recommendation 2.4: The White Paper should recommend that urgent action be taken to combat climate change by:

2.4.1 Developing a climate change strategy for managing climate risks and tracking climate effectiveness in foreign policy particularly via the Aid Program;

2.4.2 Directing 60 per cent of climate change development assistance towards adaptation and resilience, including support for community-based adaptation initiatives, particularly in the Pacific;

2.4.3 Taking an integrated approach to poverty alleviation and climate resilience, in recognition that poverty is a key driver of vulnerability to the impacts of climate change;

2.4.4 Scaling up Australia's public climate finance contributions to $600 million in 2017–18.[9]

What does success look like?

6. Foreign policy underpinned by a strategic focus on human security would be characterised by policies, commitments and actions including:

    a. Greater action on climate change guided by a clear strategy for our leadership within multilateral fora and greater development assistance support for those most affected in our region;

    b. Advocating for gender equality in the systems, processes and outcomes through all of Australia's diplomatic, trade and development engagements while also better reflecting diversity and equality in its human resourcing, including setting benchmarks to ensure that 50 per cent of Ambassadors and High Commissioners, senior diplomats and advisers are women;

    c. Engaging diplomatically to promote reforms and champion global governance systems that are better able to identify, and act on, early-warning indicators of conflict and crisis, including a much high contribution to UN peace-keeping deployments (we currently sit as the 61st largest contributor of deployed personnel);[10]

    d. Designing geopolitical engagements to produce stability and security for individuals not just reinforcing borders or stabilising States; for example, greater Australian contributions to regional peace-building and peace negotiations in Myanmar to address the ethnic violence, and in Mindanao;

    e. Ensuring that Australian trade agreements prioritise the security and rights of workers, land holders and communities and do not produce detrimental environmental or social outcomes; providing guidance to Australian companies on managing these requirements while also holding companies to account legally when they violate the rights of people overseas;

    f. Acting on counter-terrorism in a way that upholds human rights and takes a root cause and preventive approach, addressing drivers, rather than symptoms, of radicalisation;

    g. Ceasing Australia's policy of arbitrary detention of asylum seekers and refugees in third countries;

    h. Undertaking human rights diplomacy (see Strategic Priority 4 on Promoting multilateralism and human rights).

How Australian aid can contribute to meeting the human security imperative

Australia's Development Assistance program is also a key asset to ensuring a coherent approach to human security through our diplomatic, trade and development efforts. Below is a short summary of some of the human security threats that can be addressed through the Aid Program.

Humanitarian conflicts

Recommendation 2.5: Australia should maintain a focus on fragile States while scaling up support for conflict prevention and resolution by:

> 2.5.1 Developing a rigorous policy framework to guide efficient, effective, timely and accountable responses to protracted crises, including through multi-year funding agreements that strategically address the root causes and chronic indicators of crisis;

> 2.5.2 Increasing support for the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions relating to women, peace and security and the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012–18, including through a dedicated budget allocation;

> 2.5.3 Increasing funding support for women's organisations, networks and coalitions, generally, and those that address the Women, Peace and Security agenda;

> 2.5.4 Maintaining a focus on bilateral aid directed to fragile States with a focus on programing to improve aid effectiveness, build civil society capacity, and strengthen institutions and the business environment.

Movement of people

Recommendation 2.6: Australia should address root causes of people movements and contribute to global processes to address people's movements within and across borders by:

> 2.6.1 Taking a rights-based, equitable and humane approach to people on the move;

> 2.6.2 Responding at scale to regional spikes in violence, human rights abuses, or conflicts to restore the necessary conditions for human security and prevent voluntary or forced people movements;

> 2.6.3 Demonstrating leadership by proactively supporting the establishment of a regional protection framework for asylum seekers and refugees in South East Asia, through re-energised engagement with new or existing multilateral fora;

> 2.6.4 Addressing children on the move as a unique category, considered primarily by their status *as children*, and ensuring that the protections of the Convention of the Rights of the Child are fully upheld;

> 2.6.5 Increasing Australia's humanitarian intake to 30,000 by 2018–19 with flexibility to accommodate spikes in regional or global refugee numbers.

Strategic Priority 3: Deliver sustainable and inclusive growth

Recommendation 3.1: The White Paper should recognise that current growth patterns threaten long-term prosperity and should prioritise an explicit focus on *sustainable and inclusive* growth as the means of achieving prosperity in the decade ahead.

Why Australia should prioritise sustainable and inclusive growth

1. The current global economic system has relentlessly pursued growth as the means to prosperity without adequate attention to the distribution of growth's benefits or the impact of that growth on a set of finite resources. This narrow pursuit of a certain type of growth is no longer sufficient for Australia's interests in the medium to long term.

2. Following this track has led to social and environmental conditions that include levels of wealth inequality such as those that tipped countries into major crises in the past,[11] planetary boundaries that have been breached,[12] and a global economic system that lacks agility and incentives to correct these problems and put economic growth on a sustainable trajectory.

