2

Australia–ASEAN links

Introduction

2.1   This chapter discusses the nature and level of interaction between ASEAN, ASEAN nations, the Australian government and Australian non-government organisations. This is considered in the context of:

- the culture of ASEAN;

- ASEAN's increasing engagement with the region, including
  ⇒ recent developments; and
  ⇒ membership of other organisations; and

- Australian interaction with ASEAN

The culture of ASEAN

2.2   ASEAN was founded in 1967 by five nations at the height of the Cold War.[1] The founding nations were acutely aware of the potential for

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1   The founding countries were Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

Communist-led revolutionary movements and their vulnerability in relation to the major powers. They were also recovering from tensions between them.[2]

2.3   Economic development was also a concern. ASEAN members were dependent on the trade in primary produce with First World trading partners, who were perceived as unsympathetic.

2.4   Being unable to significantly influence the conditions affecting it, ASEAN maximised its members' diplomatic and political strengths and focused on discussion and confidence building. ASEAN:

> … emphasised informality and loose arrangements, … stressed the primacy of the sovereign equality of members and has generally avoided the exercise of overt leadership, and has sought gradual change based on consensus with cooperation preceding 'at a pace comfortable to all'.[3]

2.5   The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member countries was entrenched through the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation signed in Bali in February 1976. The treaty calls for signatories to commit to:

- non-interference in internal affairs of one another;
- settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful means;
- renunciation of the threat or use of force; and
- effective cooperation among themselves.[4]

2.6   ASEAN has a distinctive style of operation, termed 'the ASEAN way', which emphasises:

- frequent meetings and discouragement of top-heavy institutions, the key being annual Ministerial meetings;

- economic cooperation without producing serious disharmony, thereby creating an image of ASEAN as a stable and benign destination for foreign investment; and

- using ASEAN's collective drawing power to gradually include other major external countries in dialogue.[5]

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2   Indonesia's 'Confrontation' of the new state of Malaysia, 1963–1966; and the Philippines' claim to the Malaysian state of Sabah, 1968.

3   *Exhibit No. 1,* pp. 4–5.

4   <http://www.aseansec.org/1217.htm> Accessed December 2008.

5   *Exhibit No. 1,* pp. 5–6.

ASEAN's increasing engagement with the region

2.7   ASEAN has progressively engaged with other countries in the Asia-Pacific region since its creation in 1967.

ASEAN's dialogue partners

2.8   ASEAN maintains relationships with countries known as 'dialogue partners'—non-members of ASEAN who have an identified interest in the ASEAN region.

2.9   Australia was the first country to establish a relationship with ASEAN in 1974 through the Australia-ASEAN Economic Cooperation Program, which provided multilateral economic assistance.[6]

2.10   In 1979, ASEAN invited the Foreign Ministers of its dialogue partners to a Post Ministerial Conference held after ASEAN's annual Ministerial Meeting. Australia is currently one of 10 ASEAN dialogue partners.[7]

ASEAN Regional Forum

2.11   The 1994 inaugural ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) increased the number of nations interacting with ASEAN. Attending the ARF were the ASEAN member countries, its dialogue partners, and Mongolia, Pakistan, PNG, North Korea, and Sri Lanka.

2.12   The ARF was created in the context of strategic uncertainty following the demise of the Soviet Union, and the desire to engage major and regional powers such as China, the US, and Japan. The aim of the ARF was to 'sponsor multilateral discussions on regional security issues', with ASEAN playing a leading role. The ARF is now held annually following ASEAN's Ministerial and Post Ministerial Conferences.[8]

ASEAN Plus Three

2.13   The ASEAN Plus Three (APT) process was prompted by several factors including:

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6   *Exhibit No. 1*, p. 47.
7   *Exhibit No. 1*, p. 5.
8   *Exhibit No. 1*, pp. 37–8.

- the Asian financial crisis which caused a focus on the need for greater cooperation to forestall future crises and to provide support to ASEAN nations in their dealings with the International Monetary Fund (IMF);

- the stalling of APEC's momentum towards trade liberalisation;

- the progressive development of the European Union and the North American Free-Trade Agreement; and

- the rise of China as an economic power.[9]

2.14   The first meeting of the APT, held in Kuala Lumpur in 1997, was attended by China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. It has continued to adopt a 'loose cooperative framework based on conferences and dialogue.' The dialogue is flexible in approach, with meetings between ASEAN and all three external members; between ASEAN and one external member; or just between the non-ASEAN members.

2.15   The APT process has promoted regional financial cooperation through two major initiatives:

- the Chiang Mai Initiative which enables currency swap arrangements between the central banks of participating states without recourse to the IMF; and

- the Asian bond market which is intended to enable East Asian entities to borrow from each other's reserves in local currency denominations rather than in the currencies of the major industrial economies.[10]

East Asian Summit

2.16   The East Asian Summit (EAS) developed from a desire of the APT group to broaden dialogue to countries of a wider geographical area. It was stipulated, however, that countries attending the EAS:

- must be signatories of the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (or be prepared to sign it);

- needed to be full ASEAN Dialogue Partners; and

- had to have substantial relations with ASEAN.[11]

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9   *Exhibit No. 1,* p. 40

10   *Exhibit No. 1,* pp. 41–2.

