

Asia-Pacific 4D

INAUGURAL DEVELOPMENT, DIPLOMACY AND DEFENCE DIALOGUE

Rethinking Australia's International Relations
5 November 2019

"Australia's capacity to shape the world by persuading others will determine how effectively we can deal with the unparalleled international challenges ahead. That requires us to coordinate all our national assets in new ways. AP4D is a model for what needs to be done."

Allan Gyngell AO

National President, Australian Institute of International Affairs



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ABOUT ASIA-PACIFIC 4D

No existing Australian forum deliberately brings together the discrete strands of foreign relations represented by the development, diplomatic and defence communities. Asia Pacific 4D aims to create a new dimension in Australia's international relations policy-making by combining the skills and experience of each community to achieve new insights, develop and test new ideas and promote strategic collaboration around shared interests.

This initiative is needed now because our strategic circumstances are changing rapidly. Prime Minister Morrison said recently that "Australia has never been in a better position to influence international events and to benefit from them" (Lowy, October 3, 2019). Dialogue partners also see opportunities, but judge that they will be challenging to grasp. Additionally, they see large and growing threats requiring additional action, both bilateral and multilateral.

Across multiple indices, Australia's relative weight in the world is diminishing. It is, at very least, questionable whether the array of measures already taken in response will reverse what is assessed to be our declining ability to shape events to our advantage. The China challenge may be understood in the broad, but few foreign policy and strategic analysts argue that we have yet crafted the right set of responses. Additionally, wider changes in the relative weight and power of regional countries do not appear to be fully reflected in our thinking and strategic planning.

The fundamental problem for Australia, as seen by dialogue organisers, is that the international relations challenges we face are multiplying and our assets are deteriorating, but thus far we have only been willing to bolster our defences; fund greater intelligence operations and push back in the Pacific. It is argued that Australian interests require a much more substantial and integrated set of responses, especially in South East Asia. Collaboration between development, diplomatic and defence communities may help identify what is required and carry the message to decision makers.

ASIA-PACIFIC 4D GOALS

The Asia Pacific Development, Diplomacy, Defence Dialogue aims to:

- Forge a multi-party consensus that a substantial increase in the scale and sophistication of Australian international activity is needed to respond to a deterioration in Australia's strategic circumstances and lift Australia's declining ability to influence regional and global developments.
- Shape and sustain a new platform for Australian international policy development that will:
 - Create a 'safe space' to explore a wide range of alternative policies and actions
 - Catalyse new insights and ideas, allowing Australia's national interests to be debated, tested, reformulated and advanced
 - Build understanding and complementarity amongst different international policy actors; thereby creating dynamic new networks
 - Encourage and enable credible voices to speak with knowledge and authority across a range of issues pertinent to the long-term security and prosperity of Australia and the region
- Through its deliberations, periodically determine a small number of key messages for decision makers in government and beyond to respond effectively to the rising international challenges Australia is facing.

CHAIR'S STATEMENT

We, the Chairs of the inaugural Asia Pacific Development, Diplomacy and Defence Dialogue (Asia Pacific 4D), convened 25 influential international relations leaders at the Australian National University on 5 November 2019.

This new partnership between our organisations was created on the collective agreement that greater strategic collaboration between the individual fields of foreign policy is required to help Australia address the unprecedented international relations environment it faces.

In convening this multidisciplinary group, this inaugural dialogue established the foundations of a new and more extensive partnership between our fields of development, diplomacy and defence and set a course for its future.

DIALOGUE OUTCOMES

Informed by analysis from our fields, there was consensus that Australia's weight in the world is declining. Primarily, this is driven by two factors: firstly, the fall of Australia's relative economic weight to other nations and secondly, the fragmentation of the international order from which Australia has benefited.

We agreed that this environment presents Australia with unparalleled challenges, but also new opportunities. We agreed that Australia must be more proactive in shaping its international circumstances and protecting and advancing its interests.

We welcomed the recognition and analysis of this environment in recent foreign policy and defence white papers and their emphases on a smarter, more proactive Australian foreign policy. We agreed that these responses should be deepened, extrapolated and pursued with urgency, noting that such plans need resourcing if they are to be achieved.

We affirmed that domestic and international issues should not be considered distinct in growing Australia's reputation and influence. We acknowledged that greater consistency between the values and policies Australia pursues at home and those overseas would allow Australia to speak with 'one voice', creating greater clarity for international partners and which could ultimately improve Australia's international standing. The dialogue attendees concluded that an accurate, informed evidence base is needed to assess Australia's reputation and influence and to benchmark current perceptions of Australia in the world.

