

The Senate

Standing Committee on
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Australia's public diplomacy: building
our image

August 2007

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ISBN 978-0-642-71840-2

Printed by the Senate Printing Unit, Parliament House, Canberra.

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Main findings and recommendations

Australia's public diplomacy

The committee found that Australia's public diplomacy is spread across a large canvas with many contributors. A significant number of government departments and agencies are engaged in work overseas that either directly or indirectly conveys to the world a positive image of Australia.

It commends the work of Australia's government departments and agencies, the cultural and educational institutions and the many private organisations that are actively engaged in promoting Australia's reputation overseas. Many of these organisations are working quietly behind the scenes and, through word and deed, are helping to secure a presence for Australia on the international stage. They are helping to build a reputation that will hold the country in good stead.

In the May 2007 Budget, the Australian Government provided \$20.4 million over four years to enhance Australia's cultural diplomacy and improve market access for Australia's cultural exports. The committee welcomes the increased funding allocated to cultural diplomacy. Undoubtedly it will allow Australia's cultural institutions to make an even larger contribution to Australia's image abroad.

The committee notes, however, that Australia is in intense competition with other countries also seeking to be heard on matters of importance to them. To ensure that Australia's public diplomacy efforts are not overshadowed in the highly contested international space, Australia must ensure that it takes advantage of opportunities to capitalise on the positive outcomes from its many public diplomacy activities. The committee identified some areas where it believes Australia could improve its public diplomacy achievements. For example, one pertinent observation made during the inquiry was that 'the whole [of Australia's public diplomacy] is not as great as the sum of the parts'.¹ The committee was particularly concerned about:

- the low level of interest in, or awareness of, Australia's public diplomacy by many Australians;
- the lack of methodical and long-term research into attitudes toward Australia by countries that are of significance to Australia;
- the effectiveness of Australia's whole-of-government approach to public diplomacy in producing a cooperative, coordinated and united effort by the many agencies and organisations that contribute to, or have the potential to contribute to, Australia's public diplomacy, including Australia's diaspora;
- DFAT's ability to meet the growing challenges of conducting public diplomacy in a fiercely contested environment including matters such the

1 Ms Jennifer McGregor, Asialink, *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 9.

resources devoted to public diplomacy, staff training and the role of locally engaged staff;

- the need to ensure that those responsible for managing and delivering public diplomacy programs are taking full advantage of advances in technology to reach the global audience; and
- the apparent absence of appropriate performance indicators suggesting that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade does not have mechanisms in place to monitor and assess adequately the effectiveness of its public diplomacy programs.

In light of these factors, the committee made a number of recommendations.

Recommendation 1 (paragraph 6.36)

The committee recommends that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) give a higher priority to tracking opinions of Australia in countries of greatest significance to Australia as a means of obtaining better insights into the attitudes of others toward Australia. To this end, DFAT should devote appropriate resources to develop a capacity to conduct and evaluate regular assessments of attitudes towards Australia and its foreign policy.

Recommendation 2 (paragraph 6.49)

The committee recommends that the government's public diplomacy policy attach greater importance to creating an awareness of public diplomacy domestically. It recommends that the government formulate a public communication strategy and put in place explicit programs designed:

- to inform more Australians about Australia's public diplomacy; and
- to encourage and facilitate the many and varied organisations and groups involved in international activities to take a constructive role in actively supporting Australia's public diplomacy objectives.

Recommendation 3 (paragraph 7.39)

The committee recommends that the government take a more active role in working with Australian educational institutions to develop stronger and more effective alumni programs for overseas students who have studied in Australia.

Recommendation 4 (paragraph 7.52)

The committee recommends that:

- all visitors' or training programs sponsored or funded by the government have clearly identified public diplomacy objectives;
- DFAT ensure that all government sponsored or funded visitors' or training programs adopt a longer-term perspective and include measures or plans that are intended to consolidate and build on the immediate public diplomacy benefits that accrue from such activities; and

- as an accountability measure, the organisers or sponsors of a visitors' or training program report on how the program has contributed to Australia's public diplomacy.

Recommendation 5 (paragraph 7.61)

Consistent with the findings of previous parliamentary reports,² the committee recommends that the government consider introducing additional incentives for Australian students not only to study an Asian language but to combine their studies with cultural studies.

Recommendation 6 (paragraph 8.43)

The committee recommends that the government restructure the interdepartmental committee on public diplomacy (IDC) so that its functions extend beyond sharing information between departments and agencies to include coordinating and monitoring Australia's public diplomacy activities. It recommends:

- (a) more senior representation on the IDC than is currently the case— Departments should be represented at the Deputy Secretary level;
- (b) expanding the functions of the IDC to ensure that it has a central role in planning and overseeing a whole-of-government long-term strategic plan for Australia's public diplomacy;
- (c) the IDC have responsibility for ensuring that the synergies among government departments and agencies are identified and exploited in pursuit of the government's foreign policy objectives;
- (d) the IDC produce a coherent public diplomacy strategy that outlines priority objectives for public diplomacy along the lines of the UK Public Diplomacy Board;
- (e) the government's public diplomacy strategic framework acknowledge the potential of local governments, particularly the major city councils, to engage in Australia's public diplomacy;
- (f) the government's strategic framework take account of non-state stakeholders and adopt as one of its key operating principles in its public diplomacy strategy 'work with others, including business, NGOs and Australian expatriates';
- (g) some cross membership on the IDC and the Australia International Cultural Council;
- (h) the IDC produce a report on discussions and decisions taken at its meetings to be published on its website;

2 See Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Opportunities and challenges: Australia's relationship with China*, March 2006, pp. 274–5. Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade, Foreign Affairs Sub Committee, *Near Neighbours—Good Neighbours*, May 2004, Canberra, p. 147

- (i) establishing a sub-committee of the IDC with responsibility for ensuring that non-state organisations involved in international activities, including diaspora communities, are incorporated into an overarching public diplomacy framework;
- (j) establishing a sub-committee of the IDC that would be responsible for ensuring that Australia's public diplomacy stays at the forefront of developments in technology.

The committee does not intend the IDC to encroach on the independence of statutory bodies such as the ABC or of non-government organisations bound by their own charters. The IDC would recognise and respect their independence. Its objective would be to work in partnership with them, advising and offering guidance and assistance where appropriate to maximise their contribution to Australia's public diplomacy.

Recommendation 7 (paragraph 8.45)

The committee recommends that if, after considering the above recommendation, the government is of the view that the IDC cannot or should not be the body to take on this leadership and whole-of-government coordinating and advisory function, the government establish an appropriate separate and permanent body that would do so.

Recommendation 8 (paragraph 8.58)

The committee recommends that the Australian Government explore opportunities for greater and more effective collaboration and coordination with Australian capital city councils in promoting Australia's public diplomacy.

Recommendation 9 (paragraph 9.35)

The committee recommends that the Australia International Cultural Council (AICC) take note of the evidence relating to the coordination and planning of international cultural activities with a view to addressing the concerns raised in evidence. Close consultation with the relevant sections in the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, DFAT and Australia's cultural institutions would be central to AICC's consideration. The committee suggests that a report of the Council's deliberations and decisions be made available to the committee and also made public by publishing them on DFAT's and the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts' websites (also see recommendation 6).

Recommendation 10 (paragraph 9.36)

The committee recommends further that the government consider that the AICC be co-chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Arts and Sports. The committee suggests that this would contribute significantly to greater coordination and cooperation in the area of cultural diplomacy.

Recommendation 11 (paragraph 9.40)

The committee recommends that the government establish a small but specifically tasked cultural and public diplomacy unit in the Department for Communications,

Information Technology and the Arts. In liaison with DFAT, the unit would provide the necessary institutional framework to ensure that Australia's cultural institutions are well placed and encouraged to take full advantage of opportunities to contribute to Australia's public diplomacy.

Recommendation 12 (paragraph 9.52)

The committee recommends that DFAT ensure that its public diplomacy framework accommodates the concerns of the educational institutions especially with regard to industry engagement by formulating with the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and the Vice Chancellors of Australian Universities appropriate strategies to facilitate a more productive engagement by these institutions in Australia's public diplomacy.

Recommendation 13 (paragraph 9.53)

The committee also recommends that DFAT initiate and sponsor a public debate on measures that could be taken to promote a more productive partnership between government departments and educational institutions in promoting Australia's public diplomacy.

Recommendation 14 (paragraph 10.42)

The committee recommends that DFAT review the findings of the Lowy report, *Diaspora*, reconsider the relevant recommendations made in March 2005 by the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee on Australian Expatriates and consider the evidence set out in this report with regard to Australian expatriates and Australia's public diplomacy. The committee urges DFAT to formulate and implement strategies that would enable DFAT to take advantage of the significant resource of the diaspora and encourage Australian expatriates to engage more constructively in Australia's public diplomacy.

Recommendation 15 (paragraphs 11.31 and 11.32)

The committee recommends that DFAT conduct an independent survey of its overseas posts to assess their capacity to conduct effective public diplomacy programs. The survey would seek views on the effectiveness of the post's efforts in promoting Australia's interests, and how they could be improved, the adequacy of resources available to conduct public diplomacy activities, the training and skills of staff with public diplomacy responsibilities, the coordination between agencies in public diplomacy activities; and the level of support provided by the Images of Australia Branch (IAB) and how it could be improved.

The survey would also seek a response from the overseas posts on observations made by the educational and cultural organisations, noted by the committee in this report, levelled at the delivery of Australia's public diplomacy programs. Such matters would include suggestions made to the committee that public diplomacy opportunities are being lost in the absence of an effective mechanism for the coordination of activities. See paragraphs 7.24–7.34 (alumni associations); 9.22–9.30 (cultural organisations); 9.41–9.44 (educational institutions); 10.23–10.39 (Australia's diaspora).

Recommendation 16 (paragraph 12.15)

The committee recommends that DFAT explore the application of innovative technologies to enhance the delivery of its public diplomacy programs.

Recommendation 17 (paragraph 13.57)

The committee recommends that, as a matter of priority, DFAT put in place specific performance indicators that would allow it to both monitor and assess the effectiveness of its public diplomacy programs.

Recommendation 18 (paragraphs 13.65)

The committee recommends that, two years after the tabling of this report, DFAT provide the committee with a report on developments in, and reforms to, Australia's public diplomacy programs giving particular attention to the role and functions of the IDC and the way DFAT evaluates the effectiveness of its public diplomacy activities.

Recommendation 19 (paragraph 14.27)

The committee recommends that DFAT undertake a review of the nine bilateral foundations, councils and institutes (FCIs) with a view to assessing their effectiveness in contributing to the conduct of Australia's public diplomacy. The review should consider, among other matters, whether the FCIs should receive an increase in funding.

Recommendation 20 (paragraph 14.29)

The committee recommends that each FCI produce an annual report to be tabled in Parliament.

Request to the Australian National Audit Office

The committee requests that the Australian National Audit Office consider undertaking a performance audit of DFAT's public diplomacy programs giving particular attention to the evaluation of the effectiveness of such programs.

Chapter 15 provides a fuller explanation of the Committee's findings and recommendations.

Chapter 1

Introduction and conduct of the inquiry

Referral of the inquiry

1.1 On 7 November 2006, the Senate referred the matter of the nature and conduct of Australia's public diplomacy to the committee for inquiry. The committee was to report by 29 March 2007. On 27 February, the Senate granted an extension to the committee's reporting date to 12 June 2007 which was extended further to 9 August and then to 16 August 2007.

Timing of the inquiry

1.2 This is the first inquiry conducted into Australia's public diplomacy by an Australian parliamentary committee. Although parliamentary committees have not considered Australia's public diplomacy programs as a distinct subject, some have recently inquired into Australia's relations with particular countries or regional organisations. For example the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee has examined APEC, and Australia's relations with Japan and China. The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade has also examined Australia's relations with specific countries, including the Republic of Korea and Malaysia. It is currently looking at Australia's relations with India. During the course of such inquiries, the committees have considered some aspects of Australia's public diplomacy.

1.3 Over recent years, however, public diplomacy has attracted growing attention. Many international commentators have noted its increasing significance with some asserting that public diplomacy 'matters more than ever' and should 'not be the poor relation of mainstream diplomacy'.¹ For example, in 1998 an advisory panel called for US public diplomacy to be moved from the sidelines to the core of diplomacy.² Commentators argue that public diplomacy can 'no longer be seen as an add-on to the rest of diplomacy—it has to be seen as a central activity which is played out across many dimensions and with many partners'.³ Recently, Professor Jan Melissen, Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Clingendael), referred to the frenzy

1 Report on Wilton Park Conference WPS06/21, *Public Diplomacy: Key Challenges and Priorities*, 12 March 2006.

2 CSIS, *Reinventing Diplomacy in the Information Age*, Final draft, 9 October 1998, p.12 of 135, <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/usiahome/pdforum/fulton.htm> (accessed 7 February 2007).

3 Mark Leonard with Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, The Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2002, p. 95.

surrounding public diplomacy⁴ and suggested that it was 'the hottest topic under discussion in the world's diplomatic services':

Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) in all corners of the world pay more and more attention to their countries' reputation overseas, from Chile to Japan and from Canada to Indonesia. The discourse about 'PD' extends much beyond the world of diplomacy: not only diplomats but also academics, university students in international relations and even those who are targeted by the public diplomacy of states take an interest in this subject matter.⁵

1.4 In comparison to the interest in, and discussion on, public diplomacy overseas, the discourse on public diplomacy in Australia is silent. Indeed, a literature search on public diplomacy in Australia reveals a limited amount of work.

1.5 In light of the growing international recognition given to public diplomacy throughout the world, the committee believes that it is timely to review Australia's public diplomacy programs.

Terms of reference

1.6 Under the terms of reference, the committee is to inquire into the nature and conduct of Australia's public diplomacy, with particular reference to:

- (a) the extent and effectiveness of current public diplomacy programs and activities in achieving the objectives of the Australian Government;
- (b) the opportunities for enhancing public diplomacy both in Australia and overseas;

4 Jan Melissen, 'Public Diplomacy Between Theory and Practice', *The Present and Future of Public Diplomacy*, The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 9 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007). Professor Jan Melissen is CDSP Director and Professor of Diplomacy at Antwerp University (Belgium). Professor Melissen is co-editor of the *Hague Journal of Diplomacy and Managing Editor of the web-based Discussion Papers in Diplomacy*. He has a wide-ranging research interest in contemporary diplomacy and published five books, including *Innovation in Diplomatic Practice* (Macmillan, 1999) and *The New Public Diplomacy* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2005)

5 Jan Melissen, 'Public Diplomacy Between Theory and Practice', *The Present and Future of Public Diplomacy*, The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 7 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007). See also Rainer Schlageter, 'German Public Diplomacy', *The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy*, p. 21 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007) and Javier Noya, 'The United States and Europe: Convergence or Divergence in Public Diplomacy?', *The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy*, p. 12 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007). Rainer Schlageter, Director of General Communication, Public Diplomacy and the Media, German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, noted that 'For many states Public Diplomacy has become an increasingly important tool in the 'toolbox' of foreign policy in pursuance of their interests'. Javier Noya, Real Instituto Elcano, noted that 'the set of activities encompassed by public diplomacy is gaining significance in view of the role of public opinion in international politics'.

- (c) the effectiveness of and possible need to reform administrative arrangements relating to the conduct of public diplomacy within and between Commonwealth agencies and where relevant, the agencies of state governments; and
- (d) the need and opportunities for expanding levels of funding for Australia's public diplomacy programs, including opportunities for funding within the private sector.

Conduct of the inquiry

1.7 The committee advertised the terms of reference in the *Australian* in November 2006 and on a number of occasions before the closing date for receipt of submissions in mid-February 2007. The committee also wrote directly to a range of people and organisations including government departments and agencies, academics, cultural and sporting organisations inviting written submissions. The low response to the committee's call for submissions led to a second round of invitations and more advertising.

1.8 It should be noted, in particular, that some important government agencies such as Austrade and Tourism Australia did not make a submission. A number of other key departments had to be invited more than once before they lodged a written submission. All agencies invited to present oral evidence before the committee accepted the invitation.

Submissions

1.9 The committee received 31 public submissions which are listed at Appendix 1. It also placed on notice a number of questions to witnesses, the bulk of which were directed to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The answers to DFAT questions have been published on the committee's website.

Public hearings

1.10 The committee conducted five public hearings in Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney. It also held a roundtable on 11 April in Canberra at which eight specialist teachers, researchers or practitioners of public diplomacy appeared before the committee and discussed a broad range of topics related to Australia's public diplomacy.

1.11 A list of the committee's public hearings, together with the names of witnesses who appeared, is at Appendix 2.



Participants in the Roundtable on public diplomacy which was held in Parliament House, Canberra, on 11 April 2007.

Structure of the report

1.12 The report is divided into two parts. In the first part, the committee examines the definition of public diplomacy. It considers the growing body of international literature on public diplomacy and the difficulties countries have in using public diplomacy to pursue their foreign policy objectives. Against the background of international developments in public diplomacy, the committee then provides an overview of Australia's public diplomacy including a description of public diplomacy activities funded or sponsored by the Australian Government.

1.13 The second part of the report provides a detailed examination of the many aspects of Australia's public diplomacy to determine its effectiveness and to identify opportunities to enhance it. The committee looks at:

- the challenges facing Australia to be seen and heard on the world stage;
- the effectiveness of Australia's public diplomacy in terms of:
 - the coherence, consistency and credibility of its message;
 - the network of relationships and communication systems that form the bedrock of public diplomacy;
 - the coordination of public diplomacy activities—between government departments and agencies and non-state entities including non-government organisations (NGOs);

- the training and qualifications of those responsible for the government's public diplomacy programs;
- the use of technology;
- the evaluation of Australia's public diplomacy programs; and
- the funding available for, and resources devoted to, Australia's public diplomacy activities.

1.14 In concluding the report, the committee looks at the opportunities for improving Australia's public diplomacy. It draws together the main themes developed in the report and makes its findings and recommendations.

Acknowledgments

1.15 The committee thanks all those who contributed to the inquiry by making submissions, providing additional information or appearing before it to give evidence.

Chapter 2

Defining 'public diplomacy'

2.1 Generally, any consideration of public diplomacy starts with a discussion of its meaning. Indeed, the International Public Affairs Network maintained that the term public diplomacy is, 'so contestable that definitions and explanations precede most uses of it'.¹ In this chapter, the committee explores various definitions of 'public diplomacy' and in the process articulates its understanding of public diplomacy and how, for the purposes of the report, it intends to use the term.

The meaning of public diplomacy

2.2 The term 'public diplomacy' has been used on occasion since the mid-19th century but became more widely used during the First World War. Its meaning then was flexible—some used it to refer to publicly brokered peace covenants. In the 1950s, it was used to refer to the propaganda of the Cold War.²

2.3 As a field of study in international relations, public diplomacy came to prominence in 1965 with the founding of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.³ One of the Centre's earlier brochures noted that public diplomacy:

...deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as between diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the processes of inter-cultural communications.⁴

2.4 This description identifies the important distinction between public diplomacy and conventional diplomacy. Traditional diplomacy tries to influence other nations' policies by engaging their leadership: its principal concern is with relations between national governments. On the other hand, public diplomacy deals with the influence of

1 *Submission 27*, p. 8.