3. Through the White Paper process, Australia must consider that our ongoing prosperity will require a fairer distribution of growth's benefits and economic growth strategies driven more and more by new technology and non-resource-intensive processes. The SDGs, negotiated and agreed by Australia and all 192 of our peers at the United Nations in 2015, provide a robust framework for how we might achieve this.

4. Currently there are three major types of challenges to fostering an inclusive and sustainable growth and they fall into the categories of income inequality, social and environmental challenges.

5. As noted in the Strategic Priority 2 section of this submission we believe that the threats to security and prosperity are inter-related and that the challenges named below also pose concerns for global stability and peace.

What are the challenges to sustainable and inclusive growth?

Income inequality

6. In 2016, 62 richest people on earth owned the same amount of wealth as the poorest half of the world (3.6 billion people).[13] By 2017, this number has shrunk to just eight men.[14]

7. In 2012 The World Economic Forum (WEF) asserted that rapidly entrenched inequality was the risk most likely to manifest in the next 10 years.[15] [16] The report directly names the forces of protectionism, nationalism and populism as compounding factors to inequality that could prompt a rapid downward economic spiral.[17] The growing support for grievance parties and populist sentiments within the political landscape of Europe, the USA and Australia points to a manifesting risk to global economic prosperity.

8. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has also highlighted that the situation of persistent and growing inequality is bad for economic growth. They found that increasing the incomes of the bottom 20 per cent of the population led to higher growth, while increases for those in the top 20 per cent led to lower growth outcomes.[18]

Social

Women's economic and labour force participation

9. Currently we are failing to realise the full benefit of human resource capacity given the persistent under-representation of women in the labour force. In recognition of this, in 2014 the G20 committed to reducing the gap between male and female labour force participation by 25 per cent by 2025. Achieving this target would put an estimated additional 100 million women into the work force.

10. A McKinsey Institute report showed that approximately US$12 trillion could be added to global GDP if women's equal representation in the workforce was comprehensively pursued.[19] The report also noted that to boost progress towards this goal there are four major underlying areas that need to be addressed: education, financial and digital inclusion, legal protection, and unpaid care work.[20]

Intersectionality

11. Sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, age, and disability compound the vulnerability to poverty/extreme poverty and further entrench structural inequality, discrimination and disadvantage.[21] Women and girls are more likely to live in poverty than men,[22] one in five of the poorest people has a disability,[23] and a pilot World Bank study places the cost of LGBTI discrimination in India alone at staggering loss of $32 billion a year in economic output.[24]

12. These factors both compound and reinforce, as, for example, people with a disability are more likely to live in poverty, and poverty is a predictor of one's lifetime risk of a disability. Similarly, women and girls have a higher instance of poverty; however, the social expectations of women and girls to take on unpaid and domestic care responsibilities poses significant limits on women's and girls' ability to engage in the formal workforce and raise economic input for their families.

13. Focusing on growth without ensuring that all can contribute to, and benefit from, such growth will only continue to reinforce and entrench the deep structural problems that are currently limiting growth prospects.

Environmental

Planetary boundaries

14. The natural systems that support life on Earth have been heavily eroded through global growth trajectories of the past which have been heavily resource-intensive and have failed to adequately consider the delicate and inter-related components of the natural environment.[25]

15. This is evident in the food supply chains of the world that are both vulnerable to, and major contributors of, environmental degradation. Food production currently uses 40 per cent of global land area, 70 per cent of the world's fresh water, 30 per cent of global energy and generates 20 per cent of greenhouse gases.[26] With a projected population of more than nine billion by 2050, the world will need to produce at least 70 per cent more food than we do today.[27]

16. Ensuring sustainable prosperity will require commitment to preserving a level of natural resilience through new models of growth which do not degrade the natural environment

beyond its resilience limits, and which manage or avoid consumption of finite resources, including fisheries and marine stocks, land, water and greenhouse gas emissions.

Natural disasters

17. The economic costs of increasingly frequent and severe natural disasters are significant, both for affected people and affected States. In 2015, there were 346 reported disasters that affected 98.6 million people worldwide and cost US$66.5 billion in economic damages. The Asia–Pacific region is particularly exposed and is noted to be the most disaster-prone region in the world, accounting for 47 per cent of all disasters in 2015.[28] Asia experienced the highest level of fatalities from their disasters, accounting for 71.8 per cent of the total number of deaths from disasters globally.[29]

18. At the end of 2016, the World Bank released a report highlighting that the connection between extreme weather and extreme poverty has devastating consequences, including US$520 billion in consumption losses and pushing more than 26 million people into poverty every year.[30]

19. Together with the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), the World Bank joined in authoring a report that further exposed the amount of economic damage wrought by natural disasters ($300 billion a year), and the much higher risks faced by people living in poverty (costs to people living in poverty are 60 per cent higher than previously thought, and people living in poverty are twice as likely to work and live in vulnerable or exposed sectors/areas).[31]

What does success look like?

20. Supporting social stability and stable global relations will require that we seek to reduce both the absolute poverty amongst us, and the issues of inequality. This is in line with research which shows that perceived inequalities between people have an impact on social cohesion.[32]

21. A view of growth from this perspective would require approaches that deliver positive social and environmental outcomes: reducing poverty and inequality amongst people as well as protecting the finite resources and life-support systems of Earth. Growth should create jobs, not just wealth for a few. Market-based economic activity can operate beneficially, but it must be acceptable and responsive to the needs of all peoples, fair, and environmentally sound.