11   *Exhibit No. 1,* p. 43.

2.17   Regarding potential members of the EAS, political tensions between China and Japan polarised the ASEAN member countries. Some ASEAN member countries supported China's view that the EAS should involve just the APT nations; other ASEAN member countries supported Japan's view that membership should be extended to include Australia, India, and New Zealand. In the end, Japan's view prevailed and the first EAS was held in 2005.[12]

2.18   The divergence in views remains, with Malaysia arguing that the APT is the best vehicle for building an East Asia Community and Japan arguing for a broader Australia-ASEAN Economic Cooperation Program based on the EAS grouping.[13]

Recent developments

2.19   Two recent developments in ASEAN's evolution have significantly affected Australia's interaction with ASEAN. The first—the Bali Concord II—has provided a framework for much of Australia's interaction with ASEAN member countries. The second—the ASEAN Charter—has the potential to raise the profile of ASEAN as a distinct entity in Australia's future relations with ASEAN.

Bali Concord II

2.20   The Bali Concord II, announced in 2003, introduced ASEAN's three pillars policy for underpinning future intra-ASEAN cooperation. The 'three pillars' were:

- political and security cooperation—development of an ASEAN Security Community (since 2007, referred to as ASEAN Political and Security Community);

- economic cooperation—development of an ASEAN Economic Community; and

- socio-cultural cooperation—development of an ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community.[14]

2.21   Since 2003, Australia's interactions with ASEAN can be seen to be consistent with and assisting ASEAN's goals as outlined in its three pillars objectives.

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12   *Exhibit No. 1,* p. 44.
13   *Exhibit No. 1,* p. 46.
14   *Exhibit No. 1,* p. 8. Further details can be found at *Exhibit No. 1,* pp. 8–20.

ASEAN Charter

2.22   The ASEAN Charter was adopted in November 2007 and came into effect in December 2008. Under the Charter:

- ASEAN becomes a legal entity as an inter-government organisation;

- ASEAN achieves status under international law and can enter into agreements in its own right;

- two new positions of Deputy Secretary General are to be created, with open recruitment based on merit;

- biannual ASEAN Summits are convened;

- an ASEAN Coordinating Council is established, comprising ASEAN Foreign Ministers;

- a Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN is formed comprising representatives from each of the member states;

- three ASEAN Councils are formed—for Political-Security, Economic, and Socio-Cultural Communities;

- key high-level ASEAN bodies are to have a single chairmanship; and

- an ASEAN Human Rights Body is established.[15,16]

2.23   In March 2009, the ASEAN Secretary-General announced a restructuring of the ASEAN Secretariat to come into effect in April 2009. Four departments were created, three mirroring ASEAN's three pillars policy, and the fourth focusing on community and corporate affairs. Each department would be led by a Deputy Secretary-General.[17]

Membership of other regional organisations

2.24   Australia and the countries of ASEAN are members of various international bodies. In evidence to the Committee, three

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15   *Exhibit No. 1*, p. 23.

16   *Press Statement by the Chairman of ASEAN on the Special ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting,* ASEAN Secretariat, 15 December 2008.

17   ASEAN Secretariat, Press Release, *New ASEAN Secretariat for the ASEAN Community.* 25 March 2009. <http://www.aseansec.org/PR-ASECRestructuring.pdf> Accessed March 2009.

organisations were referred to as being important for Australia's interaction with ASEAN member countries:

- the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA);

- the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO); and

- Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

Membership of the IAEA

2.25   Seven ASEAN states are amongst the 145 member states of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).[18] The goals of the IAEA, which arose from US President Eisenhower's 'Atoms for Peace' address to the UN in 1953, are nuclear verification and security, safety and technology transfer.[19]

Membership of SEAMEO

2.26   SEAMEO was established in 1965 following a meeting of education ministers from Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and South Vietnam, the Chairperson of UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines, and the Special Adviser to the US President. SEAMEO currently comprises the 10 ASEAN member countries and Timor Leste which joined in 2006. There are eight Associate Members, one Affiliate Member, and one Partner Country. Australia and New Zealand joined the organisation in 1974 as the second and third Associate Members. The SEAMEO secretariat is based in Bangkok.

2.27   The aim of SEAMEO is:

> To enhance regional understanding and cooperation and unity of purpose among SEAMEO Member Countries and achieve a better quality of life through:
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> - the establishment of networks and partnerships;
> - the provision of an intellectual forum for policymakers and experts;
> - the promotion of sustainable human resource development.[20]

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18   Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam. Cambodia joined in 1958 but withdrew in 2003.