2 Nicholas J. Cull, "'Public Diplomacy' before Gullion: The Evolution of a Phrase', USC Center on Public Diplomacy, <http://uscpublicdiplomacy.com/pdfs/gullion.pdf> (accessed 10 February 2007).

3 'What is Public Diplomacy?', The Edward R. Morrow Center of Public Diplomacy', <http://fletcher.tufts.edu/murrow/public-diplomacy.html> (accessed 12 January 2007).

4 'What is Public Diplomacy?', The Edward R. Morrow Center of Public Diplomacy', <http://fletcher.tufts.edu/murrow/public-diplomacy.html> (accessed 12 January 2007).

both government and non-government organisations on foreign populations. As Australia's former Foreign Affairs Minister, the Hon. Gareth Evans, observed in 1990:

All diplomacy is an exercise in persuasion and influence. Public diplomacy differs only in its methodology and in terms of whom it sets out to influence and persuade. Traditional diplomacy seeks to influence the influential. Public diplomacy too reaches out to the decision makers and opinion formers, but it also casts its net much wider, beyond the influential few to the 'uninvolved' many.⁵

2.5 Today, most practitioners and students of public diplomacy recognise this connection between traditional diplomacy and public diplomacy and the differences in methods of operation between them.⁶ More recently, His Excellency Mohamed Al-Orabi, Egyptian Ambassador to Germany, said:

...public diplomacy differs from the traditional diplomacy in that public diplomacy deals not only with governments but primarily with non-governmental individuals and organizations. Furthermore, public diplomacy activities often present many differing views as represented by private individuals and organizations in addition to official Government views.⁷

2.6 The conduct of public diplomacy is therefore broader in scope and less regulated by the laws and protocols that govern relationships between elites in traditional diplomacy.⁸ The overriding concern of a country's public diplomacy is to influence in a positive way the public or elite opinion of another country in order to promote its own interests.

2.7 The definitions adopted by the United States of America (US), the United Kingdom (UK) and Canada are based on this unifying notion that public diplomacy is about 'getting other people on your side—about influencing other people's opinion and attitudes'.⁹ They acknowledge that to persuade the leaders of other nations and their parliaments to support policies, the citizens of that country must be persuaded.

5 The Hon. Gareth Evans, 'Australia and Asia: role of public diplomacy', *The Monthly Record*, March 1990, p. 136.

6 See for example, Public Diplomacy Council, *A Call for Action on Public Diplomacy*, A Report of the Public Diplomacy Council, January 2005, p. 8.

7 Speech by H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi, the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 'The Role of Education in Diplomacy', New Year's reception hosted by the European Cultural Circle, Baden-Baden, Germany, 2003.

8 'What is Public Diplomacy?', *Public Diplomacy Website*, US Information Agency Alumni Association, <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/1.htm> (accessed 12 January 2007).

9 See Jan Melissen, 'Public Diplomacy between Theory and Practice', The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 8 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007) and Philip Fiske de Gouveia, Foreign Policy Centre, The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 4 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

Public diplomacy in the US

2.8 In 2003, the US Government Accountability Office (GAO), explained that the State Department's public diplomacy goal was:

...to inform, engage, and influence global audiences. This goal is aimed at reaching out beyond foreign governments to promote better appreciation of the United States abroad, greater receptivity to U.S. policies among foreign publics, and sustained access and influence in important sectors of foreign societies.¹⁰

2.9 In November 2005, a report by the United States Advisory Committee on Public Diplomacy defined the objectives of public diplomacy in similar terms. It noted that although public diplomacy has many facets, it was critical to understand that its core goal is 'to advance policies'. The committee added that 'Public diplomacy entails informing, engaging and influencing foreign publics so that they may, in turn, encourage their governments to support key U.S. policies'.¹¹

2.10 In 2006, the GAO introduced 'understanding' as a key element of public diplomacy. It noted that the overall goal of US public diplomacy efforts was:

...to understand, inform, engage and influence the attitudes and behaviour of global audiences in ways that support the United States' strategic interests.¹²

Public diplomacy in the UK

2.11 The UK's public diplomacy has undergone two recent major reviews which have considered at length the meaning of public diplomacy. In March 2002, the British Wilton Review defined public diplomacy as 'that work which aims at influencing in a positive way the perceptions of individuals and organisations overseas about the UK and their engagement with the UK'. The review team emphasised that the definition must seek to define the impact of this work on the target audience.¹³

2.12 In December 2005, the Lord Carter Review argued that the Wilton Review's definition was inadequate because it did 'not explain what public diplomacy seeks to achieve, or why'. It defined public diplomacy as—'work aiming to inform and engage individuals and organisations overseas, in order to improve understanding of and

10 See GAO, *U.S. Public Diplomacy: State Department Expands Efforts but Faces Significant Challenges*, September 2003, p. 4.

11 United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, 2005, p. 2.

12 GAO, *U.S. Public Diplomacy: State Department Efforts to Engage Muslim Audiences Lack Certain Communication Elements and Face Significant Challenges*, May 2006, p. 5.

13 UK Government, 'Changing perceptions: Review of public diplomacy', March 2002, p. 12. The report was produced by a team of three people: Chris Wilton of the FCO, Jonathon Griffin of the British Tourist Authority and Britain Abroad and Andrew Fotheringham of the British Council. See p. 9.

influence for the United Kingdom in a manner consistent with governmental medium and long term goals'.¹⁴ This definition now guides the work of the newly established UK Public Diplomacy Board.

Public diplomacy in Canada

2.13 Canada has similarly looked closely at its public diplomacy. In 2005, Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) produced Canada's International Policy Statement which recognised the growing importance of public diplomacy:

Public diplomacy is about projecting a coherent and influential voice to all those who have influence within a society—not just within its government. Canada's credibility and influence abroad will be built not only by Government action but by Canadians themselves—artists, teachers, students, travellers, researchers, experts and young people—interacting with people abroad. Public diplomacy includes cultural events, conferences, trade shows, youth travel, foreign students in Canada, Canadian studies abroad and visits of opinion leaders. All this cultivates long-term relationships, dialogue and understanding abroad, underpins our advocacy and increases our influence.

Public diplomacy is also crucial to achieving our foreign policy goals. By persuading others as to the value of our proposals and strategies, or by engaging in cross-cultural dialogue, we can take important steps in furthering shared objectives of importance to Canadians.¹⁵

2.14 Although different in their wording, the three definitions of public diplomacy have a common understanding that the main objective of public diplomacy is to influence the perceptions, opinions and attitudes of people in other countries in a way that will serve the home country's foreign policy interests. They all acknowledge that public diplomacy is not directed at influencing elites alone: that it works outside the boundaries of traditional diplomacy.

Public diplomacy in Australia

2.15 Australia's use of the term 'public diplomacy' is consistent with the general notion of influencing other countries in order to protect and promote national interests. Dr Lachlan Strahan, Assistant Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, told the committee that the Department regards public diplomacy primarily 'as a means for communicating with populations of other countries, influencing opinion overseas' and projecting Australia's national image abroad.¹⁶ He stated:

14 Public Diplomacy Review by Lord Carter, presented to the Foreign Secretary of the Treasurer on 13 December 2005, p. 8.

15 Diplomacy: Canada's International Policy Statement, 'A Role of Pride and Influence in the World', tabled in Parliament, April 2005.

16 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 4.

public diplomacy is about reaching out to the populations and decision-makers of other countries and shaping their opinions and shaping their image of us.¹⁷

The scope of public diplomacy

2.16 The definitions used by the US, UK, Canadian and Australian governments or their officials are instructive. They are based on the core concept that public diplomacy is directed at influencing in a positive way the attitudes of individuals and organisations in order to build support from foreign countries for the nation's objectives.¹⁸ In this way, good public diplomacy complements conventional diplomacy—it is 'done before it is needed not afterwards', or as one scholar has stated, public diplomacy paves the way for traditional diplomacy: it lays the groundwork, 'like a sapper'.¹⁹

2.17 Although public diplomacy is clearly tied to the notion of shaping public perceptions, its application to the day-to-day activities of government agencies creates difficulties in determining whether an activity or program should be specifically designated as public diplomacy. In many cases, the primary purpose of an activity may not be public diplomacy even though it contributes significantly to public diplomacy. For example, agencies that are concerned with attracting visitors or students to their country are charged with presenting their country in the best light for these select groups. In doing so, they effectively project an attractive image of their country that contributes to public diplomacy. Similarly, cultural institutions that showcase their unique artistic achievements overseas are effectively engaging in public diplomacy. Developmental or humanitarian aid programs can also contribute to a country's public diplomacy. Even though they are primarily intended to assist countries in need and not to enhance one's influence abroad—an improved reputation is often a by-product of delivering such aid.

2.18 Professor Jan Melissen noted the way public diplomacy activities are shifting beyond established borders:

It is true that the kind of new diplomacy that increasingly moves outside its original habitat, works more and more with other agencies and

17 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 4.

18 Jan Melissen, 'Public Diplomacy between Theory and Practice, The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 8 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

19 Philip Fiske de Gouveia, Foreign Policy Centre, The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 4 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007) and Jan Melissen, 'Public Diplomacy between Theory and Practice, The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 12 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

organisations, and operates in a variety of networks, helps create an environment in which public diplomacy is also thriving.²⁰

2.19 In this regard, the question arises as to what factors differentiate an international activity that influences the perceptions and attitudes of foreign audiences from those activities that are distinctly public diplomacy. While some people adopt a definition that embraces a broad range of activities, others restrict their understanding of public diplomacy to a simpler, narrower range of activities linked closely to government funding and management. Thus, one of the major problems in reaching a definite and agreed understanding of public diplomacy is determining the boundaries that effectively place activities in a public diplomacy corral.

2.20 The Canadian definition took the expanded approach. The University of Southern California (USC) Center on Public Diplomacy Studies also takes the broader approach. The Center's points of inquiry are not limited to United States governmental activities, but examine public diplomacy as it pertains to a wide range of institutions and governments around the globe:

...the impact of private activities—from popular culture to fashion to sports to news to the Internet—that inevitably, if not purposefully, have an impact on foreign policy and national security as well as on trade, tourism and other national interests.²¹

2.21 The committee draws on the definitions used by the US, UK and Canada. It adopts the basic concept that public diplomacy is work or activities undertaken to understand, inform and engage individuals and organisations in other countries in order to shape their perceptions in ways that will promote Australia and Australia's policy goals internationally.

The committee's definition of public diplomacy

2.22 For the purposes of this report, the committee applies this definition of public diplomacy in both an expanded and contracted sense according to the matters under investigation. It uses the expanded understanding of public diplomacy when it is considering: the coherence, consistency and credibility of Australia's public diplomacy messages; the nature of Australia's dialogue and engagement with the international community; and the coordination of public diplomacy activities. In this context, it acknowledges that the work of some agencies such as AusAID and Defence is not primarily concerned with public diplomacy but that an important by-product of

20 Jan Melissen, 'Public Diplomacy between Theory and Practice, The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 11 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

21 Joshua S. Fouts, Director, Center on Public Diplomacy, University of Southern California, 'Rethinking Public Diplomacy for the 21st Century: A Toolbox for Engaging the Hearts and Minds of the Open Source Generation', Prepared for presentation at the APSA Political Communication Conference on International Communication and Conflict, 31 August 2005, p. 4.

their activities contributes significantly to Australia's international reputation. The committee is interested in exploring how the work of these agencies, as well as cultural and educational institutions and other groups including Australia's diaspora, intersects with Australia's public diplomacy.

2.23 When it comes to matters such as the qualification and training of those responsible for Australia's public diplomacy programs, the evaluation of these programs and the federal government's funding for its public diplomacy programs, the committee uses the narrower definition of public diplomacy. In these cases, the core concern of the committee is the government-sponsored or funded activities that are primarily intended to inform and influence the attitudes of individuals or organisations overseas to improve Australia's image.

2.24 Before embarking on a detailed examination of public diplomacy in Australia, the committee considers overseas developments in the practice of public diplomacy. The following chapter provides this broader international context.

Chapter 3

International developments in public diplomacy

3.1 The growing body of international opinion holds that public diplomacy plays a critical role in establishing a country's standing in the world and in achieving real objectives.¹ A recent conference in Geneva, at which 30 foreign ministries were represented, concluded that foreign ministries world-wide are 'actively engaged in a complex process of change and adaptation to an international environment that is volatile and unpredictable'. Participants recognised that public diplomacy was a central consideration in this changing environment.²

3.2 This chapter considers the increasing attention being given to public diplomacy and why it has assumed such importance in today's foreign relations.

Soft Power

3.3 It is useful in any discussion of public diplomacy to refer to the broader context of the exercise of 'hard and soft power'. Joseph Nye, Professor, Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, described hard power as the ability to produce results through force or coercion. According to Nye, hard power grows out of a country's military and economic might. In contrast, he defined soft power as the ability to influence others to secure the desired outcomes through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion or payments. He explained:

When you can get others to want what you want, you do not have to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction.³

3.4 Nye argues that soft power is 'more than simply ephemeral popularity; it constitutes a means of obtaining desired outcomes'.⁴ According to Nye, a state derives its soft power from three sources—culture, political values and foreign policy. The strength of a country's soft power rests on the extent to which its culture, political values and foreign policy attracts or repels those of the targeted country.

1 Report on Wilton Park Conference WP05/4, *Diplomacy Today: Delivering Results in a World of Changing Priorities*, 3–6 March 2005 and WPS06/21, *Public Diplomacy: Key Challenges and Priorities*, Friday 10–12 March 2006.

2 Summary of discussion, Conference on 'Challenges for Foreign Ministries: Managing Diplomatic Networks and Optimising Value', 31 May–1 June 2006, Geneva.

3 Joseph Nye, 'Soft power and American foreign policy', *Political Science Quarterly*, Summer 2004, p. 256. See also, Joseph S. Nye, 'Propaganda Isn't the Way: Soft Power', the *International Herald Tribune*, 10 January 2003.

4 Shanthy Kalathil, Rapporteur, *Soft Power, Hard Issues, Reports of the 2005 Aspen Institute Roundtable on Public Diplomacy and the Middle East and the Forum on Communications and Society*, Washington, 2006, p. 15.

3.5 Public diplomacy is a practical manifestation of the use of soft power. It revolves around a country using non-military force to attract rather than coerce in order to influence the views and behaviours of others. The following two examples show public diplomacy as an exercise of Australia's soft power.

3.6 In February 2007, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Alexander Downer MP, wrote an open letter to the people of the Solomon Islands in an attempt to neutralise attempts to diminish the reputation of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). The letter was intended to reach beyond the government to influence the attitudes of the general population toward RAMSI and more broadly, Australia. In this letter, the Minister stated that he felt it was important to place before the people of Solomon Islands 'accurate information about the views of Australia'. He offered assurances that:

Australians and indeed your regional neighbours who make up RAMSI remain committed to working with you to prevent a return to those bad old days; we remain committed to keeping RAMSI in place, so that Solomon Islands can continue to move forward.⁵

3.7 The Minister was also critical of a number of developments in the islands such as endeavours to undermine the work of government institutions that were 'designed to ensure the government and people are accountable for their actions'.

3.8 The letter was published in three newspapers and, although it was condemned by the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, 'there was, according to DFAT, a broad acceptance of the letter from the Solomon Islands community'.⁶

3.9 The second example relates to government funding for madrasah schools in Indonesia. The Australian Government recognises the important role mainstream Islamic organisations play in the provision of basic services and in the development of a democratic and religiously tolerant society in Indonesia.⁷ To help raise the standard of mainstream Islamic education and contribute to the security and stability of the region, in 2004–05 AusAID implemented the Learning Assistance Program for Islamic Schools. During its first 12 months of operation, the project mapped the immediate and longer-term needs of more than 800 madrasah schools and provided support to meet some immediate needs.⁸

3.10 AusAID also co-hosted, with the Indonesian government, the International Dialogue on Interfaith Cooperation in Yogyakarta. Faith leaders from around the

5 Hon. Alexander Downer's Letter to Solomon Islanders, <http://tutuvatu.infome.com/hon-alexander-downer-s-letter-to-solomon-islanders-dt18.html>

6 *Committee Hansard*, Estimates, 29 May 2007, p. 6.

7 AusAID, *Annual Report 2004–05*, Section 2, Administered programs, p. 68.

8 Many Indonesians send their children to private Islamic schools, or madrasah, where a predominantly secular curriculum is taught. *Focus*, vol 19, no. 2, September 2004.

region joined discussions on the role of religion in addressing the issues of religiously diverse communities, including peace and conflict prevention.⁹

The growing awareness of the role of public diplomacy

3.11 The substantial and growing body of international literature on public diplomacy, together with the number of international conferences or seminars devoted to discussion of this subject, testify to its emerging prominence. Furthermore, governments are increasingly finding that they cannot downplay the importance of public diplomacy and are taking a serious look at their public diplomacy policies: public diplomacy is now seen as a major investment in a country's future. Countries including the US, UK and Canada have commissioned independent and comprehensive reviews of their public diplomacy activities. Indeed, Bruce Gregory, Director of the Public Diplomacy Institute, the George Washington University, stated that the US had reached the point of 'report fatigue'.¹⁰

3.12 As noted in chapter 1, public diplomacy has become 'the hottest topic under discussion in the world's diplomatic services'.¹¹ Mr Mark Leonard, Director of the Foreign Policy Centre, in his comprehensive 2002 review of public diplomacy argued that it can 'no longer be seen as an add-on to the rest of diplomacy—it has to be seen as a central activity which is played out across many dimensions and with many partners'.¹² He identified the spread of democracy, the media explosion, the rise of global NGOs and protest movements as key factors behind the growing importance of public diplomacy.¹³ Carmen Calvo, Spanish Minister of Culture, also cited the changing nature of international relations and globalisation as major considerations for governments today:

Some years ago, the issue of 'country image' began to take centre-stage in diplomatic and many other circles, among other reasons because we are in an increasingly interconnected world and also, in a way, one that is increasingly homogeneous and globalised, where every country needs to identify itself and offer its own unique and differentiating aspects. A

9 AusAID, *Annual Report 2004–05*, Section 2, Administered programs, p. 68.

10 Bruce Gregory, Director, Public Diplomacy Institute, The George Washington University, 'Not Your Grandparents' Public Diplomacy', Public Diplomacy Retreat, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ottawa, November 30, 2005, p. 3.

11 Jan Melissen, 'Public Diplomacy Between Theory and Practice', The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 7 and 9 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

12 Mark Leonard with Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, The Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2002, p. 95.