22. If Australia's foreign policies were to incorporate an explicit focus on sustainability and equality, a triple bottom-line approach, the characteristics, policies or commitments would include:

    a. Developing markets and commercial opportunities for Australian business, that prioritise and promote green research, business, investment, and technology;

    b. Negotiating trade agreements that consider and prioritise the social and environmental impacts of its trade equal to the economic outcomes and incentivises trading partners to do the same; this includes removing fossil fuel subsidies, promoting economic diversification, and adhering to the approximately 20 targets

within the SDGs on trade;[33]

c. Promoting and adhering to ambitious and legally-binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, through diplomacy and domestic action;

d. Taking a whole-of-government approach to sustainable development where all government policies that affect developing countries – such as our environmental, migration, taxation and trade policies – are consistent with achieving the SDGs;

e. Advancing the inclusion of women and other marginalised groups in the economic, social and political spheres through diplomacy, within trade, and through development;

f. Expanding the current micro-State visa scheme to include skilled labour in industries where Australia is currently under-served.

Foreign Policy Imperative 2: Apply the SDGs for an integrated approach to security and prosperity

The SDGs are a set of inter-related goals designed to enable complex policy making to tackle the many barriers that countries face in realising the foundations of both security and prosperity. They include a focus on energy security, urban planning, decent work, and life below water, to sit amongst the more traditional pillars such as addressing hunger and nutrition, education, health, sanitation and governance.

Australia played an active and productive role through an intense, three-year, multilateral negotiation process, arguably one of the most successful in a decade or more. The resulting 2030 Agenda, which encompasses the SDGs and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, captures the key domains of action required to reach a desirable level of security and prosperity for all people.

The SDGs can be a useful tool to leverage the strengths of an integrated DFAT, as well as to deliver on a whole-of-government approach to Australia's engagement with the world. Promoting their application and uptake, globally, as well as a principled approach to their implementation in Australia is a positive contribution to an enabling environment conducive to Australia's interests, one in which multilateral agreements are negotiated in good faith and upheld (see Strategic Priority 4: Promoting multilateralism and human rights).

Further, the realisation of the SDG outcomes would have a profoundly positive impact on the human security, sustainable and inclusive growth outcomes that are outlined in this submission as the foundation of Australia's own long-term security and prosperity.

Recommendation 3.2: The White Paper process should explicitly acknowledge the SDG Framework as a contribution to holistic foreign policy approaches by Australia and deliver on its aims by:

> 3.2.1 Strengthening the means of implementation for the SDGs by lifting aid levels to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent ODA/GNI by 2030, in line with international commitments;

> 3.2.2 Scaling up efforts to explore and support innovative public and private finance models for sustainable development in collaboration with the private sector, civil society and academia;

> 3.2.3 Delivering stronger data, monitoring and accountability for the SDGs in partnership with Pacific governments and ensuring that domestic data collection and reporting systems for the aid program are aligned to the SDGs;

> 3.2.4 Investing in a research funding scheme to support applied research and partnership between DFAT and Australian and regional research institutions on tackling inequality and sustainability;

> 3.2.5 Delivering on the principles of the SDGs, including 'leave no one behind', 'universal application' and 'multi-sectoral engagement, collaboration and partnership'.

How Australian aid can contribute to sustainable and inclusive prosperity

1. Address income inequality

Recommendation 3.3 Australia should improve the social and economic conditions for the poorest in society by:

> 3.3.1 Ensuring that the bulk of Australia's aid investments are focused on low-income countries, countries with low rates of human development, fragile States, conflict and post-conflict States, and countries with persistently high gender inequalities;

> 3.3.2. Furthering a focus on aid delivered within fragile and conflict affected States where the development of 2 billion people can be bolstered;[34]

> 3.3.3 Fostering income and opportunity growth for the poorest 40 per cent of people, particularly targeting groups such as women, children, people with a disability, indigenous people and ethnic and sexual minorities.

2. Tackle intersectionality, structural and social exclusion

Recommendation 3.4: Australia should ensure that the poorest people and those facing multiple, reinforcing disadvantages are supported to participate and benefit by:

> 3.4.1 Resourcing fully the disability inclusive development Strategy 2015–20;

> 3.4.2 Prioritising programs that explicitly seek to engage marginalised communities including those excluded on the basis of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ethic, racial or religious status;

> 3.4.3 Supporting initiatives to help people transition from informal to formal labour market participation;

> 3.4.4 Using holistic and integrated program approaches that support economic participation by addressing relevant social, legal, political or cultural impediments;

> 3.4.5 Developing and resourcing a youth strategy for the aid program.