19   <http://www.iaea.org> Accessed December 2008.

20   <http://www.seameo.org> Accessed December 2008.

Membership of APEC

2.28   APEC arose in 1989 from an informal dialogue of a group of 12 nations meeting in Canberra. Its secretariat is based in Singapore. APEC now has 21 member countries, seven of which are from ASEAN.[21] As well, the ASEAN secretariat has official observer status.

2.29   The aim of APEC is set out under a 'three pillars' framework:

- trade and investment liberalisation;

- business facilitation; and

- economic and technical cooperation.

2.30   APEC's goals are to be achieved through 'promoting dialogue and equal respect for the views of all participants in making decisions based on consensus' rather than through entering into legally binding obligations.[22]

Committee comment

2.31   Since its inception in 1967, ASEAN has assumed a culture of continuous discussion and confidence building, consensus decision-making, and incremental change. ASEAN has also been outward-looking, seeking to progressively engage with countries in the Asia Pacific region—a strategy which was confirmed when ASEAN chose to include non-Asian countries in the EAS rather than confine membership to the 13 nations of the APT.

2.32   For its relationship with ASEAN to be productive, Australia must recognise the ASEAN way of discussion, consensus, and incremental change.

2.33   An issue for the Committee is whether Australia's interaction with ASEAN is consistent with the consensus, incremental approach of ASEAN.

Australian interaction with ASEAN

2.34   Australian interaction with ASEAN occurs on many levels; either with ASEAN itself, or bilaterally with the various ASEAN member

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21   Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam.

22   <http://www.apec.org> Accessed December 2008.

countries. It can be at government agency level or involve non-government bodies, often termed 'Track II' bodies.

2.35   Professor Milner told the Committee that the interaction of Track II bodies was an important aspect of the Australia–ASEAN relationship. He explained that Track II networks and organisations, which were formally independent of government but related closely to government officials and ministers, were a strong feature of the ASEAN region.[23]

Australian government interaction with ASEAN

2.36   As noted above, Australia participates at the ministerial level at ASEAN's Post Ministerial Conference (which involves Australia's Foreign Minister), the ARF and the EAS. Submissions to the inquiry detailed the interactions at Minister level which included:

- ASEAN Economic Ministers-Closer Economic Relations meetings;[24]

- Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM) + Australia Consultation meetings;[25]

- possible ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting–Plus meetings;[26] and

- ASEAN Chiefs of Police (ASEANAPOL) forum.[27]

2.37   At the officials level, interactions included:

- ASEAN–Australia Forum; and

- ASEAN–Australia Development Cooperation Program Joint Planning Committee.[28]

ASEAN Regional Forum and Australian involvement

2.38   The ARF is an annual meeting of ASEAN, its dialogue partners, and five other nations. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) advised that the ARF was 'the region's principal forum for security dialogue and cooperation.' Australia's engagement was:

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23   Professor Anthony Milner, *Transcript 12 September 2008,* p. 45.
24   DFAT, *Submission No. 24,* p. 287.
25   DIAC, *Submission No. 4,* p. 56.
26   DFAT, *Submission No. 24,* p. 293.
27   DFAT, *Submission No. 24,* p. 293.
28   DFAT, *Submission No. 24,* p. 287.

> … aimed at strengthening [the ARF's] capacity to respond
> with practical measures to regional security challenges,
> taking into account the ARF's unique security mandate and
> membership.[29]

2.39   In 1998, the meeting of ARF Foreign Ministers adopted a review of the
ARF's achievements, conducted by Singapore—the ARF Chair at the
time. The review suggested ways to maximise the ARF's effectiveness.
DFAT noted that:

> Australia strongly supported the Review's recommendation
> that the ARF's practical program of outreach, capacity
> building and preventative diplomacy focus on counter-
> terrorism and transnational crime, disaster relief, non-
> proliferation and disarmament, maritime security and
> peacekeeping.[30]

2.40   The Committee discusses opportunities to enhance regional security
in Chapter 7.

East Asia Summit and Australian involvement

2.41   The EAS comprises an annual meeting of ASEAN Plus Three and
Australia, India and New Zealand. DFAT advised that Australia's
participation in the EAS offered:

> … an important opportunity to engage with ASEAN in the
> broader East Asia region in a number of key areas, including
> energy security, environment, finance, education, disaster
> mitigation and avian influenza.[31]

2.42   DFAT advised that the EAS had established an Economic Research
Institute for ASEAN and East Asia and had commissioned a study
into the 'possibility of a Comprehensive Economic Partnership in East
Asia—essentially an EAS-wide FTA.'[32]

2.43   The Committee discusses trade and FTAs in Chapters 3 to 6.

ASEAN–Australia Development Cooperation Program

2.44   DFAT told the Committee that Australia's multifaceted interaction
with ASEAN, such as through the various ASEAN–Australian

