



Submission No 16

Inquiry into Australia's Overseas Representation

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Response to the Parliament of Australia's Inquiry into Overseas Representation

Activities

Australia was one of the first countries to develop a successful international education sector. International education has delivered a wide range of benefits to Australia, including increased business, cultural, diplomatic, research and security links. The sector contributed \$16.3 billion in export income to the Australian economy in 2010-11, making it the third largest source of export income. Educational exchanges and collaborations pave the way for productive economic relationships which can bring long term rewards.

The Department's overseas representation of Counsellors and locally engaged staff lead Australia's offshore bilateral and multilateral education engagement. They play a valuable role in exchanging information and advice with host governments, in-country institutions and organisations on the Australian education and training system. The Department's (DEEWR) overseas network is uniquely placed to build strong education and training partnerships internationally.

DEEWR's Education Counsellors are vital to supporting government to government relationships through Joint Working Groups, Memoranda of Understanding and high level delegations. The international network also works to promote scholarship and exchange programs to support outbound and inbound mobility in partnership with DFAT, AusAid and the Australia Awards Board. Other countries look to Australia as a model for qualifications frameworks, quality assurance frameworks, qualifications recognition, regulation, and income contingent student loans. Australia has great strengths to draw on as an international partner of choice for foreign governments and leading overseas education institutions.

International education also provides lifelong links with future leaders in Asia and other parts of the world. Graduates from Australian education institutions play a major role in the political and economic life of many countries, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. Australia is recognised as a world leader in education, with students from more than 190 countries and more than 2.5 million alumni worldwide.

Since the transfer of international marketing and promotion functions from DEEWR to Austrade on 1 July 2010, the two agencies work in partnership under a Memorandum of Understanding. This positions both agencies to achieve the Government's strategic objectives in international education by positioning Australia as a highly sought after, quality education partner in the region and world.

Europe

A bilateral partnership between the European Commission and Australia is outlined in the 2007 *Joint Declaration on Cooperation in Education and Training*, which led to the inclusion of these areas in the EU-Australia Partnership Framework in the following year.

DEEWR's SES level position in Paris serves Australia's education collaboration with EU member states (with the assistance of a locally employed officer based in Brussels) and its involvement with the OECD, which is mostly associated with the work of two Directorates:

- the Education Directorate (EDU); and
- the Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (DELSA).

International Labour Organisation

DEEWR also maintains a SES level position in the Australian Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva which undertakes the following roles:

- Servicing the Australia-ILO Partnership Agreement 2010-2015;
- Chair of the ILO Governing Body (2011-2012);
- Member of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association;
- Representing the Australian Government in the Asia-Pacific Group of Governments (ASPAG); and
- Representing the Australian Government at ILO meetings and United Nations Committee meetings (for example, the Universal Periodical Review in January 2011) as well as other international meetings relating to employment.

Geographical Locations

The importance to Australia of strengthening engagement in the Asia Pacific region is reflected in the location and composition of DEEWR's international Counsellor network.

The DEEWR International Network offices are located in Australia's Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates in 16 locations across 14 countries. The posts and their jurisdictions are:

Post	Jurisdiction and Diplomatic Accreditation
Bangkok	Thailand and The Philippines
Beijing	People's Republic of China. Two A-based positions.
Shanghai	Shanghai (locally engaged staff, reports to Beijing Minister-Counsellor)
Hong Kong	Hong Kong (locally engaged staff, reports to Beijing Minister-Counsellor)
Geneva	International Labour Organisation
Hanoi	Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos
Jakarta	Indonesia
Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia and Brunei
New Delhi	India (also Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Nepal and Bhutan) Two A-based positions.
Paris	OECD, France, the European Union, UNESCO and non-EU countries
Brussels	European Union (locally engaged staff, reports to Paris Minister-Counsellor)
Singapore	Singapore (locally engaged staff, reports to Kuala Lumpur Counsellor)
Tokyo	Japan
Seoul	Republic of Korea and Mongolia
Taipei	Taiwan (locally engaged staff)
Washington	USA and Canada

Staffing

Post	A-Based		Locally Engaged Staff (LES)				
	Title	Level	Staff	Level			
Bangkok	Counsellor	EL2	2	BB3	BB1		
Beijing	Minister-Counsellor	SESB1	3	LE10	LE6	LE6	
	Counsellor	EL2					
Shanghai			1	LE9			
Hong Kong			1	BB4			
Geneva	Minister-Counsellor	SESB1*	0				
Hanoi	Counsellor	EL2	1	LE3			
Jakarta	Counsellor	EL2	3	BB5	BB3	BB3	
Kuala Lumpur	Counsellor	EL2	1	BB4			
New Delhi	Counsellor	EL2	4	BB4	BB3	BB3	BB3
	First- Secretary	EL1					
Paris	Minister-Counsellor	SESB1	2	BB4	BB3		
Brussels			2	EL1	LE6		
Singapore			1	BB6			
Tokyo	Counsellor	EL2	2	LE4	LE3		
Seoul	Counsellor	EL2	2	BB4	BB1		
Taipei			2	EL1	BB3		
Washington	Counsellor	EL2	1	BB3			
	Total	13	28				

(*) The Geneva post position has been temporarily re-designated by the Department to the higher SESB2 level of Minister(Labour), until the cessation of the current occupant's appointment to reflect the increased duties exercised by the occupant following his election to the position of Chair of the International Labour Organisation's Governing Body.

Information and Communication Technology

DEEWR utilises the DFAT Information and Communications Technology (ICT) system in managing its business and communications requirements.