3. Address women's participation and inclusion

Recommendation 3.5: Australia should take a multidimensional and holistic approach to achieving women's full inclusion in the familial, communal, economic, and political spheres by:

> 3.5.1 Developing and implementing pre-investment tools that require policy, and all activities, to outline the different impacts by gender, during their design phase;

> 3.5.2 Investing in the Individual Deprivation Measure to better identify the differentiated social and economic deprivations faced by individuals in developing countries;

> 3.5.3 Increasing the support for sexual and reproductive health and rights within the aid program and in policy engagement with partner governments;

> 3.5.4. Tackling the persistent and extremely high incidence of violence against women and girls in Melanesia;

3.5.5 Ensuring that gender equality outcomes are prioritised in initiatives across the entire portfolio of DFAT, including infrastructure and trade, areas that have traditionally performed badly in terms of gender;

3.5.6 Increasing investments where gender is the principle focus by building on the long-term, sustained and programmatic model of Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development;

3.5.7 Increasing support for women's organisations in partner countries that are on the front line working with communities to tackle gender discrimination.

Pacific labour mobility

Considering the special relationship between Australia and the Pacific, Australian Aid supports more inclusive and sustainable growth for the Pacific. Australia could make a substantial contribution to boosting incomes of Pacific citizens by integrating the Pacific labour force more fully with the global market, and furthering the people-to-people connections between Australians and Pacific Islanders though a labour mobility scheme.

A labour mobility scheme would enable the Pacific countries to leverage human resource assets for economic development and to enable Pacific Island nations to benefit from growing sectors of the labour market, namely 'high touch' industries such as youth and aged care, hospitality, and personal services.

Estimates of the current net income potential of the cohort of Pacific migrants (420,000 or 4.4 per cent of the Pacific population) is $11.8 billion if they were to be enabled to work in OECD countries around the world.[35]

Recommendation 3.6: Australia should support stronger integration of Pacific citizens into the global labour market by:

3.6.1 Supporting labour mobility potential of Pacific Island nations through programs focused on skills-development, technical education and certification in high-touch economies;

3.6.2 Using Australia's Aid for Trade allocations to support countries that currently have the lowest labour mobility opportunities, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu; atoll-countries most exposed to the impacts of climate change; and other Pacific nations.

4. Invest in Disaster Risk Reduction, Resilience and Response

Recommendation 3.7: Australia should support development partners to address their vulnerability to natural disasters by:

3.7.1 Increasing investment in disaster risk reduction and resilience programming to at least 5 per cent of ODA;

3.7.2 Adhering to appropriate environmental and social safeguards in infrastructure investments; and following disasters, using a 'build back better' approach;

3.7.3 Developing capability to respond to urban disasters and deliver urban risk reduction programming to combat vulnerabilities of urban and peri-urban areas;

3.7.4 Working with partners to restore and rehabilitate natural environmental mechanisms protecting against storm surge, flooding and erosion.

5. Address climate change

See Strategic Priority 2 of this Submission [Foreign Policy Imperative 1: Tackle climate change].

Strategic Priority 4: Predictable, principled action promoting multilateralism and human rights

Recommendation 4.1: The White Paper recognises the benefit of Australia's leadership in championing the multilateral system, including supporting reforms for improvement to the various instruments of the United Nations.

Recommendation 4.2. The White Paper makes the case for Australia's continued focus on defending universal human rights and protesting violations as a means of curbing instability and increasing human security/

Recommendation 4.3 The White Paper articulates the value in having a predictable and principled approach to human rights, inclusive and sustainable growth and human security, upheld through relevant domestic policies as well as in foreign policy.

Why should Australia's foreign policy champion multilateralism and human rights?

1. As noted in the Strategic Priority 1 section of this submission, the emergent multipolarity of geopolitics sets the stage for the next decade of Australia's foreign policy engagements to require that delicate balances between competing interests be struck. States will pursue their interests and test the old balances of power to determine how, and in what ways, the system will permit them to exercise their power.

2. The multilateral system and key normative frameworks, such as universal human rights, have been established and upheld as a direct response to the lessons learned in the early 20th century about rising powers and the unchecked pursuit of State interests. These tools are necessary to constrain the legitimate choices available to powerful actors. However, to continue to hold sway over actors, there must remain a widespread consensus about their applicability; they must function in practice; and there must be consequences for their breach.

3. To maintain and strengthen the consensus that exists will require predictable and principled adherence to these norms by those actors seeking to champion them. It is in Australia's interests that this consensus remains and the system and normative frameworks are meaningful for as many actors as possible amongst the family of nations. They underpin peace and prosperity and Australia's own security and economic interests are best served in a peaceful, stable and prosperous global order. Australia must be prepared to align its domestic policy with the same principles to be a credible and strong leader on these issues.

4. In addition to the role that multilateral and human rights defence and promotion play in achieving optimal conditions for Australia to pursue its foreign policy, these tools are also effective in disrupting the rising protectionist, isolationist and nationalist sentiments that are in part motivated by the deeply entrenched poverty, economic and social inequality experienced by so many individuals.

5. The growth of populism and nationalism is evident through resurgent parochial political parties in Australia and momentum for far-right parties and populist political actors across Europe, the USA, and in the Philippines.

6. These politicians, their parties and their supporters have grievances, many legitimate; however, their narratives are ones of blame and anger which threaten to undermine domestic social, economic and foreign policy, approaches that have been very good for Australians over many decades.