13 Mark Leonard with Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, The Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2002, pp. 2–3.

country's international image is now managed in a very different way than before.¹⁴

3.13 Canada is an example of a country that is taking its public diplomacy seriously. In its International Policy Statement, it noted that 'modern diplomacy is increasingly public diplomacy'. It stated that Canada would re-invest in its public diplomacy and make it 'central' to its work.¹⁵ Germany is also aware of the importance of increasing its appeal as a means of pursuing its interests. Rainer Schlageter, Director of General Communication, Public Diplomacy and the Media, German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, noted that 'a modern, strategic and coordinated Public Diplomacy can—in the long term—enrich and strengthen Germany's reputation abroad'.¹⁶

The importance of public diplomacy

3.14 The reason public diplomacy is now afforded a high priority in foreign relations is the growing realisation that it is an indispensable tool in the toolbox of international politics: that effective public diplomacy can and does place a country at an advantage in advancing its national interests. Mark Leonard explained why public diplomacy is important to a country:

Public diplomacy is based on the premise that the image and reputation of a country are public goods which can create either an enabling or a disabling environment for individual transactions. Work on particular issues will feed off the general image of the country and reflect back on to it—in both positive and negative directions.¹⁷

3.15 He gave the following practical examples of where the attitude of overseas populations have played a determining role in a government's ability to pursue its foreign policy objectives:

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- 14 Carmen Calvo, Opening Remarks, 'The Present and Future of Public Diplomacy: A European Perspective'. The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 2 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007). See also comments by Rainer Schageter, German Ministry of Foreign Affairs who said 'Over the past decade the framework for Public Diplomacy has dramatically changed. In a global media and information society, in which billions of people world-wide witness events in real time via the electronic media, states are competing more than ever for markets, investment, tourists, value systems, and political influence. So is Germany'. Rainer Schlageter, 'German Public Diplomacy', The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 20 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).
- 15 Diplomacy: Canada's International Policy Statement, 'A Role of Pride and Influence in the World', tabled in Parliament, April 2005, pp. 4 and 5 of 6.
- 16 Rainer Schlageter, 'German Public Diplomacy', The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 21 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).
- 17 Mark Leonard with Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, The Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2002, p. 9.

The Afghan and Kosovo conflicts saw powerful military coalitions risk defeat, not in the field, but in the media battleground for public opinion. In Rwanda ethnic conflict was mobilized through inflammatory radio broadcasts rather than military command chains. The global anti-capitalist demonstrations have illustrated a new diplomatic environment where state and non-state actors compete for the public's attention. During the British BSE crisis the French government, in breach of EU law, banned British beef largely in response to public fears about its safety.¹⁸

3.16 He elaborated further on the reasons why a country's reputation matters in today's world:

In each of these cases perceptions of Britain and other countries combine to create an enabling or disabling backdrop for each situation. It is clear that propaganda will not persuade populations in reluctant countries to support the war against terror—but perceptions of Western motivations as imperial or self-interested can damage chances of success, and divergent national debates can cause tensions which could eventually break up the international coalition. Independent or national sources of news will not block out calls to arms from tribal radio stations, but they can act as a counterweight by presenting a calm overview of the ongoing tensions and giving access to information which may be of critical importance (Rwanda had only 14,000 phones but some 500,000 radios). Promotional campaigns for British beef have a limited impact on the fears of consumers, but work to show the quality of British science and the integrity of our vets did play a role in assuaging the French public's suspicion. And many studies have shown that campaigns to change the perceptions of countries like Ireland, Spain or New Zealand can create a premium for products and services as well as playing a role in attracting investment and tourists.¹⁹

3.17 Clearly, a country's reputation is significant both politically and economically. It can be an asset or liability in pursuing foreign political objectives or attracting overseas investment, students and tourists or in gaining access to markets. The importance of public diplomacy is particularly evident where traditional diplomacy is not working or relations with another country have soured. In this regard, Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi pointed to the valuable role of public diplomacy:

All these [public diplomacy] tools assure continued linkages between countries of the international community, even when government-to-government relations are disrupted. Public diplomacy and inter-cultural diplomacy, not only helps traditional diplomacy to succeed by creating opportunities for person-to-person contacts that can lead to better official ties, but it also makes up for the failures of traditional diplomacy by

18 Mark Leonard with Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, The Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2002, p. 3.

19 Mark Leonard with Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, The Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2002, pp. 3–4.

allowing human interaction to continue, when formal negotiations are suspended or terminated.²⁰

3.18 China, in particular, stands out as a country that is awake to the importance of public diplomacy as an enabling device for a country to pursue its interests. It has recently embarked on a significant public diplomacy campaign to improve its global image and to influence world opinion. It wants to allay concerns over its emerging influence by convincing other countries of its 'peaceful rise' or *heping jueqi*.²¹ The committee recently reported on China's concerted efforts to present itself as the 'good neighbour' as a way to ensure its intentions, policies and acts are interpreted elsewhere as well-meaning.²²

3.19 Numerous commentators have noted the success of what they term China's 'smile strategy' or its 'charm offensive'. One analyst described China's diplomatic skill and grace as 'a thing of beauty'.²³ China has clearly placed public diplomacy at the forefront of its foreign relations. It is energetically and deliberately cultivating better relations by using the political and diplomatic tools at its disposal to gain the confidence of its neighbours.²⁴

3.20 China demonstrates the potency of an effective public diplomacy strategy in gaining world attention and influence as a means of promoting a country's own interests.

The contest to be heard

3.21 Public diplomacy, however, is not solely the domain of the large and more influential countries. Many countries are putting a great deal of effort into developing public diplomacy strategies and capabilities of their own. Without doubt, public diplomacy is becoming a fiercely contested activity. Rainer Schlageter, German

20 Speech by H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi, New Year's reception hosted by the European Cultural Circle, Baden-Baden, Germany http://www.egyptian-embassy.de/downloads/Speech_role_of_education_in_Diplomacy.htm .

21 Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *China's emergence: implications for Australia*, March 2006, paragraph 4.9.

22 Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *China's emergence: implications for Australia*, March 2006.

23 Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *China's emergence: implications for Australia*, March 2006, paragraph 5.12.

24 Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *China's emergence: implications for Australia*, March 2006, paragraphs 2.19–20, 2.20, 3.4–3.7, 3.17–3.20 and 4.9. See also Javier Noya, 'The United States and Europe: Convergence or Divergence in Public Diplomacy?', The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 12 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007). See also Philip Fiske de Gouveia, Foreign Policy Centre, The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 6 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, used his country as an example of one of the many facing increased pressure to engage actively in public diplomacy:

Whether it is in the dialogue with Islamic societies, in competition for global markets, in the discussion on the further development of the European Union and the United Nations, Germany has to mark out its position. We want to explain to foreign audiences our values, our democratic system, our social market economy, our human rights concept. And we want to anchor Germany in the minds of people as a partner for solutions to problems, now and in the future.²⁵

3.22 Indeed, smaller and medium-sized countries have a vital interest in securing a presence on the global stage. Philip Fiske de Gouveia, Senior Research Associate at the Foreign Policy Centre, noted that most countries—big and small—conduct public diplomacy:

Despite the fact that available literature and journalism sometimes give the impression that the US, and several of the major EU states including the UK, are the only countries engaged in public diplomacy initiatives, almost everyone is. For example, countries like Botswana, Bahrain and Uganda have so-called 'nation-branding' initiatives, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a Public Diplomacy department, Turkey has been looking to raise US\$25 million from Turkish businesses to support a charm offensive in Europe in advance of EU accession, and China is establishing dozens of Cultural Relations Institutes in major cities all over the world. In a way, those of us working in this field are witnessing what we might call the globalisation of Public Diplomacy. Today, it seems everyone wants to develop and exercise their 'soft power'. This is a trend that can only intensify. In a globalised world, international communications, and their impact on attitudes and behaviour, have profound economic and political implications. States realise this and are acting accordingly.²⁶

3.23 He concluded that:

Policymakers are going to see countries, including those in the Developing World, as well as supra-national organisations like the European Union,

25 Rainer Schlageter, 'German Public Diplomacy', The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, pp. 20–1 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

26 Philip Fiske de Gouveia, Foreign Policy Centre, The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 5 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007). He has written for a wide variety of publications including the Sunday Times, Irish Times, Harpers and Queen, Foreign Policy, Media Guardian and BBC World Agenda. FPC publications include 'An African Al-Jazeera? Mass Media and the African Renaissance' (May 2005), and 'European Infopolitik: Developing EU Public Diplomacy Strategy' (November 2005). Philip Fiske de Gouveia is currently working with private sector partners to develop a flexible, web-based research tool for comprehensive public diplomacy monitoring and evaluation.

taking strategic communications and public diplomacy more and more seriously.²⁷

3.24 Increasingly, small and medium-sized countries face stronger competition in gaining the recognition they seek on the global stage.²⁸ This need to be noticed creates fierce competition among countries. As Philip Fiske de Gouveia observed:

...if states ramp up their public diplomacy efforts in order to try and capture a share of foreign publics' goodwill, they will increasingly compete for what is essentially a finite resource.²⁹

3.25 He predicts that aggressive, more competitive public diplomacy 'may well be something those working in this field have to learn to live with'.³⁰ Professor Melissen similarly noted:

A major challenge for all foreign ministries is what Joseph Nye calls the 'paradox of plenty': diplomats must gain attention in a world where there is an abundance of information. But the paradox of plenty hits different countries in dissimilar ways. Some of them are desperate to be noticed in the first place, or not to be confused with states that look all too similar to outsiders (the Slovak Republic, or Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania respectively), others do not want to be noticed for the wrong reasons (Balkan countries that have emerged from the war) and there are even those that see the absence of news as 'good news' for their international reputation (countries as diverse as Israel and Sudan).³¹

3.26 Ms Pamela H. Smith, Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs, US Embassy, London, underlined the particular challenges faced by less influential countries in being noticed:

Generally, the smaller powers do not enter the global public discussion unless a crisis or scandal envelops them. It is unfortunate, but these seem to be the events that attract the global media and interest the mass audiences to

27 Philip Fiske de Gouveia, Foreign Policy Centre, 'The Future of Public Diplomacy', The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 5 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

28 See for example, Jozef Bátor, Department of Political Science, University of Oslo, 'Multistakeholder Public Diplomacy of Small and Medium-sized States: Norway and Canada Compared', Paper presented to the International Conference on Multistakeholder Diplomacy, Mediterranean Diplomatic Academy, Malta, February 11–13, 2005, p. 5.

29 Philip Fiske de Gouveia, Foreign Policy Centre, 'The Future of Public Diplomacy', The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 5 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

30 Philip Fiske de Gouveia, Foreign Policy Centre, 'The Future of Public Diplomacy', The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 5 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

31 Jan Melissen, 'Public Diplomacy Between Theory and Practice', The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 11 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

which they cater. Perhaps it is for this very reason that smaller powers need public diplomacy programs, just as major powers do. The task for the smaller powers is to be heard on the stories that matter to them, to explain their positions and aspirations during non-crisis moments, and to do so in a way that captures attention.³²

3.27 This contest for limited space means that countries are under pressure to make themselves visible and heard. With limited resources they compete not only with each other but with larger political and economic forces including the US and China. Jozef Bátora, Research Fellow, University of Oslo, also noted the difficulties less influential countries have gaining attention:

While major powers usually have a broader cultural impact and a larger reservoir of messages and images that they represent and that represent them, the smaller countries, who have been successful in getting an international profile, usually focus their public diplomacy efforts at a few niche-areas...While such orientation on a few niche messages and values enables small states to capture attention, it also has to do with the more general foreign policy tendency of small and medium-sized states to concentrate their scarce resources on a few niche areas which provide them with comparative advantages in international affairs.³³

3.28 In 2004, the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan Petersen, noted that 'visibility and a clear profile' were essential if Norway were to gain acceptance for its political views and be regarded as 'an interesting and reliable partner'.³⁴ Indeed, Javier Noya, Senior Analyst, Image of Spain, Elcano Royal Institute, singled out Norway as a medium-sized country that has used public diplomacy strategies that have 'over time made them into champions of peace, sought-after mediators in a range of national and

32 Pamela H. Smith, 'Public Diplomacy', paper presented at the International Conference on Information Technology and Diplomacy (May 1997) and the International Conference on Modern Diplomacy (February 1998), p. 5 of 13, http://diplo.diplomacy.edu/Books/mdiplomacy_book/smith/p.h.%20smith.htm accessed 22 January 2007. In 2001, Ms Smith was sworn in as Ambassador to Moldova and recently retired from the U.S. Foreign Service.

33 Jozef Bátora, 'Multistakeholder Public Diplomacy of Small and Medium-Sized States: Norway and Canada Compared', Paper presented to the International Conference on Multistakeholder Diplomacy, Mediterranean Diplomatic Academy, Malta, 11–13 February 2005. p. 5. Jozef Bátora is a research fellow at the Department of Political Science, University of Oslo. Recent publications include: 'Public Diplomacy in Small and Medium-Sized States: Norway and Canada', *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* (forthcoming 2006); 'Does the European Union Transform the Institution of Diplomacy?', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 12 (1), 44–66, 2005; 'Spillet om det nye Europa' [The New Europe Game] in Rasch, B.E., P.K. Mydske and J.H. Matlary (eds.) 'Spillet om Irak' [The Iraq Game] Oslo: Abstrakt Forlag, 2003. *Europeanization of Diplomacy and the Slovak Foreign Ministry*, *Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, 4 (2), 116–129, 2003.

34 Jan Petersen, 'Norwegian public diplomacy', Speech, Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle, 12 April 2004.

international conflicts'.³⁵ Mark Leonard also cited Norway as a country that has succeeded in proving its relevance by concentrating on niche diplomacy:

Norway is a good example of a country that has a voice and presence on the international stage out of proportion to its modest position and unpromising assets. It has achieved this presence through a ruthless prioritisation of its target audiences and its concentration on a single message—Norway as a force for peace in the world. Positioning as a contributor to world peace enables Norway to achieve greater visibility than its size would otherwise warrant and rebuts accusations of isolationism. Main activities in this field are conflict resolution activity in the Middle East (the Oslo Accords), Sri Lanka and Colombia, and Norway's large aid budget. Norway also operates a 'rapid-reaction force' to assist in election monitoring and conflict prevention...³⁶

3.29 As noted earlier, public opinion and international reputation matter to a country whether it is seeking to gain access to new markets or protect existing ones, attract foreign investment, negotiate trading agreements, gain political support in multilateral fora, or secure its own national security. The problem for smaller and medium-sized countries is to distinguish themselves from others—to stand out from the crowd. Philip Fiske de Gouveia observed that many smaller countries have begun employing international public relations companies and branding consultants to design and do their public diplomacy for them:

Public affairs companies have understandably identified states' new taste for public diplomacy as a significant commercial opportunity and have moved in hard and fast. The consequence, in part, has been the stealthy privatisation of some elements of public diplomacy. This trend looks set to continue, to the extent that even established players like the UK and US are increasingly turning to the private sector for help.³⁷

3.30 In today's world, public diplomacy is becoming big business with many countries investing substantially in promoting their reputations. They recognise that political and economic advantage goes to the country whose public diplomacy provides an environment that enables it to pursue its foreign policy objectives with the support of other countries.

35 Javier Noya, 'The United States and Europe: Convergence or Divergence in Public Diplomacy?', The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 14 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

36 Mark Leonard with Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, The Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2002, p. 53.

37 Philip Fiske de Gouveia, 'The Future of Public Diplomacy', The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 6 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007). Philip Fiske de Gouveia is a Senior Research Associate on the Foreign Policy Centre's Public Diplomacy programme.

Conclusion

3.31 The committee notes the important role of public diplomacy in promoting a country's interest and of the contest among countries to be heard. It is central to a country's foreign policy and works in tandem with traditional diplomacy.

3.32 Public diplomacy is not just the domain of large and influential countries. There is general acceptance that managing overseas perceptions is not easy and that small and medium-sized countries face particular challenges in securing a presence on the international stage. They must compete against one another to be noticed. Although they have less visibility than larger and more influential countries, they may achieve the international engagement they seek with strategic and well targeted public diplomacy programs.

3.33 It is in this context of the growing significance of public diplomacy and the fierce contest between countries to establish their reputation that the committee considers Australia's public diplomacy. Clearly it is in Australia's interest to make sure that its public diplomacy programs are effectively meeting their objectives: that it is strategically and deliberately tailoring its public diplomacy in support of long term foreign policy objectives.

3.34 The following chapter looks at public diplomacy in Australia and provides an account of Australia's major public diplomacy activities.

Chapter 4

Public diplomacy in Australia

4.1 The previous chapter traced recent developments in international relations and found that overseas governments attach great significance to public diplomacy and are increasingly devoting more resources to promote their country's image abroad. Against this background, the committee provides an overview of Australia's public diplomacy activities. In this chapter, it considers Australia's level of awareness of public diplomacy and the activities it undertakes to build an international reputation.

Awareness of public diplomacy in Australia

4.2 Some commentators in Australia are acutely aware of the importance of public diplomacy to Australia. A former diplomat, Mr Kirk Coningham, believed that public diplomacy 'particularly in the global village as it stands right now, will do far more to ensure Australia's future wellbeing and future security than traditional diplomacy'. He explained:

If we cannot maintain a neutral to positive stance on a government's sense of cooperation with Australia then we will fail...So it [public diplomacy] really does matter—not just in a tree-hugging, feeling good about ourselves sense. It matters in achieving our international objectives, because that is in some ways subordinate to how people feel about Australia, whether it be neutral or positive. If it is negative then we are not going to be able to achieve our objectives.¹

4.3 The Australian Government recognises the significant place that public diplomacy has in Australia's foreign policy. In its White Paper, *In the National Interest*, the government stated:

In its multilateral strategies, as in its regional and bilateral efforts, Australia's international reputation is itself a factor in our capacity to advance Australian interests. An international reputation as a responsible, constructive and practical country is an important foreign policy asset.²

4.4 Despite the recognition given by some Australians and by the government to the role of public diplomacy in Australia's foreign policy, little has been written on this matter domestically. Indeed, the paucity of material on public diplomacy in Australia and the confusion surrounding the use of the term has been one of the most striking features of this inquiry. For example, Dr Pauline Kerr from the Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy, ANU, observed that 'it is quite noticeable when looking

1 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 41. Mr Coningham was the Counsellor, Public Affairs, at the Australian Embassy, Jakarta from 2000–2004.

2 Commonwealth of Australia, *In the National Interest, Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy, White Paper*, Overview, 1997, p. iii.

through the diplomatic literature that public diplomacy really is not a topic that Australian academics find all that interesting'.³ The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) also observed that there is 'a real absence of discourse about public diplomacy in Australia outside Government circles'.⁴ Indeed, a research project being conducted in the Crawford School of Economics and Government and research underway in the Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy are the exceptions.⁵



Dr Pauline Kerr noted that generally the scholarly research that is done on public diplomacy comes from Europe and Britain. She is showing the committee a publication from the Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations as an example of the material that the institute regularly produces on public diplomacy. (*Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 9)

4.5 Australia's lack of interest in public diplomacy is evident when compared with the growing body of literature on public diplomacy produced overseas and at recent

3 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 8.

4 *Submission 9*, p. [3].