29   DFAT, *Submission No. 24*, p. 292.
30   DFAT, *Submission No. 24*, p. 292.
31   DFAT, *Submission No. 24*, p. 291.
32   DFAT, *Submission No. 24*, p. 291.

ministers meetings, the ARF, and EAS, had in 2007 led to the 'signing of the Joint Declaration on the ASEAN–Australia Comprehensive Partnership and the adoption of its associated Plan of Action.'[33] Progress on the Plan of Action would be reviewed annually by Ministers at the ASEAN-Australia Post Ministerial Conference.[34]

2.45   Complementing this plan of action was AusAID's ASEAN–Australia Development Cooperation Program (AADCP). The AADCP commenced in 2002 as a six-year $45 million program:

> … aimed at promoting sustainable development by assisting ASEAN tackle priority regional development challenges through regional cooperation … [and] engaged a significant number of Australian organisations, government departments, agencies and individuals through the development of project partnerships between appropriately skilled institutions in Australia and ASEAN.

2.46   The aim of the program, DFAT advised, was to:

- strengthen regional economic and social cooperation (including macro-economic and financial cooperation, economic integration, social policy formulation and systems, and ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand economic linkages);
- strengthen regional institutional capacities;
- strengthen science, technology and environmental cooperation; and
- expedite the new ASEAN Member Countries' integration into ASEAN by supporting their participation in ASEAN cooperation programs.[35]

2.47   In 2007, a second phase of the AADCP focused on research providing 'ASEAN, other EAS members, and the ASEAN Secretariat with high-quality, high-priority and timely economic policy analysis.'

2.48   DFAT also provided details of the successor program to the AADCP through which $57 million has been budgeted for 2008–15. The AADCP II aimed 'to promote economic growth, particularly in the region's poorer countries, through supporting ASEAN's effort to establish an ASEAN Economic Community by 2015.'

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33 Mr Peter Woolcott, *Transcript 12 September 2008,* p. 2. The plan of action can be found at: DFAT, *Submission No. 24,* pp. 305–16.

34 DFAT, *Submission No. 24,* p. 291.

35 DFAT, *Submission No. 24,* p. 289.

2.49   DFAT's submission also added that Australia would second an Australian government representative to the ASEAN Secretariat to jointly manage the program and 'to provide economic research and policy advice on priority regional economic integration issues.'[36] A witness from AusAID provided further details of the AADCP II:

> We have a research stream. … This enables the [ASEAN] secretariat to commission research on high-priority regional issues and to use the best brains that are available within ASEAN or Australia to work on regional issues. We also have a program stream that enables ASEAN to identify the roadmap for getting to the [ASEAN] community by 2015 and what it needs to do to get there.[37]

ASEAN Immigration Ministers meetings

2.50   DIAC told the Committee that Australia had annually been involved in DGICM meetings, termed DGICM Plus Australia. From 2007, Australia had had a standing invitation to attend the Australia Plus part of these meetings. Australia's approach, DIAC said, had been to:

> … identify where we have shared interests, build on those and then develop training and other capacity building projects with ASEAN countries. For instance, in the last few years we have undertaken training and capacity building around areas such as document fraud examination and intelligence analysis in relation to population movements and people movements and English language training.[38]

2.51   Countries involved in document examination initiatives were Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. Involvement was based on Australia's priorities and those countries' interests.[39]

2.52   DIAC also advised that it participated in the ASEAN Immigration Intelligence Forum and was considering how to further enhance its involvement with ASEAN:

> We are seeking opportunities to institutionalise our engagement more deeply and more broadly. For example, at the strategic level this may entail an exploration with ASEAN

36   DFAT, *Submission No. 24*, pp. 289–90.
37   Mr Richard Moore, *Transcript 22 September 2008*, p. 18.
38   Ms Arja Keski-Nummi, *Transcript 12 September 2008*, p. 14.
39   Mr Jacob Townsend, *Transcript 12 September 2008*, p. 15.

of priority areas of the ASEAN Plan in which we could agree cooperative programs. At the practical level, any such agreement would facilitate a higher tempo of joint action by ASEAN and Australia to, for example, share expertise in border management capabilities.[40]

ASEAN defence and security meetings

2.53   The Department of Defence (Defence) told the Committee that ASEAN had recently initiated an annual ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM). In addition it had resolved to look at an ADMM Plus concept which would 'draw in defence ministers from other countries.'[41]

2.54   Nevertheless, the ARF, Defence commented, was 'the primary multilateral security forum in South-East Asia.' The annual ARF Security Policy Conference and the quarterly ARF Defence Officials Dialogue provided 'key opportunities for Defence to engage with senior ASEAN and ARF security officials.'