7. Complex social, economic and political problems are blamed simply on globalisation, the United Nations, trade relations, refugees, migrants, Islam, and mainstream political parties. Government programs to redistribute economic benefits in society are attacked with derision, and international development assistance is given short shrift, with funding deeply cut on the false premise of its zero-sum benefits.

8. Those advancing and accepting isolationist and populist approaches are inclined to turn inwards, shut the gate, and take unilateral action in response to complex, deeply integrated, problems. There is a similar script amongst the demagogues: one of fear, chaos and hopeless leaders, and it is designed to tap into an anxiety felt by people that they have been, or will be, left behind.

9. These populist and far-right actors position themselves as the only ones capable of fixing problems and use popular acquiescence to their narrative as justification for rolling back fundamental freedoms and universal human rights. This, in turn, sets the stage for political and social unrest, as people won't stand for such concentrations of power and curtailed individual freedoms for long, particularly in countries with a long-standing practice of democracy.

10. Civil society, and the legitimate space for civil society to operate in all countries, is a key way of protecting against this decline of stability around the world. People's right to organise, to hold their governments accountable, and to participate in social, cultural and political processes of their country is a critical component of free and open societies. Civil society also holds to account the private sector and works with, and alongside, private enterprise to incentivise action for the common or public good.

11. Civil society plays numerous roles from acting as watchdogs in States where impunity and corruption are endemic, to service providers in places where public services are under-funded or are contracted out to be delivered on behalf of the government. Civil society also acts in solidarity with the vulnerable, serving as a bulwark against a complete disregard for universal rights. Amongst its achievements, civil society also plays a critical role in articulating standards which can define and shape the course of action of States and non-State entities.[36]

12. Each of these has a valuable contribution to make in extending the number of State actors that feel, and are responsive to, pressure from their citizens, that act as a constraint on their exercise of power, both domestically and internationally. As a right of individuals to gather, think, discuss and participate in like-minded groupings, civil society spaces are also an important human rights outcome.

13. By acting on all the strategic priorities outlined in this submission, and doing so with a primary emphasis on Australian values, predictable, principled action and promotion of multilateral approaches and universal human rights, a clear signal is sent to those most worried: 'you will not be left behind'. Using the multilateral system and the framework of universal human rights to identify and prioritise collaboration with likeminded actors builds the constituency for those ideas, and in turn, builds their legitimacy.

14. A highly subscribed-to multilateral system that is seen to have high degrees of legitimacy will also contribute to better adherence to agreements and decisions taken through, or in support of, multilateral approaches and human rights. Better adherence to commitments – and consequences for breaches – will contribute to better outcomes which in turn will influence individual belief that the current system can meet their needs and interests.

Foreign Policy Imperative 3: Support, and protect space for, civil society

As a liberal democratic nation with a long and established tradition of civil society's contribution, Australia is well placed to champion the role of civil society, and to engage diplomatically to protect the space that civil society requires to operate in with legitimacy. This will make a vital contribution to keeping open societies and representative governments flourishing around the world in the decade to come.

In recent years, increasing pressure has been placed on institutions, processes and systems which have been the mainstay of open societies for a century or more. In fact, in some of the most stable democracies around the world, troubling assaults on the bedrocks of the democratic tradition have been increasing for some time. Several of these pressures are being driven by changes to social organisation prompted by distribution and accessibility of mobile technology, social media, labour mobility and movements of people, and the judicial and political interpretation of these phenomena communicated to the public.

Amongst these worrying trends, none is more so than the shrinking space for civil society around the world. Civil society is an intersecting feature of both human rights and democratic principles. Civil society is the space for individuals within their communities to participate in, shape the direction of, and hold accountable elected representatives of, their societies.

Narrowing the legitimate space for civil society consequently limits people's rights to participate in the processes of social, cultural, economic and political life within their countries. Doing so also signals an unwillingness by governments to be responsive to their constituents.

As a proud and stable democracy, Australia is well placed to champion the important role of civil society and seek to protect and extend the spaces for civil societies to engage in their own countries and in global policy and governance. It is in Australia's interests that there be a growing number of free, equal, inclusive and open societies in the decades ahead.

Recommendation 4.4: The White Paper should clearly identify the role of civil society in protecting and advancing human rights and fundamental freedoms and position Australia as a champion of civil society space around the world by:

4.4.1 Supporting reforms to global governance that make it more representative and inclusive, including specific space for civil society engagement;

4.4.2 Protesting violations of human rights and attacks on civil society;

4.4.3 Working closely with all sectors to achieve adherence to business and human rights standards in all industries;

4.4.4 Engaging partners around the world in developing and upholding enabling environments, legal, regulatory, policy and normative, for civil society.

What does success look like?