5 Dr Yasuku Horiuchi and Mr Trevor Wilson, ANU, are currently working on a book on public diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region. The book will examine why the state makes public diplomacy efforts and how their efforts changed over time. The aim is to formulate a better theoretical framework to understand public diplomacy in the context of today's global and dynamic international relations and to pave the way for further development of studies on public diplomacy. Dr Pauline Kerr, Director of Studies at the Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy at the ANU, referred to the study into public diplomacy in her evidence, *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 8.

international conferences and seminars discussing all aspects of public diplomacy.⁶ Furthermore, Australia is not among the countries such as the US, the UK and Canada whose public diplomacy has undergone comprehensive and independent review.⁷



Dr Yusaku Horiuchi and Mr Trevor Wilson, who attended the committee's roundtable, are currently engaged in a research project on public diplomacy. (*Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 8)

4.6 Not only is there an absence of serious discussion on public diplomacy in Australia but the very term appears to have little currency even among those who may be practicing public diplomacy. Mr Jacob Townsend from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, cited the white paper, *Protecting Australia Against Terrorism*, which listed the four components of Australia's approach to terrorism. He noted that

6 For example, see Report on Wilton Park Conference WP05/4, *Diplomacy Today: Delivering Results in a World of Changing Priorities*, 3–6 March 2005; WPS06/21, *Public Diplomacy: Key Challenges and Priorities*, Friday 10–12 March 2006; Summary of discussion, Conference on 'Challenges for Foreign Ministries: Managing Diplomatic Networks and Optimising value', 31 May–1 June 2006, Geneva; 'The Present and Future of Public Diplomacy: A European Perspective', the 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 7 and 9 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

7 See GAO, *U.S. Public Diplomacy: State Department Expands Efforts but Faces Significant Challenges*, September 2003; GAO, *U.S. Public diplomacy: State Department Efforts to Engage Muslim Audiences Lack Certain Communication Elements and Face Significant Challenges*, May 2006; UK Government, 'Changing perceptions: Review of public diplomacy', March 2002; Lord Carter's review of the effectiveness of public diplomacy work, presented to the Foreign Secretary and Chief Secretary of the Treasury, 13 December 2005; Foreign Affairs Canada, Office of the Inspector General, Evaluation Division, *Cross Cutting Issues—A Horizontal Review of the Range of Canadian Public and Cultural Diplomacy Programming, Final Report*, August 2005.

prevention, preparedness, response and recovery were identified but that public diplomacy was not listed in the prevention section. He concluded:

Counter-radicalisation is a long-term prevention technique. This is a long war so it seems to me that we need to put two and two together and include that in our counter-terrorism strategy.⁸

4.7 Dr Julie Wells, RMIT University, noted that public diplomacy is 'not a term that is well understood by the people we would expect to be the government's partners in the project'.⁹ She informed the committee that, when she mentioned RMIT's submission on public diplomacy to the head of the University's alumni office, she was asked 'what's public diplomacy?' Dr Wells pointed out that Australia has not had explicit dialogue involving leaders of universities about public diplomacy.¹⁰

4.8 The Centre for Democratic Institutions provides another example of the lack of awareness of relevant individuals and organisations to their place in Australia's overarching public diplomacy framework. When asked whether the Centre saw itself as a formal contributor to Australia's public diplomacy processes, Dr Benjamin Reilly, Director, replied that he had not thought about it in terms of public diplomacy until the inquiry encouraged him to do so. On reflection, he believed that, although independent of government or DFAT, the work of the centre is 'part of Australia's international public diplomacy efforts'. He noted that most of the countries and individuals the centre works with have 'great difficulty distinguishing one Australian agency from another' and added:

I think the fact that we have a very strong regional focus, particularly on the South Pacific, East Timor and Indonesia, which are all regions of enormous importance to Australia, heightens that. And I think the fact that we work not just with the formal institutions of Australian politics, such as the parliament and parliamentarians, but also with organisations like political parties, which are in a slightly different category, means that we do have an important role to play there.¹¹

4.9 During the course of this inquiry, the committee learnt first-hand of the lack of interest in public diplomacy and the confusion surrounding its meaning. Its call for submissions received a poor response even from government departments or agencies actively engaged in public diplomacy. Clearly, public diplomacy is not a term commonly used or understood in Australia. Furthermore, and of some concern, it would seem that Australia is not actively involved in the international conversation about public diplomacy.

8 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 15.

9 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 28.

10 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 28.

11 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 31.

4.10 This lack of interest in, or awareness of, public diplomacy does not mean that Australia is not actively engaged in public diplomacy. The following section provides an outline of the public diplomacy activities undertaken by government departments and agencies in Australia and some of the more significant government-funded programs. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive account of Australia's programs but rather to indicate the number and diversity of the government's public diplomacy activities.

Public diplomacy activities

4.11 The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) submission stated that the department, particularly its Images of Australia Branch (IAB), has primary responsibility for implementing Australia's public and cultural diplomacy programs to advance Australia's foreign and trade policy objectives. Its programs aim to create positive perceptions towards Australia and to ensure that Australia's international image is 'contemporary, dynamic and positive'.¹² Dr Lachlan Strahan, Assistant Secretary, IAB, informed the committee that public diplomacy:

...spans an extremely wide range of activities. It is everything from integrated promotions, where we will work with other agencies to do a promotion of Australia encompassing culture, business and politics, all the way through to quite specific targeted activities, such as what we might do on nonproliferation.¹³

4.12 The outline given below groups DFAT's public diplomacy programs under general headings and provides just a small sample of its public diplomacy activities. A detailed listing and description of the various programs can be found in DFAT's submission.¹⁴

Bilateral foundations, councils and institutes

4.13 DFAT explained that the department provides secretariats for, and cooperates with, nine bilateral foundations, councils and institutes (FCIs). The FCIs 'promote people-to-people links and accurate, contemporary images of Australia in support of the Government's foreign and trade policy goals'.¹⁵ They operate both in Australia and abroad to shape perceptions of Australia held by individuals and organisations overseas. As DFAT explained:

FCI projects are expected to foster perceptions of contemporary Australia as scientifically, technologically and educationally advanced, economically enterprising and culturally diverse. FCI activities are required to build

12 *Submission 18*, p. 5.

13 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 3.

14 *Submission 18*.

15 *Submission 18*, p. 40.

networks and contacts, influence opinion-makers and facilitate exchange of knowledge.¹⁶

4.14 The first FCI, the Australia–Japan Foundation, was created as a statutory body under the *Australia–Japan Foundation Act 1976*. Since then, the following FCIs have been established: Australia–China Council, Australia–India Council, Australia–Indonesia Institute, Australia–Korea Foundation, Council on Australia–Latin America Relations, Council for Australian–Arab Relations, Australia–Malaysia Institute and Australia–Thailand Institute.¹⁷ The committee uses the Australia–China Council to indicate the range and type of public diplomacy activities that the FCIs undertake.

4.15 The three major themes in the activities supported by the Australia–China Council link with public diplomacy: encouraging Australian knowledge of and interest in China; encouraging Chinese knowledge of and interest in Australia; and broadening and deepening bilateral contact and exchange. The Council has a number of programs to advance these goals, such as the Year in China Program and Australian Studies Program. It has initiated projects such as the Young Business and Professional Scholars Program. The Council stated that in 2005–2006, it funded around sixty separate projects and several hundred individuals. Ms Dinah Dysart, Deputy Chair of the Council, informed the committee that the Council gives preference to:

...projects that project Australia as an innovative, multicultural, open and liberal society and that offers prospects of long-term institutional links and continuing exchanges.¹⁸

4.16 The Council emphasised the importance of alumni organisations and people-to-people contacts in increasing public diplomacy and positive attitudes toward Australia.

Culture

4.17 DFAT funds the Australia International Cultural Council (AICC), Australia's peak consultative group for the promotion of Australian culture overseas. Its membership includes 'representatives from government, the arts and cultural community and business with a common interest in more effective international showcasing of Australian arts and culture'.¹⁹

4.18 According to DFAT, the AICC is one of the government's most important cultural diplomacy tools. Its aims include producing a wide range of high quality cultural products to project a positive image and to encourage greater understanding of Australia. The Council also promotes Australian cultural exports and facilitates links between institutions to encourage longer-term cooperation. The Council is also

16 *Submission 18*, p. 40.

17 See Appendix 5 for information on FCIs.

18 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 33.

19 *Submission 18*, p. 25.

involved in the International Cultural Visits Program and the Cultural Relations Discretionary Grants.²⁰

- The International Cultural Visits (ICV) Program organises visits to Australia by senior and influential arts representatives and cultural media from a range of countries. It promotes awareness of the diversity and excellence of Australian cultural product, enhances links and networks, and improves commercial opportunities for the Australian arts industry.²¹
- The Cultural Relations Discretionary Grant (CRDG) program, provides *ad hoc* funding to individuals and organisations that project a modern image of Australia abroad through cultural activity.²²

4.19 Further examples of cultural public diplomacy outlined in DFAT's submission are the touring exhibitions, including the Embassy Roadshow, a package of contemporary Australian films and documentaries, Indigenous Arts Program, the Australian Visual Arts Touring Program, and the Australian Fine Music Touring Program.²³

Environment

4.20 DFAT is also active in environmental matters. It informed the inquiry that it:

... uses a range of PD tools to support Australia's international advocacy on environment issues and to promote Australia's strong credentials as a country committed to addressing environmental matters, including climate change, biodiversity conservation and whales conservation.²⁴

4.21 Speeches, workshops and public relations campaigns are used to inform international audiences of Australian policies on the environment. In January 2006, the department initiated Asia-Pacific Partnership (AP6), a 'key element of Australia's international climate change effort, focusing on practical technology-based initiatives'.²⁵

Major events and expositions

4.22 DFAT coordinates Australia's participation in or supports major events such as the Commonwealth Games or World Expos.²⁶

20 *Submission 18*, pp. 25, 27.

21 *Submission 18*, p. 27.

22 *Submission 18*, p. 28.

23 *Submission 18*, pp. 28–31.

24 *Submission 18*, p. 38.

25 *Submission 18*, p. 38.

26 *Submission 18*, 46–48.

Humanitarian

4.23 In its submission, DFAT stated that it 'uses public diplomacy to help shape positive international opinion regarding Australia's human rights credentials and to promote human rights fields of endeavour where Australia has a distinctive international reputation'.²⁷

4.24 DFAT uses funding administered by AusAID for organising various activities, including visits of foreign officials and NGOs to Australia for discussion on the role of human rights in Australia's foreign policy.

4.25 According to DFAT, the 'diplomacy of the deed', in this case Australia's response to disasters and emergencies overseas, 'augments our image as a good international citizen, committed to assisting other nations regardless of religious, ethnic and political considerations'. A good example of this was the response to the Boxing Day Tsunami.²⁸ DFAT stated that:

[s]uch efforts have a particularly enduring PD outcome because they are motivated by humanitarian considerations and are ascribed a level of integrity which sets them apart from any other PD program. Emergency relief efforts underline the shared interests and values which bind Australia and other societies, including in the Muslim world, together.²⁹

4.26 Other examples of Australia's efforts in the field of human rights are hosting or participating in forums such as the *Anti-violence against Women and Children Act* in Manila and addressing child trafficking and labour issues in conjunction with a cultural program in Hanoi.³⁰

Media

4.27 In Australia, DFAT's International Media Centre in Sydney runs an International Media Visits program and liaises with the Foreign Correspondents Association to generate informed international media coverage on Australia. Under the International Media Visits program, senior international journalists and commentators are invited to Australia to participate in tailored programs focused on particular issues and to meet a wide range of people from ministers to business leaders and academics.³¹

27 *Submission 18*, p. 39.

28 An earthquake struck off the western coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, on Boxing Day morning, 2004. It triggered tidal waves that swept into coastal villages and seaside resorts causing many tens of thousands of deaths and widespread devastation in countries including Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Myanmar, the Maldives, Malaysia, and Bangladesh.

29 *Submission 18*, pp. 48–49.

30 *Submission 18*, p. 14.

31 *Submission 18*, pp. 20–21.

Australia Network is a television service to the Asia Pacific region. It delivers 'high quality and contemporary programming in education, arts, culture and drama', as well as an independent news and current affairs service. Radio Australia is another media outlet providing news and other programs in the region.³²

4.28 Overseas, DFAT posts monitor coverage of Australia in the local press and report on emerging or contentious issues. They also run information and public affairs campaigns to influence official perceptions and the public image of Australia.³³

Publications

4.29 DFAT develops publications for specific bilateral, regional and thematic public diplomacy purposes.³⁴

Defence/Military

4.30 DFAT uses public diplomacy in relation to military or defence matters, for example in the fight against terrorism or to promote Australia's commitment to arms control and counter-proliferation. It provides support to regional governments in their efforts to combat terrorism.³⁵

Sports

4.31 DFAT regarded sports diplomacy as:

an important facet of [its] PD efforts, taking advantage of Australia's international reputation for sporting excellence. Like culture, sport acts as a neutral bridge between Australia and other countries, facilitating the communication of PD messages in a subtle and less overtly political way.³⁶

4.32 Some examples of sporting events which contributed to public diplomacy were the Prime Minister's XV (rugby union) match during the Australia-Japan Year of Exchange in 2006, and the Commonwealth Games.

Trade

4.33 DFAT is involved in various projects, including the organisation of APEC 2007, for which DFAT coordinates a whole-of-government communications and outreach strategy. DFAT stated that it is addressing the 'considerable Chinese

32 *Submission 18*, p. 23.

33 *Submission 18*, p. 22.

34 *Submission 18*, pp. 12, 16.

35 *Submission 18*, p. 35.

36 *Submission 18*, p. 49.

sensitivities' in Australia's free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations with China, including misconceptions about potential harm to some of China's industries.³⁷

Other departments and agencies

4.34 Many government departments and agencies contribute to Australia's public diplomacy even though their primary responsibility may not be public diplomacy. An outline of the programs of some of these agencies is provided below.

Department of Defence

4.35 The Department of Defence submission outlined the various Defence activities that promote understanding and awareness of Australia. Defence activities, such as ship visits at Australian and foreign ports, often generate media coverage, as do community outreach and humanitarian assistance programs, emergency evacuations and search and rescue operations carried out by the Australian Defence Force (ADF). For example, Defence mentioned in its submission ADF's contribution to humanitarian assistance operations such as Operations Sumatra Assist and Pakistan Assist. Defence noted, however, that:

Although the deployment (Operation Sumatra Assist) was directed at providing humanitarian relief, it also made a positive impression on public perceptions of Australia both locally and more widely within Indonesia.³⁸

4.36 Further programs include the Defence Cooperation Program (DCP) that, according to the Department of Defence:

...provides significant support to regional security forces in the areas of strategic planning, education and training, command and control, infrastructure, counter-terrorism, communications and logistics support.³⁹

Invest Australia

4.37 Invest Australia is the Australian Government's inward investment agency. Its mission is to attract 'productive foreign direct investment into Australia to support sustainable industry growth and development' through promoting Australia as an internationally competitive investment destination.⁴⁰

We try to work with other government agencies to make sure that there is a consistent approach to portraying Australia as an investment destination that is consistent with the other images of Australia in the public domain as a tourism and trade destination, for example.⁴¹

37 *Submission 18*, pp. 32–33.

38 *Submission 19*, p. 3.

39 *Submission 19*, p. 3.

40 *Submission 24*, p. 1.

41 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 52.

4.38 Invest Australia noted that its public diplomacy efforts involve:

...increasing its international presence through a range of international promotional activities including public relations activity, a global advertising campaign, attendance at key events and a multilingual website.⁴²

4.39 Like several other departments and agencies, Invest Australia does not distinguish between public diplomacy and promotional activities. Mr Barry Jones, Invest Australia, stated that he thought Invest Australia would argue that 'you could consider all of our general promotional activities as being public diplomacy'.⁴³

4.40 Invest Australia participates in various inter-departmental committees, including the Committee on Marketing, Information and Communications Technologies for Australia and the Committee for Public Diplomacy. Further, Invest Australia is involved in running media relations programs such as a Visiting Journalists' Program (VJP), and liaising with the Foreign Correspondents' Association (FCA), with tailored programs comprising ministerial interviews and interviews with business and investment organisations.

4.41 Invest Australia reported having developed an *Australians Abroad* pilot program 'to increase positive public diplomacy within the international business community':

A key strategy of the program is to educate and encourage endorsement, word-of-mouth marketing and reinforcement of key messages by influential Australian business leaders based in key international markets.⁴⁴

4.42 Invest Australia reported that it chairs the National Investment Marketing Group (NIMG) that is used for coordinating the national investment marketing effort between the States and Territories and the Australian Government.

AusAID

4.43 According to AusAID, the objective of Australia's overseas aid program is to assist developing countries reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development in line with Australia's national interest. It stated that public diplomacy plays a key role in its activities and is used for:

...strengthening engagement in international and multilateral fora to facilitate advocacy of regional issues, research and development of guidelines regarding protection of vulnerable populations in humanitarian

42 *Submission 24*, p. 2.

43 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 56.

44 *Submission 24*, p. 6.

situations, and identifying and integrating lessons learned from the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami into enhanced humanitarian response mechanisms.⁴⁵

4.44 AusAID's public diplomacy efforts are incorporated in the program management and delivery, that is, through aid programs or disaster relief missions such as the Boxing Day tsunami or the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands. It also contributes to Australia's public diplomacy, through educational assistance, including the Australian Leadership Awards Fellowships Program that has the aim of supporting and strengthening long-lasting ties to Australia.⁴⁶

4.45 Communicating with the public in Australia and in partner countries is a priority. AusAID admits, however, that although its aid program enjoys a high degree of awareness and support in Australia and amongst the key stakeholders, 'this is not necessarily reflected in awareness levels amongst the broader population' in recipient countries.⁴⁷

4.46 In answering the question about how AusAID's public diplomacy funding of \$4.57 million is spent, Ms Jenny Da Rin, Director, Media and Parliamentary Services, AusAID, explained that:

Out of those funds we fund our global education program...internet presence and the management of that and our photo library. We fund our media activities...promotional activities and events, media launches and things like that. We fund our media monitoring services. We also fund our stakeholder engagement activities, which include domestic and international activities...We fund our publications, including *Focus* magazine. We fund our post and public affairs support. That includes things like in-country newsletters, in-country websites, graphic design and that sort of work.⁴⁸

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

4.47 The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) stated that it closely cooperates with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to advance a whole-of-government approach to public diplomacy. It participates in a number of inter-departmental committees (IDCs), including addressing matters relating to border security and quarantine.⁴⁹

4.48 DAFF's public diplomacy efforts fall into three categories: market access and reputation, including negotiations; biosecurity; and emergency preparedness. To reinforce biosecurity, DAFF has developed brochures in 15 different languages, and

45 *Submission 25*, p. 13.

46 *Submission 25*, p. 5.

47 *Submission 25*, p. 16.

48 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 68–69.

49 *Submission 26*, p. 1.

the same information is also displayed on its website and on the websites of Australian embassies. Further, DAFF noted that:

...quarantine messages are developed and required, under Australian law, to be broadcast on all international airlines and cruise lines into Australia; [and] prominent messages are displayed at international arrival terminals.⁵⁰

Department of Education, Science and Training

4.49 The Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) reported that international education is gaining increasing recognition for the significant role it plays in contributing to Australia's global engagement and the perception of Australia around the world, and thus contributing to Australia's public diplomacy efforts.