2.55   For some 15 years Defence had:

> … attended and hosted ARF workshops and meetings which [had] provided substantial opportunities to develop closer relationships with ASEAN members. … Australia [had] taken a leading role with other like-minded nations in promoting the need for greater practical cooperation between ARF members in areas such as peacekeeping, counterterrorism, disaster relief and maritime security.[42]

2.56   The submission from Defence provided a list of nine workshops co-hosted by Australia and an ASEAN partner since 1998.[43]

2.57   The submission also advised that in addition to its direct contacts with ASEAN, Defence attended the Shangri-La Dialogue.[44] This is an annual conference of the International Institute for Strategic Studies which was attended by regional defence ministers, chiefs of defence

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40   DIAC, *Submission No. 4*, pp. 56–7.
41   Mr Lachlan Colquhoun, *Transcript 12 September 2008*, p. 41.
42   Mr Lachlan Colquhoun, *Transcript 12 September 2008*, p. 33.
43   Defence, *Submission No. 7*, p. 78–9.
44   Defence, *Submission No. 7*, p. 77.

and senior security officials of ASEAN and other Asia-Pacific
countries.[45]

2.58   The Committee discusses regional security further in Chapter 7.

ASEAN Chiefs of Police forum

2.59   ASEANAPOL meets annually with the aim 'to promote regional
cooperation and collaboration and provide a focus on priority crime
types in the region.' Australia formally became a dialogue partner in
2008.[46]

2.60   The AFP told the Committee that while any initiatives arising from
ASEANAPOL conferences were undertaken on a bilateral basis, most
were 'under the mantle of ASEANAPOL and any directives or
strategic level directives which come out of ASEANAPOL
conferences.'[47]

2.61   The AFP subsequently advised that, in response from ASEANAPOL
for proposals from dialogue partners for initiatives to assist in
capacity building, the AFP had proposed the Human Trafficking
Investigations Training Program.[48] The proposal had been accepted
and the first course would commence in April 2009. It would 'involve
members from all of the ASEANAPOL countries' and would provide
training for the management and investigation of human trafficking.
Subjects such as 'victim support' would be included.[49]

2.62   The AFP also engages bilaterally with the ASEAN member countries
in other capacity building and training activities. These are discussed
below and also in Chapter 7.

Australian government interaction with ASEAN member countries

2.63   Australian government agencies have many and varied bilateral
interactions with individual ASEAN member countries. Such
interactions are only reviewed by the Committee if there is a link with
ASEAN, or if they are of relevance to subsequent aspects of this
report.

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45   Participants are the ASEAN member countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China,
France, Germany, India, Japan, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Republic of Korea,
Russia, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste, UK, and US.

46   AFP, *Submission No. 35,* p. 442.

47   Commander Paul Osborne, *Transcript 2 October 2008,* p. 30.

48   AFP, *Submission No. 35,* p. 442.

49   Commander Paul Osborne, *Transcript 2 October 2008,* pp. 27–8.

2.64   DFAT told the Committee that although Australia has a multifaceted interaction with ASEAN as a discreet organisation, Australia mainly interacted with countries of the region on a bilateral country-to-country basis.[50] DFAT also told the Committee that if there were ASEAN-related issues, however, DFAT would make a representation to the ASEAN secretariat and also bilaterally to all the ASEAN members.[51]

2.65   DIAC told the Committee that it too adopted a similar multilateral/bilateral strategy when it consulted with the DGICM:

> … in terms of DGICM meetings where we have then had discussions about shared agendas and shared training programs and more broader type of training programs, that then has flowed back into some of our bilateral relationships. I think the two actually are mutually beneficial to each other. Sometimes we can influence through the bilateral relationship; sometimes we can influence through the multilateral relationship more broadly to various countries within ASEAN. So, I would say that the two go quite well together.[52]

2.66   A further example of this dual approach strategy was provided by the AFP which noted that it used ASEANAPOL as 'forum to negotiate bilateral training initiatives.' Training was provided by:

- the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement which was a joint-venture with the Indonesian National Police;

- the Asia Region Law-Enforcement Management Program in Vietnam; and

- Intellectual Property Crime Workshops in Bangkok.[53]

2.67   Witnesses from other government agencies described how they focused on bilateral relations, and contacts established through other multinational organisations, with little reference to the ASEAN organisation as an initiation point.

2.68   The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) engages the region in two areas: education and workplace relations.

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50   Mr Peter Woolcott, *Transcript 22 September 2008,* p. 16.
51   Mr Peter Woolcott, *Transcript 22 September 2008,* p. 19.
52   Ms Arja Keski-Nummi, *Transcript 12 September 2008,* p. 16.
53   AFP, *Submission No. 35,* p. 442.