We reaffirmed that Australian interests, understood in terms of current geopolitical, geoeconomic and geostrategic challenges, can be better secured by greater coordination and integration of diplomatic, development, and defence policy-making. We considered several factors in reaching this conclusion:

We agreed that Australia's geostrategic approach should not rely upon military means alone and to be effective over the long-term, must always include non-kinetic aspects such as statecraft, peace-building and efforts to support resilience, including development assistance to reduce poverty;

In times of crises such as, Australia's role in the independence of Timor-Leste and Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, there was recognition that Australia had acted highly effectively. We agreed that part of that success was driven by the unification of diplomacy, defence and development, cognisant of the different, but complementary roles played by each. We agreed that this approach should be replicated outside times of crisis to create greater coherence;

We recognised that the contemporary international challenges facing Australia are multifaceted and increasingly touched upon all areas of Australia's foreign policy apparatus. A recurring example in our discussion was climate change. It was identified as an international security threat; a potential risk to Australia's reputation; and a development priority within the dialogue;

We considered the decline in Australia's overall spending on international relations, as a percentage of the Federal Budget. There was consensus that the demands upon Australian international relations are likely to increase, and in a constrained fiscal environment, without further budgetary allocation, its impact and effectiveness would become increasingly reliant upon integration; and

We recognised that Australia's diplomatic posts achieve greater coordination between development, diplomacy and defence than agencies in Canberra (with the suggestion that their size allowed for closer and more nimble working). This led to initial consideration of the adequacy of Australia's current arrangements for strategic planning and foreign policy coherence. In this regard, there was significant support for the concept of the Office of the Pacific put in place by the Australian Government (and its promising whole-of-government approach), following the Foreign Policy White Paper's recommendations to strengthen relations with the region. There is interest in carefully charting its progress over time and applying lessons learnt for future whole-of-government approaches to Australian foreign policy.

THE FUTURE OF AP4D

Attendees supported the continuation and intensification of the collaboration between our fields beyond the inaugural dialogue and offered their support in shaping and sustaining the partnership to catalyse new thinking on development, diplomacy and defence.

Asia Pacific 4D partners reflect that the dialogue demonstrated that the three fields too readily operate in silos. Further to the work of the Office of the Pacific, the partners hold that new ways should be examined by our fields and by the Australian Government to generate further understanding between fields, find complementary ways of working and achieve greater coherence and ultimately, a more effective and strategic Australian foreign policy.

As partners, we will consider future directions with a view to an applied project with partners and attendees; a major annual event; dedicated dialogue sessions on specific topics; and research on high priority issues of shared interest. The partners recognise Asia Pacific 4D as a forum to generate and test new foreign policy ideas and approaches, and which other interested parties could utilize for the same purpose.



Professor Michael Wesley



Ms Therese Faulkner



Mr Marc Purcell



Mr Chris Gardiner

ATTENDEES

CO-CHAIRS

Professor Michael Wesley

Mr Marc Purcell

Ms Therese Faulkner

Mr Chris Gardiner

CONVENORS

Ms Bridi Rice

Mr Richard Moore

Mr James Batley PSM

Mr Ted Burgell

Ms Melissa Conley Tyler

Dr Sarah Cooke

Dr Ben Day

Mr Bill Farmer AO

Dr Robert Glasser

Dr Prudence Gordon

Dr John Hewson AM

Mr Kris Kathiravel

Mr John McCarthy AO

Ms Annmaree O’Keeffe AM

Dr Morten Pedersen

Dr Lauren Richardson

Professor Anthea Roberts

Professor Brendan Sargeant

Dr Helen Szoke AO

“I applaud this initiative, as I always liked the UK ‘joined up’ FCO/DFID/MOD model and thought we should emulate.”

Gareth Evans

Chancellor ANU and former Minister for Foreign Affairs

PHOTOS – Top: Co-chairs Mr Marc Purcell, Ms Therese Faulkner and Mr Chris Gardiner. Middle: Dr Ben Day, Ms Melissa Conley Tyler and Mr James Batley PSM. Bottom: Mr Richard Moore and Prof. Michael Wesley.



For further information on this initiative or if you want to be involved,
please contact Co-Convenors Bridi Rice and Richard Moore via ACFID at 4D@acfid.asn.au



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