4.50 Its *Study in Australia* program operates as an umbrella brand for the promotion of Australian education internationally. An independent evaluation of the brand found that the brand is well-recognised, being the third strongest national education brand globally behind those of the United States and the United Kingdom.⁵¹



4.51 Australian Education International (AEI), the international arm of DEST, implements promotional activities such as familiarisation visits to Australia for senior officials, education leaders, journalists etc., organises public lectures, research symposia and support for international alumni networks.⁵² Its media releases are distributed directly to international media outlets and through DFAT and Austrade.⁵³ DEST noted that:

Student and academic mobility and exchange are seen to provide the basis for friendship, mutual respect and understanding, just as education is the key to prosperity, security and peace in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.⁵⁴

50 *Submission 26*, p. 2.

51 The brand research delivered a brand position—Freedom, Challenge, Status—that clearly differentiated Australia from its major competitors. Working in consultation with students and industry, AEI then developed a brand identity, including a logo and graphical elements. The customised Study in Australia brand was launched in December 2002.
logolicence@studyinaustralia.gov.au

52 *Submission 28*, p. 3.

53 *Submission 28*, p. 4.

54 *Submission 28*, p. 4.

4.52 The department has several programs that pursue these goals. *Endeavour Program* brings high achievers from around the world to Australia for study, research, vocational training or professional development. *Australian Scholarships* initiative combines relevant aspects of AusAID and DEST education programmes in the Asia-Pacific under a single umbrella.⁵⁵ DEST explained that through an awardee network, the *Australian Scholarships* and the *Endeavour Program* will develop enduring linkages with former participants/awardees ensuring that influential and strategic relationships with Australia are maintained.⁵⁶

4.53 Scientific projects with international partners and collaboration through international fora provide an opportunity for Australia to raise international awareness of its expertise. Like cultural or sports diplomacy:

[s]cientific collaboration often provides an opportunity to establish or strengthen relations that may be otherwise under-developed or sensitive.⁵⁷

4.54 Some examples of such projects and programs in the field of science include the tsunami monitoring and early warning system and the *Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate Change*.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

4.55 In February 2007, a restructure of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) created ABC International.⁵⁸ ABC International consists of Radio Australia and Australia Network (formerly ABC AsiaPacific).⁵⁹ According to the ABC, it is 'a major player in how our nation is represented offshore, in terms of television, radio and online'.⁶⁰ It stated that its functions are to 'encourage awareness of Australia and an international understanding of Australian attitudes on world affairs', and [through ABC Radio] 'connect audiences in Asia and the Pacific through programs that complement and enrich their lives and foster an informed dialogue'.⁶¹

4.56 In order to reach their target audience, ABC broadcasts radio programs in seven languages and has a radio and/or television presence in around 40 countries. Its regular weekly audiences are estimated at some 20 million, and its multilingual

55 *Submission 28*, p. 4.

56 *Submission 28*, p. 5.

57 *Submission 28*, p. 6.

58 See 'ABC bolsters its commitment to international broadcasting', *Media Release*, 7 February 2007.

59 ABC Asia Pacific commenced broadcasting on 31 December 2001.

60 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 86.

61 *Submission 22*, pp. 2, 3.

website had over 18 million page views in the last year.⁶² It informed the committee that:

A key to Radio Australia's success and growing audiences in recent years has been its ability to directly engage with Asian and Pacific broadcasting partners and audiences in their own languages and in response to their needs and interests.

...

Radio Australia's...approach builds on a long established reputation for credibility and independent coverage but also relies on resident linguistic and cultural expertise

...

Through content exchange, dialogue and interactivity, RA seeks a more equitable and long term relationship with the region and audiences.⁶³

4.57 Radio Australia also has a role as an educator. It has developed a new vocational English series *English for Tourism* and *English for Business*.⁶⁴

4.58 In line with promoting good governance and democratic values as part of public diplomacy, Radio Australia noted that it is an active participant in 'the development of a competent and independent media in Asia and the Pacific'.⁶⁵ It delivers training and technical support to its partners, and works together with AusAID to foster more open media in the Asia-Pacific region.⁶⁶

The ABC actively fosters international relationships with public broadcasters and a range of media-related organisations. These include ABC participation in policy and regulatory forums, membership of peer organisations (for example, the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union), the delivery of formal capacity-building assistance to public broadcasters (especially in Asia and the Pacific) and the provision of informal collegiate support to fellow public broadcasters.⁶⁷

4.59 Australia Network is the Australian television service to the Asia Pacific region operated by the ABC under contract to DFAT. The aims of the service are in line with the Australian Government's public diplomacy policy. That is, Australia Network is to:

- provide a credible, reliable and independent voice in the region;

62 *Submission 22*, pp. 3–4.

63 *Submission 22*, p. 4–5.

64 *Submission 22*, p. 5.

65 *Submission 22*, p. 6.

66 *Submission 22*, p. 7.

67 *Submission 22*, p. 17.

- present...a 'window' on Australia and Australian perspectives on the world; project images and perceptions of Australia in an independent impartial manner;
- foster public understanding of Australia, its people and its strategic and economic interests, and
- raise awareness in the region of Australia's economic and trade capabilities, including in the education and tourism industries.⁶⁸

Australian Sports Commission

4.60 Mr Greg Nance, Director, National Sports Programs, noted the Australian Sports Commission's (ASC) long involvement in public diplomacy. He advised the committee that:

the public diplomacy aspect has always been alive and well with the commission. Any activity undertaken with another developing country has always had that element to it, be it involving athletes in the environment here in Australia or sending experts into those countries.⁶⁹

4.61 Sport is used as a public diplomacy and developmental tool because:

...sport is such a neutral thing. It does not divide people but generally brings them together no matter what level you engage at.⁷⁰

4.62 The ASC efforts have ranged from organised sports events to initiatives such as the *sport for development* or the *Australian Sports Outreach Program* that the ASC delivers in cooperation with or for AusAID. The *sport for development* program has evolved from the early initiatives focused on the elite level:

[A]lthough noteworthy for their ability to expose individuals to the benefits of the Australian sports system, [the earlier ASC's overseas activities] lacked any real depth and sustainability in building capacity in the countries involved.⁷¹

4.63 The *sport for development* program, however, uses sport for individual and institutional development that, in turn, contributes to the development of the society as a whole. The program provides public diplomacy benefits to Australia. Mr Greg Nance said:

Sport for development, rather than developing sport...is where you are not developing sport for sport's sake but using sport as a tool to create better communities in the areas that you are working in. You are creating better communities through the people or the infrastructure or just the playing of

68 *Submission 22*, p. 9.

69 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 76.

70 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 75.

71 *Submission 21*, p. 1.

sport. There are health outcomes, social outcomes and personal outcomes for the people involved.⁷²

4.64 According to Mr Nance, all ASC work is public diplomacy due to the 'fairly good and neutral story' that requires little promotion.⁷³

Australian Film Commission

4.65 The Australian Film Commission (AFC) is an Australian Government agency operating under the Commonwealth Film Program (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts). Through the National Film and Sound Archive, the AFC collects, documents, preserves and provides access to Australia's screen and sound heritage. The AFC is the major collector and analyst of data about the industry. It informs opinion, outlook and policy about the audiovisual industries and screen content in Australia.⁷⁴

4.66 The AFC outlined the importance of its work in delivering significant public diplomacy outcomes for Australia through 'informing and influencing foreign public perception of Australia, its culture and people'.⁷⁵

Film, television and digital content has played a central role in establishing an international profile for Australia and its culture...Australian film and television programs are ambassadors for this country around the world.⁷⁶

4.67 The Commission stated that most of its public diplomacy objectives occur through its membership of the Australia International Cultural Council (AICC):

The AICC's strategy is to project a broad and diverse image of Australia which advances our foreign and trade policy interests and promotes and enhances the export of Australian cultural products.⁷⁷

4.68 The AFC noted its involvement in the promotion of Australia internationally through the AICC. One of the initiatives, *Embassy Roadshow*, showcases Australian films through Australian diplomatic missions overseas. Other AFC activities include Australian film festivals, tours, and gifts. The government's 'World Class Australian Film Industry' policy provides funding for the AFC to support the creation of Australian film festivals and events internationally.⁷⁸

72 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 75.

73 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 78.

74 Australian Film Commission, 'About us', http://www.afc.gov.au/profile/about_us/default.aspx (accessed 2 April 2007). See also *Submission 17*, p. 1.

75 *Submission 17*, p. 2.

76 *Submission 17*, p. 3.

77 *Submission 17*, p. 5.

78 *Submission 17*, p. 6.

4.69 According to the AFC, it participates in a number of international film and television festivals to promote the Australian audiovisual industry overseas. It operates stands or offices at key international markets and festivals and stages special networking events for Australian practitioners.⁷⁹

4.70 The AFC further noted its assistance to the government on diplomatic matters, for example by selecting and sourcing a list of iconic Australian films to be provided as gifts to the twenty national leaders attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in Sydney late 2007.⁸⁰

Australia Council for the Arts

4.71 The Australia Council for the Arts (Australia Council) is the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body. It provides over 1,700 grants each year to artists and arts organisations. Australia's major performing arts companies are supported through funding partnerships with the Australia Council and the State governments. The Australia Council also supports strategies to develop new markets in Australia and internationally.⁸¹

4.72 In line with the Australian Film Commission, the Australia Council emphasised the importance of arts and culture to the promotion of Australia and Australian culture and values internationally.

There is a burgeoning international interest in Australian arts and culture that has been driven, and has continued to drive, many major Australian export successes. These successes have actively and meaningfully complemented and enhanced Australia's diplomatic efforts in profiling our strong, independent national identity.⁸²

4.73 In cooperation with other operators in the field, the Australia Council supports activities such as tours of exhibitions and performing arts projects and international visitors' programs. According to the submission, international activities can create new relationships and public diplomacy opportunities.

4.74 Further, Australia Council activities and initiatives include OzArts Online, briefings to DFAT officers, participation in DFAT's *International Cultural Visitors Scheme* and establishing locally-based Arts Market Development Officer/Program Managers positions in target regions (Japan, UK, Berlin).⁸³ In past years, *artsaustralia berlin* 2002 and 2003 programs as well as a similar program in the UK, *Undergrowth*

79 *Submission 17*, p. 6.

80 *Submission 17*, p. 7.

81 Australia Council, 'About Us: Who and Why We Are'.
http://www.ozco.gov.au/the_council/about_us/who_and_why_we_are/ (accessed 2 April 2007).

82 *Submission 13*, p. 2.

83 *Submission 13*, p. 7.

Australian Arts UK, have been established to promote contemporary Australian arts in the European markets.⁸⁴

Museums Australia

4.75 Museums Australia (MA) was created in 1994, joining together the Museums Association of Australia, the Art Museums Association of Australia and the Museums Education Association of Australia.⁸⁵ It has 749 institutional members (museum or gallery members) and more than 1000 individual members across all states and territories.⁸⁶

4.76 According to Museums Australia, 'public diplomacy abroad relies on presentation of Australian culture in all its diversity to represent Australia as a distinctive society and nation to the world'.⁸⁷

4.77 In its submission to the inquiry, Museums Australia indicated that the nation-wide museums/galleries sector in Australia offers a great variety of human-capital resources, developed professional expertise and performance, that 'could be tapped and "harvested" towards diplomatic objectives in Australia's cultural policy internationally'.⁸⁸ There also exists within the sector 'a huge range of unique collections resources around which so much of our national cultural heritage achievements can be built interpretatively'.⁸⁹

4.78 Ms Erica Billington Sanders, Executive Director, Museums Australia, Victoria Branch, would like to include galleries, museums, science centres, botanical gardens and national parks as public diplomacy tools. She argued:

The people and professionals involved with it are looking after Australia's cultural heritage. They have the stories of Australia's culture, they have the networks that capture and present a current and past Australian culture, and they are professionals in presenting and interpreting Australian culture, which is very useful in public diplomacy.⁹⁰

4.79 In line with other cultural/art organisations, Museums Australia emphasised the value that art institutions in Australia can offer in building trust and stable social institutions through their expertise in cultural debate and diverse interpretation. These 'useful socio-cultural' skills:

84 *Submission 13*, pp. 11, 13.

85 *Submission 12*, p. 5.

86 *Submission 12*, p. 17.

87 *Submission 12*, p. 4.

88 *Submission 12*, p. 10.

89 *Submission 12*, p. 10.

90 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 30.

...could be promoted at a cultural exchange level, drawing in institutions and people working in the cultural heritage sector broadly in other countries.⁹¹

4.80 According to Museums Australia, these skills are often of interest in other countries—especially those countries of highly significant interest to Australia's foreign affairs interests in the Asia-Pacific region. They 'convey a lot subliminally about underpinning Australian social attitudes and cultural life'.⁹²

National Gallery of Victoria and Art Gallery of Western Australia

4.81 In their submissions to the inquiry, the National Gallery of Victoria and the Art Gallery of Western Australia noted their roles in promoting cultural diplomacy via Australian cultural assets. This is carried out mainly through bringing international exhibitions to Australia or taking Australian art overseas, or through individual contacts and participation in international cultural fora.

Preliminary assessments of Australia's public diplomacy activities and programs

4.82 The range of public diplomacy activities undertaken by Australians is diverse and extensive. Although public diplomacy is not a popular topic of conversation in Australia and the government's public diplomacy activities are not well understood by Australians in general, Australia does conduct many and varied programs and engages in a wide range of activities that clearly contribute to Australia's international reputation. The sheer number of activities is evidence that the Australian Government is very conscious of the importance of public diplomacy.

4.83 Despite the impressive list of agencies engaged in public diplomacy and the activities they undertake to promote Australia's reputation abroad, a number of witnesses questioned the effectiveness of the programs. Ms Jennifer McGregor, Director, Asialink Arts, was of the view that 'perhaps the whole is not as great as the sum of the parts in our public diplomacy'.⁹³ Mr Chris Freeman, a public affairs practitioner and former DFAT officer, was not convinced that over the last 30 or 40 years Australia had ever reached its 'full potential in the effectiveness' of its public diplomacy programs. In brief, he observed that a lot of emphasis is placed on the importance of public diplomacy but Australia no longer has the kinds of resources it used to have: that Australia 'no longer [has] the capacity to undertake sustained long-term multimedia communication strategies'.⁹⁴ Mr Kirk Coningham, another former

91 *Submission 12*, p. 9.

92 *Submission 12*, p. 10.

93 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 9.

94 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 3.

DFAT officer, agreed with this view. He asserted that 'very little has been achieved in terms of hard-nosed public diplomacy' in the past decade.⁹⁵

4.84 In the second part of this report, the committee looks more closely at this criticism of Australia's public diplomacy and considers in detail the nature and conduct of Australia's public diplomacy programs.

95 *Submission 1*, p. [2].

Part 2

The committee in Part 1 of the report highlighted the growing importance attributed to public diplomacy and the increasing pressure on countries to devote more resources to promoting their reputation abroad. It noted that currently, Australians do not have a high level of interest in, or awareness of, Australia's public diplomacy. They are not particularly engaged in the international discussion on public diplomacy. Even so, the committee compiled a list of public diplomacy activities that clearly demonstrates the large number of programs and activities that contribute to Australia's public diplomacy. The list of activities, however, does not indicate how well or effectively they are planned, managed and delivered.

In the second part of this report, the committee examines the range of public diplomacy activities undertaken by Australian entities to ascertain whether Australia is using public diplomacy effectively.

Firstly, the committee considers the main difficulties facing Australia's public diplomacy. It examines in detail how well Australia is meeting the challenge of making itself understood and recognised by the rest of the world in ways that serve Australia's long-term foreign policy objectives.

The committee then looks at the coherence, credibility and consistency of Australia's public diplomacy messages and the dialogue and understanding that underpins the network of relations between Australia and other countries. In subsequent chapters, the committee considers the coordination of public diplomacy activities, the extent to which the government takes advantage of opportunities to strengthen links with foreign countries; the training and qualifications of those responsible for Australia's public diplomacy; the evaluation of public diplomacy programs and the funding available for these programs.

Chapter 5

The challenges facing Australia as a medium-sized country pursuing effective public diplomacy

5.1 The committee has identified a number of problems faced by small and medium-sized countries pursuing, with limited resources, their public diplomacy objectives in a world crammed with information and images. This chapter examines the challenges facing Australia in capturing and holding attention in an already crowded international space especially now that countries large and small are competing to stake out their position on the global stage.

Gaining attention in a crowded space

5.2 Australia is one of the many countries endeavouring to secure a space in a fiercely contested international environment. Dr Alison Broinowski, visiting fellow at the ANU, highlighted the strength of competition Australia faces:

It is very difficult when you are representing Australia overseas to put Australia across in ways that differentiate it from, say, the United States or the UK. Our competitor countries like, say, France, Sweden, Japan or Korea put a lot more energy, effort and commitment—Canada, too, hugely—into their public diplomacy or their cultural relations programs.¹

5.3 Agreeing with the general view that Australia has significant obstacles to overcome in achieving its public diplomacy objectives, Media Gurus identified some specific ones:

Coupled with a rolling 24 hour news agenda, the rise of multilateralism and the need to address many audiences for whom English is not necessarily a language of conviction, it poses a challenge for Australia if our voice is to be heard in the cacophony of others.²

5.4 In practical terms, Mr Bernard Wheelahan, Council on Australia Latin America Relations, also illustrated the difficulty Australia has breaking 'through the clutter':³

You have to get your identity up there above the crowd. There are 80 embassies in Peru. None of them are Australian. There are 80 in Chile. For us to get our head above the parapet and to be noticed in Chile certainly requires Team Australia to cooperate there.⁴

1 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 21.

2 *Submission 2*, p. 7.

3 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 41.

4 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 41.

5.5 Every Australian overseas post confronts the same problem of creating a lasting favourable impression while the representatives of other countries are endeavouring to do the same. This competition to be recognised exists at all levels of public diplomacy whether it is in the areas of political influence, trade, investment or cultural activities. Dr Gerard Vaughan, Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, used the example of art exhibitions which he suggested was a limited market:

I could go to the director of, for example, the Pompidou Centre in Paris—in fact, I have done this—and say, ‘Would you like a great exhibition of Australian art?’ He would have at his fingertips directors who have offered him a great exhibition with contemporary Spanish art, American art, Canadian art or whatever it might be, or a group show from South-East Asia and all of the best artists. There is a lot of choice available to the big institutions overseas, so we really are going to have to argue the point and make it attractive.⁵

5.6 Australia is not only a medium-sized country competing with many other countries for a position on the global stage, but it has the disadvantage of being geographically separate from other countries. Asialink observed that Australia's isolation posed another difficulty:

Australia's geographic distance from world centres makes public diplomacy even more important. Given the importance of the Asian region to Australia, strategically, economically and politically, Asialink firmly believes that public diplomacy in this region is arguably the most strategic and logical investment for Australia, and therefore it should be the top priority for our public diplomacy efforts, accompanied by appropriate investments.⁶

5.7 RMIT University also suggested that Australia's remoteness and its historic links to the UK and the US create problems for Australia's public diplomacy:

...it may be viewed as an 'outpost' of US or European values and aspirations, with little to distinguish it from its powerful allies...For much of the world, England and the US remain their reference points for understanding Australia, rendering more complex the task of transmitting distinctly Australian goals, values and ideas.⁷

5.8 The government readily accepts that Australia faces significant difficulties in presenting a modern and definite image of Australia and its people. Dr Lachlan Strahan, Images of Australia Branch, referred, in particular, to the task of dispelling ideas, notions and preconceptions that belong to a by-gone era:

So one challenge for us is to accept—and this is a challenge for all foreign ministries who are running public diplomacy programs—that you in fact

5 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 43.