2.69   DEEWR advised the Committee that it maintained cooperative relations with SEAMEO, but had been involved in few collaborative activities because SEAMEO had been concentrating on its various centres of excellence. Recently, however, SEAMEO was showing 'greater interest in regional engagement on the internationalisation of education' with the aim of creating 'a structured framework for the regional integration and cooperation of higher education institutions' similar to the European Bologna process.[54]

2.70   DEEWR told the Committee that it was aware of the move towards 'the creation of a single education sphere' and the need for Australia not to be 'blocked out of that nascent grouping'.[55] To that end Australia had hosted an Asia-Pacific Education Ministers' Meeting in 2006, which resulted in the Brisbane Communiqué.[56] This set out a range of objectives concerning the creation of an 'Asia-Pacific education space'. DEEWR added that this concept was being 'pursued by the department both bilaterally and in a range of multilateral forums.'[57]

2.71   Regarding industrial relations, DEEWR told the Committee that it worked bilaterally with ASEAN member countries and through APEC's Human Resources Development Working Group with the aim of:

> … playing an important role in developing the capacity of our regional neighbours to put in place effective labour markets, policies and programs that facilitate and promote economic development, productivity, sustainable development and thereby through that, poverty reduction, regional security … to create a stable region.[58]

2.72   IP Australia provided the Committee with details of its bilateral engagement with individual ASEAN member countries either on a one-to-one basis, through its membership of organisations such as the World Intellectual Property Organisation and APEC, or through projects funded by the AADCP and AusAID.[59]

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54   DEEWR, *Submission No. 23,* p. 273. The Bologna Process aims to create a European Higher Education Area by 2010.

55   Mr Scott Evans, *Transcript 12 September 2008,* p. 82.

56   DEEWR, *Submission No. 23,* p. 274.

57   Mr Scott Evans, *Transcript 12 September 2008,* pp. 82–3.

58   Mr Scott Evans, *Transcript 12 September 2008,* p. 77.

59   IP Australia, *Submission No. 15,* pp. 179–80.

2.73   IP Australia also identified opportunities for mutually beneficial engagement with ASEAN:

■ strengthening collaboration with the ASEAN Working Group on Intellectual Property Cooperation which has primary responsibility for implementing the ASEAN IP Rights Action Plan 2004–2010, and other IP rights actions identified in the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint;

■ working with ASEAN's dialogue partners and other international organisations to assist ASEAN meet the goals of its ASEAN IP Rights Action Plan 2004–2010 and its ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint; and

■ providing advice and assistance to ASEAN in implementing key international IP treaties such as the Madrid Protocol on the International Registration of Marks, and the Patent Cooperation Treaty.[60]

Australian non-government interaction with ASEAN

2.74   Non-government bodies and networks which interact with ASEAN or their non-government ASEAN counterparts are an important part of Australia's relationship with the region.

Track II interactions

2.75   An important component of policy development in the ASEAN region is the so-called 'Track II' process. Track II organisations are defined as:

> … a network of officials and non-official experts who can pool information and discuss their apprehensions and estimates of dangers, before beginning to evolve policy recommendations to their governments on an agreed basis.
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> … [it] becomes a forum for open, exploratory communication through which governments can better understand the causes of conflicts and of the processes that contribute to their escalation and perpetuation.[61]

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60   IP Australia, *Submission No. 15,* pp. 181–2.
61   Harvard International Review, *Asia's Informal Diplomacy*, <http://www.harvardir.org/articles/ 998> Accessed December 2008.

2.76   For ASEAN, such Track II organisations:

- 'are low-cost and low-risk, features that may be attractive for nations relatively new to formal diplomatic exchanges';

- allow 'ideas to be floated freely in order to determine their general feasibility'; and

- allow more frequent meetings and discussions than the formal ASEAN summit and ARF meetings.[62]

2.77   Professor Milner drew attention to the principle Track II organisations in the Asia-Pacific:

- the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN ISIS); and

- the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP).[63]

2.78   Asialink and St James Ethics Centre were also identified by Professor Milner as important Australian Track II organisations.[64] To this list, the Committee would add the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, the Centre for Democratic Institutions, and the Lowy Institute.

2.79   A submission from Professor Milner advised that CSCAP was 'the Premier second-track security organisation in the Asia-Pacific region.' Discussion topics at its recent meeting in September 2008, held in conjunction with Asialink, included 'security architectures in Asia, dilemmas in defence planning, security aspects of resource ownership in Australia and a series of updates on terrorism.' He added that Australian members co-chaired the CSCAP Study Groups on 'maritime security, the security implications of climate change and combating transnational crime.'[65]

2.80   Professor Milner also described how Track II organisations operated:

> I do not mean [Track II organisations] work directly for governments; in some cases I think they might, but there is a familiarity there. In the Track II organisations, cabinet ministers will walk in and out and they will be chatting with them about potential policy developments or whatever. … it is very important for us that Track II works with the

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62   Harvard International Review, *Asia's Informal Diplomacy*, <http://www.harvardir.org/articles/ 998> Accessed December 2008.