15. If Australia's foreign affairs were to prioritise predictable, principled action and promotion of multilateralism and human rights, the characteristics, policies or commitments would be:

   a. **Predictable:** Global engagements where Australia leads by example in support of multilateral and human rights causes, as well as through action aligned with our values, and problem solving that prioritises positive-sum solutions;

   b. **Principled:** Australia's reputation as a principled actor and neutral broker would be supported by a consistent approach to domestic and foreign policy solutions, including domestic human rights adherence, and international commitments would be pursued domestically as relevant.

   c. **Values-based:** The achievement of short- and long-term geopolitical, trade and development aims would be sought based on a triple bottom line approach and our values would act as the ultimate bottom-line, stopping us from following partners down paths that cannot serve our full set of interests.

   d. **Multilateral**: Australia's global engagements would be consistent with cultivating a normative rather than a coercive influence. Building on the high levels of normative influence over the past half-century, Australia can continue to enjoy this status by refraining from adopting unilateralist approaches and vigorously seeking and applying collaborative solutions to common problems.

   e. **Defending human rights:** Australia should be an unequivocal champion of human rights and social, cultural, economic and political enfranchisement for all.

   f. **Protecting civil society space:** Australia can support accountable governments and human rights by championing and protecting civil society space. Civil society sits at the nexus of human rights and democratic principles and its ability to operate without undue regulation or interference is a strong predicator of governments' responsiveness to its citizens.

   g. **Investing in the UN**: Australia should seek to reform the United Nations and its instruments to be more representative, including the Security Council.

   h. **Working with new partners on new issues:** Australia should be seen to be leading in consolidating and widening adherence to existing and new normative frameworks for action on human rights, climate change, migration and refugees, nuclear non-proliferation, and international humanitarian law. Australia can lead nations by better ensuring that non-State actors, particularly multinationals, act as good global citizens, pay their full share of domestic tax where they operate, and are held accountable across jurisdictions for violations of rights in any single jurisdiction.

   i. **Development assistance**: Assigning equal value to our development assistance efforts, consistent with the importance placed on diplomacy and trade, as discussed throughout this Submission.

j. **Improving public communication**: As discussed in Section 5, a values-based Australian foreign policy and aid and development program could be more effectively communicated to the Australian public to engender support.

Strategic Priority 5: Better communication of Australian foreign policy

Recommendation 5.1: The White Paper process should be used to develop a values-based narrative for Australian foreign policy as a key communications tool.

Recommendation 5.2: An over-arching, plain-English purpose statement for Australia's foreign policy should be developed that has bipartisan support and agreement.

Limitations of the key elements of the current narrative

1. Australian foreign policy currently lacks an effective articulation of the values that underpin our foreign policy. Because of this, it also lacks a coherent narrative about what Australia intends to achieve in the world.

2. The White Paper is an opportunity to think laterally, strategically, and innovatively about how we conceive of, and communicate what we seek to do in, foreign affairs.

3. Currently, explanations of Australian foreign policy rely heavily on a set of descriptors or concepts that are outdated and fail to effectively convey to the Australian public and neighbouring nations what Australia stands for and how we will engage in the world.

4. Below, ACFID has outlined what we see as key the key concepts and narrative elements of the current foreign policy descriptions and raised some of the critical challenges posed by those terms.

Concept	Critical challenges
Middle power	In a multipolar world, where Australia's influence is declining relative to the rise of countries such as the BRICs, this concept may have outlived its usefulness as it fails to capture and convey the changing dynamics of the global system. The terminology also seems to limit the scope of ambition towards shaping and leading on the world stage. Middle power conveys a sense of being squeezed by larger powers rather than a proactive approach to shaping the system in line with Australia's own values.
Punching above our weight	In direct contrast to the phrase 'middle power', this term seems to indicate that Australia achieves more than expected. However, in the absence of visible leadership in pursuit of values that resonate with most Australians, the dominant questions remains: Achieving what? And why? It also uses an expression linked to violence and discord, projecting a sense that fighting is the only way to achieve our goals.
Committed to a rules-based normative order	To the general public, this phrase is jargon. Its use by political and policy professionals is obfuscating rather than enlightening and when it is understood, it appears to be honoured more in the breach than in the observance. For those groups of Australians who share a focus on global engagement and global governance, the phrase invites either scepticism or outright critique as Australian practice in our treatment and approach to refugees and asylum seekers appears to directly contradict this statement.
Committed to free trade and globalisation	At the electoral level there has been significant backlash to free trade and globalisation. This can be seen with the resurgence of anti-free trade, anti-globalisation political

	parties who diagnose that free trade and globalisation have failed to deliver for the populace. For those who have benefited least from globalisation, populism, nationalism, and isolationism have been on the rise as the apparent antidote.
Special relationship with the US	Under President Trump, such a claimed special relationship may be of less reassurance to the public and more of a concern, given potential future vagaries in US policy.
National interest	The term itself is amorphous and ill-defined. Without explaining what Australia stands, for the invocation of something being *in the national interest* is too broad and can be viewed as just a term of convenience rather than of any meaningful definition. It has been overused and has lost any sense of meaning.

5. The terms above are used in political circles by policy and political professionals, and are not invalid for those who believe they understand what is meant when they use them. However, the key to good communication is to have consistent messages that are understood by many.

6. While there is no narrative that will appeal to everyone, Australia has mainstream values that can resonate with a wide cross-section of the population.