6 *Submission 8*, p. 1.

7 *Submission 9*, p. 2.

have a national image to some extent which is given to you, which is something that goes back into the past and has accretions of all sorts of issues and events of the past. Parts of that national image can be enabling and parts of that national image can be more problematic.⁸

5.9 The following section outlines some of the notions or impressions of Australia that may undermine Australia's public diplomacy attempts to present the country in a favourable or appealing light.

Stereotypical or outdated images

Sunshine, cuddly koalas and abundant natural resources

5.10 For many years Australia has prided itself on its image as a safe and relaxing place—a country of sunshine, wide beaches and unspoilt natural wonders. Mr Urs Walterlin, President, Foreign Correspondents Association Australia and South Pacific, stated:

Of course one could argue that Australia is in a very fortunate position and does not really have to care too much about protecting its image, that we are already protected by what I like to call the 'CK factor'—that is, cuddly koalas. Millions of people overseas still see this country mainly as a place where these wonderful animals live and where you can still find a fish called Nemo. Therefore, image-wise, the CK factor works to a certain extent as a buffer against more critical news coming from this country. However, this buffer is becoming thinner, not only because Nemo might soon not have a home anymore as the Barrier Reef is bleaching away but mainly because people in so many important source countries of the Australian tourism industry are taking an increasing interest in what their potential holiday destination does to protect not only their attractions but, indeed, the world.⁹

5.11 The India Business Council in its submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT) elaborated on this narrow view of Australia:

Despite Australia's obvious economic success and strength, the stereotypical view of Australia that one frequently picks up in India and elsewhere is that we are a relaxed people, fairly laid back, not very hard working, obsessed with sport and leisure, not as advanced in technology, management or business as say the US, Europe or Japan. Australia's relative economic affluence is frequently viewed as being almost entirely due to our good fortune of having a small population enjoying the benefits

8 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, pp. 5–6.

9 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, pp. 27–28.

of a very large country, which is richly endowed with abundant natural resources.¹⁰

5.12 Media Gurus noted anecdotal evidence suggesting that Australia's image in 'overseas audiences (other than in very special bilateral groups i.e. diplomat to diplomat or educator to educator or scientist to scientist) is still 'a rudimentary one of sunshine, beaches, kangaroos and desert—particularly in Europe and the Americas'.¹¹ This presentation of Australia is especially attractive for tourists.¹² These images, while positive, are limiting. Dr Strahan explained:

For instance, there are a lot of people overseas that tend to think of Australia as a quarry, a farm and a beach. Those are all positive images, but we are so much more than that, so part of our challenge is to always make sure that some of those outdated perceptions are well and truly countered to take advantage of some of the positive images that we have of the country which are already out there. We need to turn those to our advantage, but primarily it is to then broaden the national image and to make people aware of everything from our scientific excellence through to our high educational standards and our dynamic culture.¹³

5.13 The image of Australia as perceived by other countries has evolved over the decades. Although Australia may have advanced and its behaviour and attitudes changed, others may still hold on to antiquated notions. Public diplomacy is very much concerned with refreshing the image of Australia so that it reflects contemporary life.

5.14 Indeed, the Government acknowledged that Australia has a direct national interest in an international reputation as 'a responsible member of the international community, committed to the rule of law, ready to assist in cases of humanitarian need, and a constructive contributor to the economic development of its neighbourhood'. It would like to be recognised as 'a thoughtful and creative country, genuinely committed to peace and prosperity of its region and a source of practical ideas'.¹⁴

10 *Submission no. 15* to the JSCFADT, Inquiry into Australia's relationship with India as an emerging world power, p. 13.

11 *Submission 2*, p. 2.

12 The committee has looked at Australia as an attractive tourist and study destination in a number of reports including, Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Japan's Economy: Implications for Australia*, August 2000, pp. 151–157 and *Opportunities and challenges: Australia's relationship with China*, November 2005, pp. 161–168.

13 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 6.

14 Commonwealth of Australia, *In the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, 1997, Chapter 1, paragraph 25.

Race relations

5.15 Australia's commitment to racial equality and to eliminating racial discrimination is also important to Australia's reputation today.¹⁵ The 1997 White Paper on Australia's foreign and trade policy cited race as a major issue that goes 'to the values of the Australian community'. It stated that on the question of race Australia's reputation matters:

Central to the values to which the Government gives expression is an unqualified commitment to racial equality and to eliminating racial discrimination.¹⁶

5.16 Yet outdated views on this important matter of race relations linger and have the potential to frustrate Australia's attempts to present itself as a tolerant country. RMIT observed that in this regard Australia 'carries some potent baggage':

For example, Australians may view the 'White Australia' policy as a thing of the past, but in much of Europe and Asia its legacy persists and works against views of Australia as an inclusive, tolerant society. Such perceptions may be reinforced by widespread international interest in such events as the Cronulla riots and (less recently) the statements of former politician Pauline Hanson.¹⁷

5.17 All too readily, it seems that incidents such as the Cronulla riots breathe life into notions of Australia as a racist country. These disturbances took place in December 2005 and were widely attributed in the media to ethnic tensions. Mr Walterlin noted that the clashes in Cronulla made worldwide headlines. Although he stated that 'it was a shocking situation', he noted that it was 'a great opportunity to actually tell the world that multiculturalism in this country is fundamentally an enormous success and that the Cronulla event is not something that is typical for Australia'.¹⁸

5.18 This observation ties directly to the discussion on the importance of public diplomacy which, as noted by some commentators, 'is done before it is needed not afterwards' or is there 'from take-off, not just on emergency landings in times of crisis'.¹⁹ Thus, Australia's public diplomacy has the difficult task not only of managing the fall-out from the occasional public demonstrations of bad behaviour, but of countering any underlying predisposition to interpret these incidents in an unfavourable light and attribute the behaviour to all Australians.

15 Commonwealth of Australia, *In the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, 1997, Chapter 1, paragraph 24.

16 Commonwealth of Australia, *In the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, 1997, Chapter 1, paragraph 24.

17 *Submission 9*, p. 2.

18 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 32.

19 See paragraph 2.16 and accompanying footnote.

5.19 A longitudinal research project conducted before, during and after the Sydney Olympic games provides an example of how outdated stereotypical views can endure and be easily reignited. The survey results from this project showed that despite the promotion of Australia during the Sydney Olympics as 'a multinational and tolerant society', media reporting in South Africa conveyed a very different impression. The project found:

Overall, the key shifts over the period of this study was that whereas in 1999 South African students had the general impression that Australia was a racially tolerant society, by 2001, the opposite perception held sway...during the Sydney Olympics, the state-owned SABC had produced and broadcast programming promoting the idea that black Australians had been (and were being) repressed by white Australians, and that white South Africans were migrating to Australia because they felt more comfortable living in a racist society like Australia.²⁰

5.20 Mr Kevin Murray, Craft Victoria, provided another example. He drew on his experiences in South Africa to illustrate the perceptions of Australia held by some South Africans. In his view:

Now that democracy has been victorious in South Africa, it is especially important that Australia continue its positive role in the region. This is challenged by the shadow of the 'packing for Perth' story that cast Australia as a haven for racists. Talking to ordinary people in South African townships, I have been politely asked 'Does Australia still have apartheid?' This misperception has been aggravated by reports of racist taunts towards South African cricketers during their Australian tour. It seems critical that Australia's positive role as a nation of tolerance is promoted in this crucible of modern democracy.²¹

5.21 In response to Mr Murray's observations, DFAT noted that monitoring the media by the Australian High Commission in Pretoria as well as regular direct contact with a wide cross-section of South African society indicated that there were 'perceptions among some South Africans, mostly ill-informed, of racism in Australia'. DFAT explained that this needs to 'be seen in the specific context of South Africa, where issues of race in a wide range of countries attract an unusual level of prominence'.²²

5.22 In general, Dr Strahan, DFAT, noted that the White Australia policy is an issue that, although abandoned by Australia several decades ago, still surfaces in some areas.²³ He cited the case of South Korea:

20 Nancy Rivenburgh, Eric Louw, Eric Loo and Gary Mersham, *The Sydney Olympics and Foreign Attitudes Towards Australia*, CRC for Sustainable Tourism Pty Ltd, 2004, p. 50.

21 *Submission 4*, p. 2.

22 Department of Foreign Affairs, Answers to question on notice, 1 May 2007, p. 24.

23 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p.6.

Some South Koreans would hang on to this attitude that we have a racially discriminatory immigration policy. When I would tell them that that in fact ended decades ago, they would be surprised. To some extent, this said something about how South Korea saw itself in the world, as much as Australia's place in the world. The way in which you have to respond to that is to try to get the message out as consistently and thoroughly as possible. We will often do that through schools to try to get the young in other countries to understand that this is the modern Australia that they are dealing with.²⁴

5.23 He agreed, however, that some attitudes 'can be rather resistant to being confronted with accurate countervailing evidence'.²⁵

Committee view

5.24 As with other countries, Australia is seeking to gain favourable attention on matters it regards as significant. It wants to ensure that its messages are not only heard but interpreted as intended, that misconceptions are corrected and stereotypical or outdated notions are dispelled. The committee heard evidence that some current perceptions of Australia, however, are still embedded in stereotypic notions that may no longer accurately represent the country. Some of the outdated images held about Australia may not only limit a broader appreciation of Australia and affect its reputation, but act as an obstacle to the effective pursuit of its foreign policy.

Responding to a changing political environment in the region

5.25 As well as addressing negative images, Australia's public diplomacy needs to adapt its messages to the changing socio-political landscape especially in the Asia Pacific region. The 2003 White Paper, *Advancing the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade White Paper*, recognised that Australia faces complex and evolving challenges especially in Australia's near north.²⁶ It stated:

Indonesia is important to the stability of South-East Asia. It is undergoing a fundamental transformation from centralised autocracy to decentralised democracy, one that Australia strongly supports. This requires major political and institutional changes at a time when the economic base is weak and Islamic extremists are targeting the secular system of government.²⁷

5.26 In its report on Australia's relations with China, the committee looked closely at developments in the South West Pacific. It noted that diplomacy and aid in the Pacific were intrinsically linked as the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan

24 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 10.

25 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 48.

26 Commonwealth of Australia, *Advancing the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, 2003, p. ix.

27 Commonwealth of Australia, *Advancing the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, 2003, p. 23.

compete for recognition, often using 'the blunt tool of aid payments'. The committee found that among some Pacific nations, competition between the PRC and Taiwan for diplomatic recognition had, on occasion, appeared to take on the characteristics of a bidding war, conducted mainly through bilateral aid payments.²⁸

5.27 In evidence to this inquiry into public diplomacy, International Public Affairs Network raised similar concerns about what it believed was Australia's declining influence in the region at a time when Taiwan and China 'are steadily increasing their presence'. It suggested that 'Others are following in their wake. Cuba, for instance, is providing, or is about to provide, doctors to Timor Leste, PNG and Solomon Islands'.²⁹

5.28 Dr Benjamin Reilly, Centre for Democratic Institutions, also noted the increasing activism of the PRC and Taiwan in the region and in the South Pacific in particular. He was in no doubt that 'the strategic situation in the region and particularly in the Pacific is changing extremely quickly'.³⁰ Ms Jennifer McGregor, Chief Executive Officer, Asialink, also observed that this area to Australia's north is moving very fast:

We are not in a world any more where we are...in a leadership position ...that position is fast being lost and we have to continue our focus in this area.³¹

5.29 The committee has already commented on China's public diplomacy campaign and the resources it is employing to portray the country as a 'good neighbour' in the region and responsible global citizen.³² Australia's public diplomacy must take account of the rapid changes taking place in the region and of ensuring that its reputation remains strong. Media Gurus observed that knowledge of Australia is 'greater in the Asia-Pacific region, thanks to closer economic, security and development assistance links and increasing people-to-people exchanges'. It noted, however, the considerable scope for 'misunderstandings and negative stereotypes about Australia's perceived role in the region'.³³

5.30 Indeed, recent surveys indicate that Australians may not fully appreciate that discrepancies may exist between how they see themselves in the region and how

28 Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *China's emergence: implications for Australia*, March 2006, p. 175.

29 *Submission 27*, pp. 22–23. In its inquiry into Australia's relations with China, the committee considered closely the growing influence of China and Taiwan in the Southwest Pacific. See Chapter 10, Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Committee, *China's emergence: implications for Australia*, March 2006, pp. 163–179.

30 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 34.

31 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 9.

32 See chapter 3, paragraphs 3.10–3.12.

33 *Submission 2*, p. 2.

others view them. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs in partnership with the Asia Society published the results of its survey on attitudes and found:

Australia is not seen as a very influential country in Asia. Asked to rank Australia's influence in Asia, respondents in China and India give it an average rating of 6.2 and 5.2, respectively, placing it only above Indonesia and in the case of India, on par with South Korea. Australians, however, see their role a little more positively and rank their influence in fifth place out of nine countries.³⁴

5.31 A survey, conducted in 2006, of NGOs in the region found that overall Australia is regarded as a good international citizen.³⁵ Although the Asia Pacific NGOs surveyed recognised Australia's importance and respected its role in the region, 59 per cent of regional NGOs surveyed disagreed with the statement, 'I always listen to what Australia has to say' compared to 20 per cent in agreement.³⁶ Also, even though NGOs generally held positive attitudes toward Australia, perceptions were 'slowly changing'. According to the survey, some NGOs registered a shift toward a more negative attitude toward Australia.³⁷

5.32 These surveys indicate that Australians engaged in public diplomacy should be aware of their assumptions and how these may differ from the perceptions of overseas communities. They should also be cognizant of changes in attitudes toward Australia and what these trends mean for Australia's public diplomacy.

5.33 The above examples identify some of the major problems confronting Australia's public diplomacy particularly in the Asia Pacific region. There are other areas, such as climate change, where shifts are occurring in world public opinion that again create challenges for Australia's public diplomacy. Mr Walterlin was of the view that Australia was 'in danger of being seen as an outsider' on the question of global climate change.³⁸ A recent public diplomacy report from the diplomatic post in Paris noted an increase in criticisms of Australia concerning its 'environment credentials'.³⁹

34 The Chicago Council on Global Affairs in partnership with Asia Society and in association with East Asia Institute and Lowy Institute for International Policy, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multinational Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 49.

35 Minh Nguyen, Alison Jaworski and Nicola Gabay, *Report card on Australia' relations with the region 2007, Asia-Pacific NGO opinion survey*, Uniya Jesuit Social Justice Centre in partnership with Griffith Asia Institute, Griffith University, 2007, pp. 15–16.

36 Minh Nguyen, Alison Jaworski and Nicola Gabay, *Report card on Australia' relations with the region 2007, Asia-Pacific NGO opinion survey*, Uniya Jesuit Social Justice Centre in partnership with Griffith Asia Institute, Griffith University, 2007, pp. 15–16.

37 Minh Nguyen, Alison Jaworski and Nicola Gabay, *Report card on Australia' relations with the region 2007, Asia-Pacific NGO opinion survey*, Uniya Jesuit Social Justice Centre in partnership with Griffith Asia Institute, Griffith University, 2007, pp. 16–17.

38 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 27.

39 DFAT, answer to written question on notice, 1 May 2007, p. 65.

5.34 Terrorism is another important international development which poses challenges for Australia's public diplomacy.

Terrorism

5.35 The government's white paper on transnational terrorism identified countering global terrorism as one of the most difficult tasks for Australia's public diplomacy. It noted that terrorists are very focused on portraying a particular strong and potent image and converting selected individuals or groups to their view:

Propaganda is an important weapon in the terrorists' arsenal. It helps them issue threats, spread disinformation and create terror. The threat of violence, to coerce or intimidate opponents, is a form of terrorism in itself. Terrorists have always used fear as a tactic, but modern technology has made it much more powerful. We see increasingly adept use by transnational terrorists of the mass media to get their fear-inducing headlines. Both the media and the Internet have proven similarly effective in conveying the terrorists' message to their supporters worldwide—and boosting their global recruitment efforts.⁴⁰

5.36 It stated:

But there are also ways we are taking the offensive. One is by arguing back. We must not let these terrorists set the agenda. We must fight the battle of ideas. They should not be allowed the final word. Those who might be swayed by their rallying cries must hear voices of reason.⁴¹

...

We must advance the same values in the conduct of our relations abroad—building, where we can, bridges of understanding. Our message must be heard and understood clearly, strongly and widely. And we must also listen. We achieve this through both institutional and people-to-people contacts.⁴²

5.37 On this matter of terrorism in particular, Australia is engaged in a 'media battleground for public opinion' against people accomplished in persuading others to their cause especially in the way they manage images and transmit messages.⁴³ Their use of modern technology, notably the internet, is particularly relevant for those seeking to counter their influence.

40 Australian Government, *Transnational Terrorism: the Threat to Australia*, 2004, p. 17.

41 Australian Government, *Transnational Terrorism: the Threat to Australia*, 2004, p. xv.

42 Australian Government, *Transnational Terrorism: the Threat to Australia*, 2004, p. xv.

43 The phrase 'media battleground for public opinion' was used by Mark Leonard with Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, The Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2002, p. 3.

Conclusion

5.38 Australia's international reputation is critical to promoting the country's interests. The examples in this chapter have shown that in some areas and among some groups of people Australia's image is at odds with contemporary reality. The committee has also noted that in a world that is changing, Australia's public diplomacy has to keep pace with these developments. To be effective, Australia's public diplomacy must succeed in projecting messages that give greater breadth and substance to its image. They must reach their target audiences and influence attitudes in a positive way toward Australia.

5.39 The following chapter considers the effectiveness of Australia's public diplomacy in conveying to other countries messages that are coherent, consistent and credible: that do counter negative and stereotypical perceptions that may harm Australia's reputation. It considers ways that Australia can improve its public diplomacy.

Chapter 6

The coherence and consistency of Australia's public diplomacy message

Introduction

6.1 A country's international image and reputation are 'public goods which can create either an enabling or a disabling environment for individual transactions'.¹ This chapter considers the effectiveness of Australia's public diplomacy in conveying images that will serve Australia's foreign policy objectives by influencing the attitudes of others in a positive way. It looks at the measures taken to ensure that the relevant audiences receive and understand Australia's public diplomacy messages.

Australia's message

6.2 The Australian Government clearly recognises the connection between Australia's international reputation and its ability to influence the regional and global agenda in ways that promote Australia's interests.² It understands that its reputation can either promote or undermine its foreign policy objectives. DFAT's handbook on public diplomacy makes clear:

Public diplomacy contributes to our national security by helping to build understanding about Australia and its place in the world as a stable, sophisticated, tolerant and culturally diverse nation. It contributes to our economic prosperity by promoting Australia as a source of innovative and high quality goods and services, as an attractive place to visit and as a country which offers international students first rate educational opportunities.³

6.3 According to the government, Australia's fundamental values and beliefs are clear and its identity strong.⁴ Official statements often refer to the Australian values upon which the country's reputation rests. The 1997 White Paper on Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy provided a statement outlining these values:

The values which Australia brings to its foreign policy are the values of a liberal democracy...they include the rule of law, freedom of the press, the

1 Mark Leonard with Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, The Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2002, p. 9 and cited at paragraph 3.7 of this report.