63   Professor Anthony Milner, *Transcript 12 September 2008*, p. 46.

64   Professor Anthony Milner, *Transcript 12 September 2008*, p. 46.

65   Professor Anthony Milner, *Submission No. 42*, p. 462.

> government departments and ministers, and it will make it more useful too. These discussions are important for many of our Australian Track II organisations as to how effective they can be with their partners around the region. It is the way the region works and is something where we are actually learning a bit from ASEAN.[66]

2.81   The submission from Professor Milner reported on the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand dialogue meeting hosted by the ASEAN ISIS:

> Everyone in the room engaged in these discussions—and the frankness (and sometimes passion) of the exchanges was striking. Here some saw real evidence of the way Track II processes can help deepen regional engagement.

> A number of practical ideas were floated—ideas for implementing the new FTA, a suggestion for an Australia-NZ role in the Chiang Mai initiative, a possible expansion of the long-standing 'Five Power' security arrangements (currently involving only Malaysia, Singapore, [UK,] NZ and Australia), a proposal to develop a special role for Indonesia and Australia representing ASEAN views in the G20 context.[67]

2.82   Australia's participation in the ISIS meeting included both non-government and government representatives from—Asialink, the Australian National University, the Lowy Institute, *The Australian* newspaper, the Office of National Assessments and Australia's High Commissioner to Malaysia.[68]

2.83   Professor Milner concluded that:

> To be effective the Track II leadership needs to be well aware of the Track I agenda, testing or debating new ideas relating to or extending that agenda … and in some circumstances might operate in areas where Governments themselves are wary of operating.[69]

AusHeritage Ltd

2.84   AusHeritage Ltd draws its membership from state and national collecting institutions, universities, and private sector consulting

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66   Professor Anthony Milner, *Transcript 12 September 2008,* p. 48.
67   Professor Anthony Milner, *Submission No. 42,* p. 463.
68   Professor Anthony Milner, *Submission No .42,* p. 463.
69   Professor Anthony Milner, *Submission No. 42,* p. 461.

firms. It has a formal relationship with the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (COCI), underpinned by a MoU.[70]

2.85   AusHeritage advised the Committee that the ASEAN Vision 2020 set COCI's objective as working towards 'the community conscious of its times of history, aware of its cultural heritage and found by a common regional identity'. Supporting this objective, AusHeritage had helped COCI develop a cultural web site of portable and a cultural mapping handbook for use in the ASEAN region.[71]

2.86   Witnesses from AusHeritage told the Committee that in its projects it usually dealt with individual ASEAN member countries, initially as a key dialogue partner who became the partner for the particular initiative. Often a further partnership was involved 'with people like UNESCO, the World Heritage Centre, the UN World Tourism Organisation and the Getty Conservation Institute.'[72]

Australian Union interactions with ASEAN

2.87   The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) advised the Committee that it maintained close relations with the ASEAN Trade Union Council (ATUC) which was a network of trade unions from seven ASEAN member countries.[73] The ATUC had links with the Asia-Pacific body of the International Trade Union Confederation.

2.88   In addition, ACTU affiliates had 'bilateral relations with industry specific unions in ASEAN member countries and with their regional and global industry union, referred to as Global Union Federations.'[74]

2.89   The ACTU told the Committee that it also 'worked closely with the Vietnamese General Confederation of Labour over a couple of decades on occupational health and safety development.'[75]

2.90   Witnesses representing the Australian Services Union, the Community and Public Sector Union, and the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union told the Committee that their unions were affiliated to the international trade union global federation— Public Services International (PSI). The PSI had offices in Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia and conducted 'a series of training programs

70   AusHeritage Ltd, *Submission No. 10*, p. 110.
71   AusHeritage Ltd, *Submission No. 10*, p. 112.
72   Mr Vinod Daniel, Mr Graham Brooks, *Transcript 6 November 2008*, p. 87.
73   Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam.
74   ACTU, *Submission No. 27*, p. 376.
75   Ms Alison Tate, *Transcript 2 October 2008*, p. 44.

in capacity building or trade union training programs for our affiliates in the region.' It was noted that the Australian Government also contributed through International Labour Organisation, Asian Development Bank, and World Bank projects in the region.[76]

Science and technology organisations

2.91   The Committee received evidence from the following science and technology organisations:

- Australian Academy of Science (AAS);

- Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO);

- Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO); and

- Engineers Australia.

Australian Academy of Science

2.92   The AAS advised that it belonged to two multinational regional organisations to which various ASEAN member countries belonged. These were:

- Federation of Asian Scientific Academies and Societies (membership of academies from Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) which promoted 'greater awareness of the roles of science and technology in nation building and regional development'; and

- Inter-Academy Panel on International Issues (membership of academies from Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) through which member of academies collaborated to provide advice on scientific aspects of critical global issues, such as 'scientific capacity building, science education, science and the media, access to scientific information, and mother and child health.'