A values-based narrative for Australian foreign policy

7. The values below are illustrative, demonstrating what can be done when attention is paid to the issue of communicating Australia's foreign policy in deliberately simple but resonating language.

Value	Explanation	Communication benefit
Cooperative	Australia is one amongst many in the family of nations, and a preferred way of working is to cooperate with others to achieve outcomes.	The public has an intrinsic understanding of what cooperation means, and what uncooperative behaviour looks like, with a preference for the former. Invoking the value of cooperation communicates that Australia will work with all equally.
Good neighbours	Australia's geographic location positions us for interaction with people from all different cultures and backgrounds. As in a neighbourhood, we want our region to be peaceful and prosperous, for us to be able to go about our business, and contribute to making it a better place.	The neighbourhood is an easily-understood idea that helps invoke identity and belonging. Drawing on the value of being a good neighbour helps to situate Australians in a positive place in the world, and describes how we will treat others and how we expect to be treated.
Play by the rules	We all understand that rules make society a better, more organised and fairer place to live and work. So too with the international order. Australia contributes to creating the rules and processes by which nations coexist, and we also follow the rules.	This simple statement of value helps avoids obscure descriptors such as 'rules-based order', 'normative standards' and the confusion and varying application between domestic and international law. This value plays into the strong sense of propriety that Australians have about following clearly articulated rules, and projects it onto the world and our role in upholding rules.

Democratic	Australians understand that we are a liberal democracy with social and political freedoms, and a parliamentary democracy, and that other countries don't all share these attributes. Most Australians would agree that this a very positive aspect of living in Australia.	Using the democratic value, we can proudly present the benefit of living in a democratic society to the world, and proclaim that our liberal democratic values will inform our foreign policy, even though we are not always dealing with liberal democratic countries. As a key value on which our foreign policy is premised, it also provides a rationale for why we will stand up for a democratic way of life and speak out where we see freedoms being abused or authoritarianism repressing people.
A fair go	A trait of Australians is that we help others less fortunate and work to ensure that they have opportunities to prosper. We don't kick someone when they are down or take advantage of them. We don't pick on a particular group of people.	This is one of the most enduring national values. Using it to communicate our foreign policy goals speaks to our commitment to help others less fortunate and to give a hand when we see people struggling. This value also helps to place our development assistance efforts, which are aimed at helping others, as an integral part of our value system. It conveys simply that we are non-discriminatory in regard to all peoples and groups regardless of gender, ethnicity, and beliefs.
Open economy and society	As with a business, an economy can be open or closed. An open economy is one that embraces business and migration, and will find constructive ways to bolster these. Open societies are ones where people's freedoms are emphasised and rights protected. Australia wants to work with other open economies and open societies to create a more open world.	As a value statement, it avoids the politically loaded terms 'free trade' and 'globalisation'. It is also clearly expressing how we want to trade and engage with the world, and what we would like to see from other countries, i.e. more open economies and societies.

8. The values above are intentionally simple to capture and communicate concepts that are commonly understood by the public, and project them onto foreign policy as an explanatory tool. The advantage of using such values is that the broadest cross-section of Australians implicitly understands their meaning.

9. More sophisticated descriptors applied to trade, multilateral cooperation, and security can be used behind these high-level values.

A plain-English narrative for foreign policy

10. While different governments will have foreign policy priorities that give emphasis to their policy objectives, it is important to develop an overarching narrative that can have longevity across election cycles.

11. Without such an overarching statement, foreign policy is too often communicated piecemeal and in terms of stand-alone issues or processes, rather than holistically.

12. We believe that a high-level narrative must explain to the public, clearly and simply, what our foreign policy intends to achieve for Australia and the world.

13. Such a narrative might be:

    Our foreign policy aims to increase Australia's human security, sustainable and inclusive prosperity, and the positive influence of Australia in the world. We believe that in working towards these goals for Australia, we will actively contribute to increased human security, prosperity of other nations, and through cooperation, make a better world.

Recommendation 5.3: DFAT should prioritise communicating with the Australian public about why, how, and to what end we engage internationally by:

> 5.3.1 Creating and resourcing a senior role for a Strategic Communications advisor for Australia's Foreign Policy;
>
> 5.3.2   Embedding communication's specialists across the Department to increase the ability of all areas to communicate with the Australian public;
>
> 5.3.3 Investing in high quality data and monitoring to learn lessons on how communications are being received by the Australian public.

Annex A

AUSTRALIAN
COUNCIL
FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

List of ACFID Members

Full Members

- ACC International Relief
- Act for Peace - NCCA
- ActionAid Australia
- Action on Poverty
- Adara Development Australia
- ADRA Australia
- Afghan Australian Development Organisation
- Anglican Aid
- Anglican Board of Mission - Australia Limited
- Anglican Overseas Aid
- Anglican Relief and Development Fund Australia
- Asia Pacific Journalism Centre
- Asian Aid Organisation
- Assisi Aid Projects
- Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine
- Australia for UNHCR
- Australia Hope International Inc.
- Australian Business Volunteers
- Australian Doctors for Africa
- Australian Doctors International
- Australian Himalayan Foundation
- Australian Lutheran World Service
- Australian Marist Solidarity Ltd
- Australian Medical Aid Foundation
- Australian Mercy
- Australian Red Cross
- Australian Respiratory Council
- AVI
- Beyond the Orphanage
- Birthing Kit Foundation (Australia)
- Brien Holden Vision Institute Foundation