2 See for example, Commonwealth of Australia, *In the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, 1997, paragraph 25, p. 13.

3 *Submission 18*, p. 8.

4 Commonwealth of Australia, *Advancing the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, 2003, pp. vii and viii.

accountability of the government to an elected parliament and a commitment to a 'fair go'.⁵

6.4 The 2003 White Paper also singled out certain qualities the government believes characterise the Australian people including a commitment to racial equality and religious tolerance:

Australians value tolerance, perseverance and mateship. These values form our spirit as a nation. They are evident in our readiness to pull together in times of adversity; in our defence, for more than one hundred years, of the freedoms we value; and in our social cohesion and national unity. We value the individual worth of every man and woman in our society. This is the essence of our egalitarian society and our identity as Australia and Australians.

Australia is a liberal democracy with a proud commitment to the core values of political and economic freedom...⁶

6.5 These images of Australians are the ones the government wants conveyed to the world and seen as genuine. As noted in the previous chapter, however, not all the messages and images coming out of Australia are consistent with the government's public diplomacy objectives or are interpreted as the government intended. Stereotypical or outdated preconceptions may in some cases block out or distort the content of the message or image. Furthermore, Australians may not appreciate that other countries do not necessarily share Australia's view of itself.

6.6 The following section considers the measures taken by Australia through its public diplomacy efforts to ensure that it is conveying a coherent, credible message to the rest of the world.

Understanding others

6.7 Students of public diplomacy often remind practitioners that one of the basic elements of effective communication is to understand the audience. They highlight the importance of fully appreciating the listener's views. Joshua S. Fouts, Director, Center on Public Diplomacy, University of Southern California, argued that public diplomacy involves not only shaping the message(s) that a country wishes to present abroad but:

...also analyzing and understanding the ways that the message is interpreted by diverse societies and developing the tools of listening and conversation as well as the tools of persuasion.⁷

5 Commonwealth of Australia, *In the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, 1997, paragraph 22, p. 11.

6 Commonwealth of Australia, *Advancing the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, 2003, p. vii.

6.8 Professor Jan Melissen, who underlined the importance of listening to and understanding the audience, observed that foreign ministries tend not to be strong in this area:

The information departments of foreign ministries generally have a lot of experience in disseminating all sorts of information about their country, including brochures, glossy magazines, films, CD ROMs and DVDs. They have however accumulated much less experience in the art of actually dialoguing with non-official organisations and individuals abroad. Feedback of any significance is often simply missing.⁸

6.9 Witnesses to this inquiry placed the same emphasis on listening to, and knowing, the target audience. For example, Mr Geoff Miller, former senior Australian diplomat, pointed to the importance of Australia having an understanding of 'the well-springs of feeling and action in foreign countries which simply may not be apparent to outside observers with limited acquaintance with the country in question'.⁹

6.10 Former diplomat, Mr Trevor Wilson, underlined the importance of tailoring Australia's approach to the target audience.¹⁰ Dr Alison Broinowski, also a former diplomat, stressed the need to understand 'what it is that people in the receiving countries are looking for from Australia rather than deciding at this end what it is we are going to give them'.¹¹ In her view, Australians must be aware of, and take account of, how others are interpreting Australia's public diplomacy messages:

...it is also very important never to lose sight, which we often do, of how we look from the point of view of the observer—that is, the client, as you might say, in the various countries where we are trying to influence opinion, trying to create a positive impression of Australia and trying to influence people either to want to trade with us, or to travel to Australia, or to be accepting of a wide range of Australian activities.¹²

7 Joshua S. Fouts, Director, Center on Public Diplomacy, University of Southern California, 'Rethinking Public Diplomacy for the 21st Century: A Toolbox for Engaging the Hearts and Minds of the Open Source Generation', Prepared for presentation at the APSA Political Communication Conference on International Communication and Conflict, 31 August 2005, pp. 4–5.

8 Jan Melissen, 'Public Diplomacy Between Theory and Practice, The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 9 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

9 Geoff Miller, *Submission 16*, 'Current and emerging challenges to the practice of Australian diplomacy', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 56, no. 2, 2002, p. 204.

10 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 7.

11 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 5.

12 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 4.

6.11 Developing this line of thought, Mr Mirchandani, who is managing director of Media Gurus an organisation that specialises in delivering public diplomacy training, provided broadcasting as a practical example of where efforts to communicate would fail if the message does not connect with the audience:

...there is now a plethora of channels available and the challenge is to say, if you have 99 channels available on your set, which one you actually turn to and why. I suggest that you would need to look at that very carefully to see what the content is of what is being transmitted. This then goes to this whole business of what we call the 'emotional intelligence'—the knowledge of what is already out there and what audiences are seeking before we just blast out into the atmosphere and broadcast whatever we feel would be relevant or not.¹³

6.12 To underline the importance of understanding the attitudes of others, Mr Jacob Townsend enunciated his view of Australia's struggle in the war of ideas with transnational terrorists. He explained:

...a major reason...we cannot operationalise a comprehensive public diplomacy component of our counter-terrorism strategy is that we have so little information about our audience. In counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation, differentiating the opponent and the audience can be quite difficult. For example, you might have someone who hates Australia but preaches nonviolence. On the other hand, you might have someone who takes up a gun against an Australian organisation or interest but has very little knowledge or attachment to any kind of opposing ideology in a concrete sense.

In any kind of war, but especially in a war of ideas, not knowing your opponent's motivation is a huge strategic blind spot. You cannot counter what they are trying to do if you do not know what they are trying to do.¹⁴

The type of information we need is why people are or are not attracted to Islamic extremism or why they dislike or like the West, Western ideology, Western societies, Australia and/or Australians, and why they become attracted to or spurn violence. It seems to me that it is particularly important to understand those people who lean away from us but who are not participating in violence—they are the sea in which the violent fish swim. Australia does not have a lot of information of this kind.¹⁵

6.13 As with Jacob Townsend, Mr Mirchandani used the public diplomacy efforts of Al-Qaeda to illustrate its success in delivering a clear, compelling message to specific audiences. He contrasted this with the difficulties the West has in countering this message:

13 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 48.

14 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 15.

15 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 15.

Al-Qaeda have said that their target is the hearts and minds of moderate Muslims. Their main message, which they are promoting everywhere, is that Islam is under attack. Every military boot that goes through a door in Baghdad and every gun that is pointed at a woman and child plays entirely into the hands of this particular message. Conversely, the coalition message is kind of, if you like, varied. It does not come together in a simple, single narrative which people can believe.¹⁶

If, for example, we are to promote the idea that Australia is a great supporter of moderate Islam, let us say in Indonesia, then we need to understand what will resonate with the target audiences so that we can say, 'We are fair dinkum in this and here is the evidence to support it.' In our training we place great emphasis not only on making motherhood statements but on what we called evidentiary support, which is proof that you are doing what you say you are doing.¹⁷

6.14 Former Ambassador to Indonesia and Chairman of the Australia Indonesia Institute, Mr Richard Woolcott, stated last year that if Australia is to succeed in its endeavours in East Asia, it must develop a much deeper public understanding of Indonesia.¹⁸

Committee view

6.15 The positive effects from the messages and images Australia conveys overseas through its public diplomacy activities will be lost if audiences are not receptive to them or interpret them negatively. To correct misconceptions, counter negative views, and generally improve Australia's reputation overseas, these messages and images need to be crafted so that they are received and interpreted by the targeted audience as intended. To do so, Australia's public diplomacy practitioners must also have a sound understanding of the culture, society and attitudes of their chosen audiences.

Mechanisms for obtaining an understanding of others

6.16 To acquire this level of understanding, numerous witnesses recognised the need for Australia to have mechanisms in place to measure public opinion in foreign countries.¹⁹ Mr Geoff Miller referred to the necessity for Australia to have informed, evaluated reporting and assessment as a regular part of its policy making.²⁰ Mr John Meert, Group Executive Director, Australian National Audit Office, also spoke of the

16 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 49.

17 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 49.

18 Richard Woolcott AC, 'Good Neighbour, Bad neighbour. What's the difference?' Uniya Seminar Series 2006, Xavier College Melbourne, 2 August 2006.

19 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 35.

20 Geoff Miller, *Submission 16*, 'Current and emerging challenges to the practice of Australian diplomacy', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 56, no. 2, 2002, p. 204.

need to have indicators that will provide information on whether activities are 'having the desired effect'.²¹ He accepted that gauging the perceptions of a country is difficult but 'if you are not measuring it then you could be throwing money at the wrong approach'.²² Mr Jacob Townsend reinforced the importance of survey-based research stating that at least, 'if you are measuring them, you have a chance of seeing where the problem lies'. He noted that if attitudes are not being measured then to a significant extent public diplomacy strategy is being formulated 'in the dark'.²³

6.17 Media Gurus agreed with the view that much more work needed to be done in understanding the way our target audiences think and respond:

There appears to be no effective mechanism for getting 'emotional intelligence' on what specific audiences might already perceive about issues which Australia wishes to discuss, or positions it has taken. The only methodology that seems to recur is that of media monitoring, and even that does not take the next step of provision of media analysis.²⁴

Mr Mirchandani referred to international market research as a well-known tool to determine how people in other countries think and feel.²⁵

Market research, surveys and opinion polls

6.18 A number of Australian agencies advised the committee of the measures they take to ensure that they understand their audience and tailor their message to suit that audience. Invest Australia and Tourism Australia stand out as two of the most active agencies in this regard. Tourism Australia relies heavily on market research to guide its marketing strategies. Mr Cameron-Smith, Manager, International Operations, Tourism Australia, told the committee:

We determine our marketing message based on market research. So as part of our global target segment, from that research we can determine what they read, where they read, what sort of messages appeal to them and then adapt our creativ[ity] around that to ensure we are getting the cut-through. There is too much wastage in consumer marketing if it is not targeted, and we do not have the money to waste.²⁶

6.19 Invest Australia spent approximately \$1 million in the 2006–07 financial year in a global advertising campaign aimed at the US, Europe and Asia. It used targeted messages to build a positive and accurate image of Australia that according to Invest Australia 'is supported by factual, independent data'. It stated:

21 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 2.

22 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 3.

23 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 14.

24 *Submission 2*, p. 5.

25 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 49.

26 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 8.

Key messages in the advertisements match the target audiences' key drivers of investment as identified in research. The ads also address information failure and help educate the target audiences about Australia's economy, business environment and industries.²⁷

6.20 Although some international commentators on public diplomacy argue that surveys and opinion polls on their own may not produce a complete picture, they nonetheless recognise that they provide crucial intelligence.²⁸ The UK 2005 review of public diplomacy recommended that:

...tracking should be reintroduced on an annual basis, between 10-30 countries being surveyed each year, and that data should be collected over time to attempt to identify shifts in impact and influence. Results from such polling would be just one output measure for public diplomacy, and findings would contribute to a wider repository of information on inputs, outputs and impact on a country by country basis. The Review Team recommends that a central monitoring and performance management unit should collect such information.²⁹

6.21 A number of witnesses to this inquiry were of the view that surveys or opinion polls certainly provide a basis on which to tailor public diplomacy messages. Mr Townsend gave the following example:

...if Australia has a positive image in Japan and you are conducting polls you need to nail down where the people received that image. How did they get that image? That then allows you to tailor your strategy or tactics more accurately. For example, if your respondents are saying that they receive a positive image through positive press coverage then that puts more weighting on the column inches measurement of public diplomacy activities. If they are receiving it from TV shows in which Australians are represented then that gives us an incentive to think about how we insert more positive images of Australians into Japanese TV shows. It could be sport. It could be schools—if so you would collaborate with the ministry of education in Japan.³⁰

6.22 DFAT informed the committee that it conducts targeted opinion surveys in key countries and regions from 'time to time'. It provided the committee with information, as outlined below, on the surveys that it had conducted over the last decade.

27 *Submission 24*, p. 4.

28 Philip Fiske de Gouveia, Foreign Policy Centre, The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, pp. 6–7 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

29 Lord Carter of Coles, *Review of Public Diplomacy*, presented to the Foreign Secretary and Chief Secretary of the Treasury, 13 December 2005, paragraph 3.9.

30 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 15.

6.23 In November 1998, DFAT presented a festival of Australian culture, sport, technology and business in Manila. An independent evaluation conducted by Trends-MBL following the promotion indicated there had been a significant fall in the percentage of writers and commentators who perceived Australia as a racist country, which had fallen from 66 to 36 per cent. The evaluation also found that 'although Filipinos continued to view Australia primarily in terms of tourism, there was a growing awareness of Australia's achievements as an advanced economy'.³¹

6.24 Despite these valuable findings, DFAT informed the committee that there had been no follow-up surveys. It noted, however, that it is about to undertake 'some joint survey work' with Australia Network.³²

6.25 The public affairs section of the Australian Embassy in Tokyo conducted surveys between 1980 and 2002 as a means of ascertaining Japanese attitudes toward Australia. The department no longer conducts these surveys because they were found to be 'not of sufficient value to justify the expense'.³³ Indeed, Dr Strahan informed the committee that it is not a cheap exercise to commission an opinion survey with 'a fairly sizeable data sample' and cited the figure of tens of thousands of dollars.³⁴

6.26 Tourism Australia and DEST have conducted opinion surveys in China in recent years. The Australia-China Council funded a survey of Chinese students at six universities in 2002–03. In early 2005, the Australian Embassy in France undertook an in-house survey to determine the quantity and nature of demand for information from embassy visitors. In the same year, the Australian Embassy in Berlin commissioned a market analysis company to conduct a one-off survey on German public views of Australia.³⁵

6.27 The evidence provided by DFAT to the committee suggests that DFAT does not undertake rigorous surveys, opinion polls or focus groups in order to understand or track attitudes toward Australia in other countries. When the occasional survey is undertaken, there is no evidence that it fits into a wider strategic plan or that there is any follow-up.

6.28 DFAT does, however, especially through overseas posts, monitor and report on attitudes toward Australia. For example, DFAT noted that there are 'perceptions among some South Africans, mostly ill-informed, of racism in Australia.' It stated that it had not conducted surveys of South African attitudes towards Australia and Australians but that it monitors closely such attitudes through the media. According to DFAT, it also maintains regular direct contact with a wide cross-section of South

31 DFAT answer to written question on notice, 1 May 2007, p. 4.

32 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 52.

33 DFAT answer to written question on notice, 1 May 2007, p. 4.

34 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 52.

35 DFAT answer to written question on notice, 1 May 2007, p. 4.

African society to determine the views held by South Africans toward Australia.³⁶ DFAT informed the committee that more generally overseas posts monitor coverage of Australia in the local press and submit monthly summaries and reports on particular emerging or contentious issues as they arise.³⁷

6.29 A recent public diplomacy report from Australia's post in Tehran provides an example of the way DFAT gleans important information about attitudes toward Australians. The post had determined that there was 'a pressing need to enhance understanding in Iran that Muslims are an integral part of the fabric of Australian society'. The post reported:

According to DIAC [Department of Immigration and Citizenship] Tehran, refugee applicants have on occasion asked DIAC staff if they would need to renounce their faith on arrival in Australia and even if they would be forced to 'spit on the Quran'.³⁸

6.30 A number of witnesses expressed concern that the steps taken by DFAT to determine overseas attitudes toward Australia were inadequate. Mr Kirk Coningham, a former DFAT officer, was of the view that DFAT's performance on research—surveys and market research—and more generally its public diplomacy communication strategies overseas would 'paint a sorry story'.³⁹ He noted that in Australia everything from 'domestic violence through to power naps in cars' is subjected to a focus group and is tested and evaluated—but not Australia's reputation abroad.⁴⁰ He questioned the reasons for the government cancelling the surveys on public opinion about Australia in Japan.⁴¹ On this matter of the surveys undertaken in Japan up to 2002, Mr Trevor Wilson, who served as Deputy Head of Mission from 1996–2000, commented:

This was one good way of assessing the impact of what Australian public diplomacy was doing, because the questions—which we influenced—were directly related to our public diplomacy targets and to our activities, so you could measure them over this long period of time and see what kinds of changes occurred and where Australia related to other countries. And we actually came off very well, particularly in something like trust, even at a time when Australia was being criticised for strikes and other sorts of disruptions to supplies of raw material to Japan.⁴²

6.31 He noted DFAT's concern about the expense involved, but expressed disappointment at the approach that posts should not carry out public opinion polls

36 DFAT answer to written question on notice, 1 May 2007, p. 24.

37 *Submission 18*, p. 22.

38 DFAT, answer to written question on notice, 1 May 2007, p. 69.

39 *Submission 1*, p. [3].

40 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 47.

41 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 47.

42 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 7.

because, in his view, they are a valuable method of 'evaluating the impact' that public diplomacy, is having.⁴³ A former counsellor in the embassy in Tokyo, Mr Christopher Stewart, endorsed these views adding the comment that:

We started that research for a very good reason: we wanted to look at attitudes and perceptions as they were developing in Japan over time, in a generational transition—and it is standard operating practice in public affairs to conduct activities based on research, not hunches.⁴⁴

6.32 Addressing the issue of the expense involved in using the tools of market research, Mr Stewart indicated that the surveys conducted in Japan were costing around \$3,000 a year 'because it was omnibus research'.⁴⁵

6.33 Confining the matter to radical Islam and terrorism in Indonesia, an ASPI study suggested that the government 'should consider the development of an 'Indonesian Attitudes Project' to provide baseline data and analysis on the Indonesian population's attitudes to terrorism, Australia, and the role of Islam in public policy'.⁴⁶ It then argued that once a survey of Indonesian opinion has been established, 'the next priority should be to develop a suitable public diplomacy strategy'.⁴⁷

Committee view

6.34 The committee appreciates the importance of research to public diplomacy. A thorough understanding based on solid and up-to-date research enables those responsible for Australia's public diplomacy to craft messages and images that are more likely to enhance Australia's reputation in target groups. It would also assist the government to identify priority areas requiring targeted public diplomacy programs and to assign appropriate funding and personnel to these relevant areas.

6.35 Based on evidence to the committee, it is clear, that DFAT is not conducting that type of research. While posts monitor the local media to obtain some insight into attitudes toward Australia and use other means such as immigration forms to assess the impressions that individuals have of Australia, they are no substitute for in-depth research. The committee accepts that research tools such as surveys are expensive but for countries of crucial importance to Australia, such as Indonesia, the committee believes that gathering information is a critical element in the successful conduct of its foreign policy. The omnibus type survey conducted in Japan could serve as a model. This conclusion and following recommendation are also relevant to findings made

43 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 8.

44 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 17.

45 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 17.

46 Fealy G. and Borgu A., *Local Jihad: Radical Islam and terrorism in Indonesia*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, September 2005, p. 9.

47 Fealy G. and Borgu A., *Local Jihad; Radical Islam and terrorism in Indonesia*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, September 2005, p. 9.

later in the report where the committee considers the evaluation of public diplomacy activities.