2.93   Through these two organisations the AAS had facilitated the attendance of Malaysian and Thai science educators and policy officers at AAS professional development activities in Australia.[77]

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76   Mr David Carey, Mr Paul Slape, *Transcript 2 October 2008*, pp. 62, 64–5.

77   AAS, *Submission No. 7*, p. 92.

2.94 The AAS submission also provided information on the collaboration established by the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research and the Menzies School of Health Research with medical researchers in Indonesia and Thailand and Vietnam. The AAS concluded that medical research was 'an area that can potentially play an important role in assisting Australia to expand its relationship with ASEAN countries'.[78]

2.95 The AAS, however, emphasised the role of government in its overseas collaborations:

> … the sorts of entrees that we get into the ASEAN countries are usually initiated in the first instance at a government-to-government level, and then quite often the science and technology strategies of those countries are often driven from the government's sector then seeking the involvement of business. I think there is a greater degree of integration sometimes in ASEAN countries between government-run and government-owned research …[79]

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

2.96 CSIRO told the Committee that it did not have a multilateral ASEAN program. Instead, it interacted with ASEAN member countries on a bilateral basis under the umbrella of government-to-government relationships which had established bilateral science and technology agreements and MoUs, and through AusAID's Public Sector Linkage Program with individual countries.[80]

2.97 CSIRO had been involved with most aspects of the ASEAN-Australia Economic Cooperation Program which commenced in 1974 and ran to 2004. Collaborative activities had been in the areas of 'food science and technology, biotechnology, microelectronics, non-conventional energy, marine science and technology management.'

2.98 Current work focused on sustainability issues and the role of science and technology in meeting these challenges. Research was funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and AusAID and focused on 'sustainable agriculture, including animal diseases and natural resource management issues' ranging from

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78 AAS, *Submission No. 7,* pp. 94–5.
79 Dr Susan Meek, *Transcript 12 September 2008,* p. 64.
80 Ms Melinda Spink, Dr Ta-Yan Leong, *Transcript 2 October 2008,* pp. 78, 81.

'collaborative research to capacity building, technology transfer and commercial consultancy.'[81]

2.99   CSIRO also drew attention to a proposed jointly funded CSIRO-AusAID Environmental Research for Development Alliance which would 'move the interaction between CSIRO and AusAID from tactical responses to a strategic level partnership' to tackle more complex and important problems such as developing the knowledge and tools to successfully implement environment development aid in the Asia-Pacific region.[82]

Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation

2.100   ANSTO advised the Committee that it was involved in two multilateral cooperation programs with Asia-Pacific countries. These were:

- the Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology (which included Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam), conducted through the IAEA—a recent project was designed to improve regional radiological safety capabilities; and

- the Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia (which included Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam)—recent projects included sponsoring a review of nuclear research reactor safety culture, and a radioactive waste management project.

2.101   ANSTO did not have any current bilateral nuclear cooperation arrangements with counterpart agencies in ASEAN, but had provided expertise under the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme.

2.102   ANSTO also interacted with ASEAN member countries through its Regional Security of Radioactive Sources Project which was aimed to address the physical protection and security management of high-risk radioactive sources. This work was undertaken in cooperation with related programs of the IAEA and US Department of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration.[83]

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81   Ms Melinda Spink, *Transcript 2 October 2008*, p. 78.
82   Ms Melinda Spink, *Transcript 2 October 2008*, pp. 78–8.
83   ANSTO, *Submission No. 30*, pp. 423–4.

2.103   The Committee further discusses collaboration in science and technology later in this report in Chapter 7 and Chapter 9 when it discusses regional security and the impact of global warming.

Engineers Australia

2.104   Engineers Australia is the peak body for engineering professionals in Australia and represents some 80 000 members. The organisation has four overseas chapters, two of which are in Malaysia and Singapore. Engineers Australia told the Committee it had:

> … fostered relationships with engineering organisations within ASEAN, including the institution of engineers in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and the professional engineering boards in these countries. Our involvement in the Washington and Sydney accords and the APEC Engineer Register, as well as our annual attendance at the conference of the ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organisations, has also helped to build partnerships in the region.[84]

2.105   The Committee discusses Engineering Australia's endeavours to further its ASEAN relations through mutual recognition agreements in Chapter 6.

Committee conclusion

2.106   The Committee notes that Australia interacts with ASEAN on many levels, both the multilaterally with ASEAN as a discrete entity, and bilaterally with individual ASEAN member countries. The Committee agrees that discussions at the Track II level are an important adjunct to government level interactions. The Australian Government must be fully aware of Track II discussions, and Track II organisations must be aware of the government's strategic agenda. The Committee is pleased to note the involvement of government ministers and officials both in the discussions themselves and in subsequent behind-the-scenes briefings.[85]

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84   Ms Kathryn Hurford, *Transcript 12 September 2008,* p. 69.
85   Professor Anthony Milner, *Transcript 12 September 2008,* p. 46.