- Bright Futures Child Aid and Development Fund (Australia)
- Burnet Institute
- Business for Millennium Development
- CARE Australia
- Caritas Australia
- CBM Australia
- ChildFund Australia
- CLAN (Caring and Living as Neighbours)
- Credit Union Foundation Australia
- Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Overseas Aid Fund
- Diaspora Action Australia
- Diplomacy Training Program
- Door of Hope Australia Inc.
- Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia)
- EDO NSW
- Engineers without Borders
- Every Home Global Concern
- Family Planning New South Wales
- Fairtrade Australia New Zealand
- Food Water Shelter
- Foresight (Overseas Aid and Prevention of Blindness)
- Fred Hollows Foundation, The
- Global Development Group
- Global Mission Partners
- Good Shepherd Services
- Grameen Foundation Australia
- Habitat for Humanity Australia
- Hagar Australia
- HealthServe Australia
- Heilala*
- Hope Global
- Hunger Project Australia, The
- International Children's Care (Australia)
- International Christian Aid and Relief Enterprises
- International Needs Australia
- International Nepal Fellowship (Aust) Ltd
- International RiverFoundation
- International Women's Development Agency
- Interplast Australia & New Zealand
- Islamic Relief Australia
- KTF (Kokoda Track Foundation)
- Kyeema Foundation

- Lasallian Foundation
- Leprosy Mission Australia, The
- Live & Learn Environmental Education
- Love Mercy Foundation
- Mahboba's Promise Australia
- Marie Stopes International Australia
- Marist Mission Centre
- Mary MacKillop International
- Mary Ward International Australia
- Mercy Works Ltd.
- Mission World Aid Inc.
- MIT Group Foundation
- Motivation Australia
- MSC Mission Office
- Murdoch Children's Research Institute
- MAA (Muslim Aid Australia)
- Nusa Tenggara Association Inc.
- Oaktree Foundation
- Opportunity International Australia
- Oro Community Development Project Inc.
- Oxfam Australia
- Palmera Projects
- Partner Housing Australasia*
- Partners in Aid
- Partners Relief and Development Australia
- People with Disability Australia
- PLAN International Australia
- Quaker Service Australia
- RedR Australia
- Reledev Australia
- RESULTS International (Australia)
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
- Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
- Salesian Missions
- Salvation Army (NSW Property Trust)
- Save the Children Australia
- Service Fellowship International Inc.
- School for Life Foundation
- SeeBeyondBorders
- Sight For All
- So They Can
- Sport Matters
- Surf Aid International
- Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation Australia
- TEAR Australia
- Transform Aid International (incorporating Baptist World Aid)
- UNICEF Australia
- Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA

- UnitingWorld
- Volunteers in Community Engagement (VOICE)
- WaterAid Australia
- World Education Australia
- World Vision Australia
- WWF-Australia
- YWAM Medical Ships

Affiliate Members

- Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations
- Australian National University – School of Archaeology and Anthropology, College of Arts and Social Sciences
- Deakin University – Alfred Deakin Research Institute
- La Trobe University – Institute of Human Security and Social Change
- Murdoch University – School of Management and Governance
- Refugee Council of Australia
- RMIT – Global Cities Research Institute
- Swinburne University of Technology Centre for Design Innovation
- Transparency International Australia
- University of Melbourne – School of Social and Political Sciences
- University of New South Wales- International
- University of Queensland – Institute for Social Science Research
- University of Sydney – Office of Global Engagement
- University of the Sunshine Coast – International Projects Group
- University of Technology, Sydney – Institute for Sustainable Futures
- University of Western Australia – School of Social Sciences
- Vision 2020
- Western Sydney University- School of Social Sciences and Psychology

* Denotes Interim Full Members

Annex B

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AUSTRALIA AHEAD OF THE CURVE
An Agenda for International Development to 2025
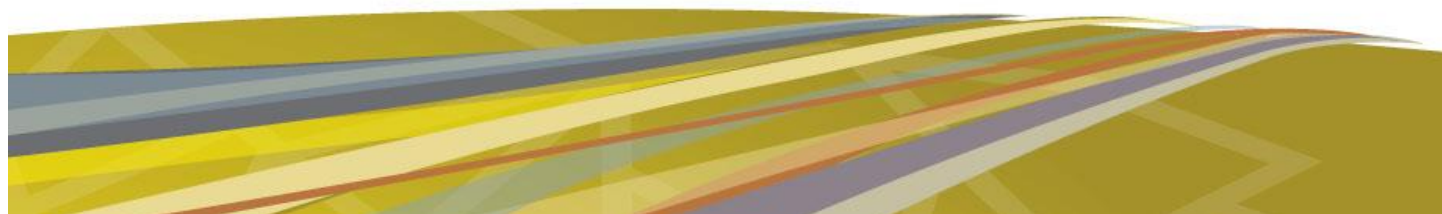
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