Recommendation 1

6.36 The committee recommends that DFAT give a higher priority to tracking opinions of Australia in countries of greatest significance to Australia as a means of obtaining better insights into the attitudes of others toward Australia. To this end, DFAT should devote appropriate resources to develop a capacity to conduct and evaluate regular assessments of attitudes towards Australia and its foreign policy.

6.37 The committee now turns to the challenges in managing and bringing coherence to the different messages being conveyed from Australia to overseas audiences.

Managing the many and diverse images coming out of Australia

6.38 Public diplomacy must also manage images coming out of the country that have the potential to undermine the government's attempts to promote a positive image. In its 2005–2006 Annual Report, DFAT highlighted that the department responded 'promptly to some inaccurate reporting' on the Cronulla riots, the Vivian Alvarez Solon deportation case, high profile cases in Bali and Singapore and the introduction of workplace reform legislation.⁴⁸ It did so 'in close cooperation with other agencies and posts'.⁴⁹ Overall, it noted that Australia had:

...a high profile year in the **international media**, with reporting for the most part factual but on occasion requiring concerted effort by our posts overseas to rectify misconceptions or to underscore key messages.⁵⁰

6.39 Stories such as the Cronulla riots and the deportation of an Australian citizen, Vivian Alvarez Solon, to the Philippines, in effect, became 'foreign policy' stories that attracted world-wide attention.⁵¹ Mr Geoff Miller said:

...it's very important for a government always to be aware that in these days of instant communications it's not possible to have a story or a version that's only for domestic consumption. Wire services pick up nearly

48 The Cronulla riots, which occurred in December 2005, were reported widely in the media and attributed to ethnic tensions. For information on the Vivian Alvarez Solon case, see Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *The removal, search for and discovery of Ms Vivian Solon*, Interim and Final reports, September and December 2005.

49 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2005–06*, p. 191.

50 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2005–06*, p. 191.

51 For thoughts on the importance of domestic diplomacy see for example Mark Leonard and Andrew Small with Martin Rose, *British Public Diplomacy In the 'Age of Schisms'*, The Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2005, pp. 5–7 and Mark Leonard with Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, The Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2002, p. 13.

everything, and if there's a foreign angle to something it will be sent at once to the country or countries concerned.⁵²

Thus, domestic diplomacy is an important component of public diplomacy.

Domestic diplomacy

6.40 The Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Alexander Downer MP, noted that there is no longer a distinction between the domestic message and the international message. He said:

Foreign correspondents based in Australia base much of their reporting on what's in the domestic press.

And domestic reports are picked up by papers and electronic media around the world.

Sometimes this causes problems for the image of Australia overseas.

The Redfern riots and the Cronulla riots are an example, where people overseas got the impression that law and order had broken down across Sydney, which was not the case.

There's not much the Government can do in these situations when a big story overwhelms the media coverage of Australia.

But over the medium term, in the background, we work away at our public diplomacy programs to build an accurate and positive image of contemporary Australia.⁵³

6.41 A number of submitters noted the importance of marshalling domestic support for Australia's public diplomacy policy as a means of managing or countering adverse impressions arising from events within the country. Professor Naren Chitty, Professor of International Communication at Macquarie University, noted that, 'You cannot run foreign policy effectively unless you have the support of your own people'.⁵⁴ In its submission, RMIT also highlighted the importance of ensuring that public diplomacy takes account of Australians:

Effective public diplomacy also requires strong engagement with domestic populations about its intent and conduct. Indeed, its benefits flow in both directions: a citizenry with a strong understanding of Australia's standing in the world and its engagement with regions and partners is less insular in outlook, better equipped to respond to the pressures and challenges of

52 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 2.

53 'Foreign Policy Values and the Media', The Hon Alexander Downer, MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Speech to the National Newspaper Publishers' Conference, Gold Coast, 28 August 2006, p. 5 of 10, http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2006/060828_nnp_conf.html (accessed 1 March 2007).

54 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 36.

globalisation, and more likely to successfully promote Australia's public diplomacy goals in their own professional and personal lives.⁵⁵

6.42 According to the government, it recognises the importance of broad community understanding of Australia's global environment and support for the policies it pursues to advance Australia's national interests.⁵⁶ It has stated its commitment to wide-ranging consultation within Australia to build broad community understanding of, and support for, Australia's foreign and trade policies.⁵⁷ The government maintains that it consults widely with interested groups through standing bodies and informal means.⁵⁸

6.43 In Chapter 4, however, the committee highlighted the apparent lack of awareness of public diplomacy in Australia. For example, RMIT noted that while there has been discussion in business and academic circles about the importance of 'soft power' in global relations, little public profile has been afforded to government or other agencies' activities and 'little discussion about how Australians might contribute to these goals'.⁵⁹ In its opinion, the 'opportunities for strengthening and broadening understanding of public diplomacy and for engaging individuals and organisations in its pursuit, are not being fully exploited'.⁶⁰ RMIT suggested that:

Government should ensure that the goals of public diplomacy, and the avenues whereby they are pursued, are better understood generally within Australia. A public communication strategy should be considered, targeting selected publics in Australia and overseas.⁶¹

6.44 It should be noted that a 2005 analytical report prepared for the White Paper on Australia's aid program found that engagement with the Australian public could be improved. It suggested that 'extended community engagement needs to be supported by a re-focused and proactive public affairs strategy with sufficient flexibility and resources to support the evolving aid framework, engage with new players and maintain existing public engagement'. It proposed that the Australian Government 'put

55 *Submission 9*, p. 1.

56 Commonwealth of Australia, *Advancing the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, 2003, p. 127.

57 Commonwealth of Australia, *Advancing the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, 2003, p. xx.

58 Commonwealth of Australia, *Advancing the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, 2003, p. 127. The White Paper mentioned the Foreign Affairs Council, the Trade Minister's World Trade Organization Advisory Group, DFAT's formal consultations twice a year with non-government organisations interested in human rights and the National Consultative Committee on Peace and Disarmament.

59 *Submission 9*, p. [3].

60 *Submission 9*, p. [3].

61 *Submission 9*, p. [3].

in place a three-year program of Town Hall meetings to inform the Australian public about developments in the aid program and invite feedback and ideas'.⁶²

6.45 The report also found that 'to generate greater media coverage of the longer term and substantive policy issues surrounding the aid program, there needs to be a targeted media communications strategy aimed at engaging significant and credible media players in dialogue about development'.⁶³ These findings could also apply more broadly to Australia's public diplomacy which is a closely related activity .

6.46 The White Paper on Australian overseas aid, briefly referred to AusAID 'not maximising the opportunities to capture its achievements and share information with the Australian public, stakeholders and development partners'. It noted a number of measures that would be taken including 'increase transparency and information sharing to a wider audience'.⁶⁴ Again, the committee notes that these observations have direct relevance to Australia's public diplomacy.

6.47 A number of overseas commentators have remarked on measures taken by some governments to connect with the domestic audience in order to mobilise support for the country's foreign policy. They include community liaison committees, town meetings, visits to regional areas and focus groups. In some cases, Ambassadors on home consultation visits engage with the domestic audience through speeches to business associations and service clubs.⁶⁵

Committee view

6.48 As with many countries throughout the world, there is no longer a distinction in Australia between a domestic message and one intended for an overseas audience. The Australian Government does need to consider its domestic diplomacy to ensure that the Australian community is fully informed about the objectives of Australia's public diplomacy and how they might take a constructive role in helping to convey overseas a positive image of Australia. The committee believes that the government

62 Gaye Hart and Ellen Shipley, *Engaging the Australian Community, Analytical Report for the White Paper on Australia's Aid Program*, October 2005, paragraphs 103–104, p. 18. It should be noted that the views expressed in this report were those of the authors and did not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government.

63 Gaye Hart and Ellen Shipley, *Engaging the Australian Community, Analytical Report for the White Paper on Australia's Aid Program*, October 2005, paragraph 110, p. 19. It should be noted that the views expressed in this report were those of the authors and did not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government.

64 Australian Government, AusAID, *Australian Aid: Promoting Growth and Stability, A White Paper on the Australian Government's Overseas Aid Program*, April 2006, p. 73.

65 See for example, Kishan S Rana, *Foreign Ministries: Change and Reform*, Working paper, November 2005, pp. 3 and 13. See also suggestions by the UK Foreign Policy Centre as cited in Philip Fiske de Gouveia, Foreign Policy Centre, *The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy*, p. 6 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

should be active in exploring all the available opportunities to harness domestic support for its public diplomacy programs. The committee notes that the government has stated that it consults widely with interested groups through standing bodies and informal means. Even so, the experiences of this committee together with the evidence presented to it suggest that Australians are not well informed about Australia's public diplomacy programs.

Recommendation 2

6.49 The committee recommends that the government's public diplomacy policy attach greater importance to creating an awareness of public diplomacy domestically. It recommends that the government formulate a public communication strategy and put in place explicit programs designed:

- **to inform more Australians about Australia's public diplomacy; and**
- **to encourage and facilitate the many and varied organisations and groups involved in international activities to take a constructive role in actively supporting Australia's public diplomacy objectives.**

Conclusion

6.50 Public diplomacy messages are intended to convey to other countries a positive image of Australia. In some cases efforts are needed to fill information gaps, or correct misconceptions. To do so effectively, public diplomacy practitioners must have a very clear understanding of those they seek to inform and ultimately influence. This understanding should be based in solid research and continuous assessment such as country surveys on attitudes toward Australia. A strategic plan based on this level of understanding is needed to ensure that the message and images Australia conveys to chosen audiences will help Australia achieve its foreign policy objectives.

6.51 Furthermore, to be fully effective in conveying a convincing, coherent and credible message, Australia's public diplomacy needs the support of Australians. Strengthening domestic support for Australia's public diplomacy should be an important part of Australia's overall public diplomacy strategy. The following chapter considers people-to-people links as another important aspect of public diplomacy.

Chapter 7

People-to-people links and relationship building as part of Australia's public diplomacy

7.1 Whether it is based on international conferences or seminars; on reviews of existing public diplomacy programs; or on the experiences of practitioners or students of public diplomacy, the literature on public diplomacy emphasises the importance of dialogue as a critical element of good public diplomacy. Thus, public diplomacy is not only about projecting an image; it is about engagement and relationship building.¹ This chapter considers how effectively Australia's public diplomacy programs build and sustain Australia's network of relationships with other countries.

Public diplomacy—a two-way street

7.2 Overseas studies on public diplomacy recognise that public diplomacy cannot be one-dimensional; that it must be more than projecting an image or delivering a message. They stress that public diplomacy is about engagement and building relationships that ensure that links and communications systems between countries continue to function despite tensions or breakdowns in formal diplomacy. Rainer Schlageter noted:

In order to be successful, today's public diplomacy has to go beyond traditional 'one-way-street' information work: It should be a *dialogue* and a steady discussion with the goal to establish a *long-term relationship* with foreign audiences and in particular with the leadership from all fields of society.²

Previous inquiries—the importance of people-to-people links

7.3 Recent inquiries by parliamentary committees and academic research on Australia's relations with specific countries provide valuable insight into the network of relationships that underpin formal diplomacy. The JSCFADT and the Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Committee have conducted a number of inquiries into Australia's relations with countries including Japan, China, Indonesia and Malaysia. All reports have emphasised the importance of building people-to-people links as a means of sustaining a healthy, strong and mutually beneficial relationship. For example, in its report on Australia's relations with China, the Senate

1 Javier Noya, 'The United States and Europe: Convergence or Divergence in Public Diplomacy?', The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 13 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

2 Rainer Schlageter, 'German Public Diplomacy', The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 22 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007). See also Mark Leonard with Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, The Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2002, pp. 9–10.

committee recognised the benefits that derive from building a lasting network of friendships with another country. It found:

...any relationship between two nations cannot be viewed purely in economic terms. The bilateral relationship comprises a complex web of interrelationships between a diverse range of actors. Contributors to the ongoing evolution of the relationship include individuals, community organisations, educational institutions, sporting associations, scientific and technological research agencies and bodies, NGOs, sub-national governments, and federal, state and local government departments, to name but a few.³

7.4 The committee believed that the possibilities for deepening Australia's relationship with China were enormous. It acknowledged that the challenge was to identify and recognise the vital role that various stakeholders play in contributing to the strength and vitality of the bilateral relationship, and to support them in their activities.

7.5 The JSCFADT provided another example of the vital role of people-to-people links in its report on Australia's relations with Indonesia. It concluded:

One of the strongest themes that appeared in the evidence received during the course of this inquiry was the importance of the people-to-people links in building Australia's relationship with Indonesia. It was a theme stressed by the myriad government agencies that made submissions to this inquiry, by teachers and academics and by individuals.⁴

7.6 These observations apply with equal force to other countries and clearly show that people-to-people links are the lynch pin of Australia's public diplomacy. Indeed, the committee's inquiry into public diplomacy further underlined the critical importance of these associations.

7.7 In this regard, RMIT recognised that while public diplomacy is about transmitting values and ideas 'by influencing the way individuals think and feel, it cannot be done "remotely"'. It argued that public diplomacy 'requires person-to-person interaction through a variety of media and fora to support not only the messages Government wishes to convey but the dialogue which must surround them'.⁵ Mr Chris Freeman, a public affairs practitioner with extensive experience in Australia's public policy programs over the last 30 years or so, also noted:

On the broader question of the selling of our views, our philosophies, our governance and the way we approach things in Australia, I agree that the key really is having people-to-people links and bringing people out to have

3 Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Opportunities and challenges: Australia's relationship with China*, November 2005, pp. 347–8.

4 Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade, Foreign Affairs Sub Committee, *Near Neighbours—Good Neighbours*, May 2004, paragraphs 6.1–6.4.

5 *Submission 9*, p. [1].

a look for themselves or sending people over there to talk to people. It is not something that can be sold by putting out publications and hammering away at people.⁶

7.8 Reinforcing this view, Geoff Miller said that public diplomacy was about 'cultivating good relations against the day you need them'.⁷

7.9 The following section looks at some of the main public diplomacy programs designed to forge people-to-people links. These include exchange and visitor programs.

Education and exchange programs

7.10 Previous parliamentary committees have noted the importance of in-country training for building personal networks and as a means of improving mutual understanding between countries.⁸ They urged the government to support programs that encourage Australian students or professionals to study or train in other countries, particularly in Asia, and for overseas students to study in Australia. For example, with regard to Indonesia, the JSCFADT noted:

It is extremely important that Australian students are given the opportunity and encouragement to study in Indonesia. Australian students who do so ultimately enrich not only their own but Australia's expertise and understanding of Indonesia and the Indonesian language. As young ambassadors for Australia, they also send a strong signal of our interest in Indonesia, and through their interactions, present opportunities for Indonesians to increase their understanding about Australia and Australians.⁹

7.11 The committee has selected the Youth Ambassador program and the Endeavour scholarships among the many similar types of activities for more detailed discussion.

The Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development Program

7.12 The Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development Program (AYAD) was established in 1998 to strengthen mutual understanding between Australia and the

6 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 32.

7 *Submission 16*, reproduced from *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 56, no. 2, 2002, p. 204.

8 In its report on Australia's relations with China, the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee recognised that student exchange programs have a vital role in promoting greater understanding and affinity between Australia and other countries, *Opportunities and challenges: Australia's relationship with China*, November 2005, pp. 288–290.

9 Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade, Foreign Affairs Sub Committee, *Near Neighbours—Good Neighbours*, May 2004, Canberra, paragraph 6.85, p. 162.

countries of the Asia Pacific. It is an AusAID-led program that sends around 400 young Australians per year to developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The program places skilled young Australians, aged 18-30, on short-term assignments of between 3-12 months, in developing countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region. They work with Australian organisations and their overseas counterparts in a broad range of areas that include health, environment, rural development, gender, governance, justice, education and infrastructure development.

7.13 The purpose of the program is to strengthen mutual understanding and for the Youth Ambassadors to make a positive contribution to the development of their 'host' country. It is designed to allow young people to gain 'an increased understanding of the development needs of our neighbouring countries and broaden their experience by living and working in a cross-cultural environment'.¹⁰

7.14 According to Mr Alan March, Assistant Director General, AusAID, there have been 2,000 Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development to date, and the number is expected to rise to 2,500 by 2008.¹¹

7.15 The scheme provides media training for possible promotional opportunities while the youth ambassadors are overseas. Upon return, they are encouraged to share their story with the media and community in general. Mr March acknowledged, however, that AusAID does not yet have a systematic approach to capture the experiences and maximise the benefits of the program.¹²

The Australian Leadership Awards Program

7.16 The Australian Leadership Awards Program offers scholarships and fellowships to academically gifted scholars from the Asia-Pacific region. The fellowship program provides short term study, research and professional attachment programs in Australia delivered by Australian organisations that provide these study, research and professional development activities in Australia. Fellows are 'leaders or mid-career professionals from the Asia-Pacific region who have the potential to assume leadership roles that can influence social and economic policy reform and development outcomes, both in their own countries and in the region'.¹³

10 Australian Government, AusAID website, Youth Ambassadors, <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/youtham/whatis.cfm> (accessed 25 May 2007)

11 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 63.

12 See comments Mr Alan March, *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 71.

13 ALA Scholarships are academically prestigious awards offered to high achievers from the Asia-Pacific region each year to undertake postgraduate study (Masters or Doctorate) and a Leadership Training Program in Australia. They are intended for those who are already leaders or have the potential to assume leadership roles that can influence social and economic policy reform and development outcomes, both in their own countries and in the Asia-Pacific region. AusAID website <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/scholar/alafellow.cfm> (accessed 1 May 2007).

7.17 During their stay in Australia, these students have the opportunity to acquire a greater understanding of life in Australia and the way Australians think and behave. Usually, they become favourably disposed toward Australians and form close associations with teachers, mentors and fellow students. For example, Ms Fiona Buffington, Australian Education International, DEST, observed that many of the international students that have studied in Australia have returned to their homes 'with a perspective of Australia that has been very positive for our diplomacy and they have probably been some of our greatest advocates and ambassadors'.¹⁴ She said:

We are aware that there are some very well regarded people who are now well placed in senior appointments in the region who had the opportunity for an education courtesy of the Colombo Plan, so that era through to the mid-eighties was a very positive one for Australia.¹⁵

7.18 As a result of all the programs designed to bring foreign students to Australian shores, including the Australian Leadership Awards Program, DEST indicated that:

There are now many businesses, political and cultural leaders in the Asia-Pacific region counted among the alumni of Australian universities and colleges. Many of these leaders came to Australia under the highly successful Colombo Plan of the 1950s. A new generation of scholars are now building on this tradition with some 318,000 international students studying in Australia in 2006, drawn not just from the Asia-Pacific region but from over 200 countries around the globe.

These students are gaining a first-hand experience of Australian people, institutions and our way of life. The experiences gained and friendships formed provide the basis for the goodwill in the personal, business and political relationships of the future.¹⁶

7.19 The sheer number of 318,000 international students studying in Australia in 2006 alone is impressive.¹⁷ The network of current and former students provides an enormous pool of people, many of whom have taken up professional positions in their own country and can and do assist in promoting Australia's reputation.

Support for education programs

7.20 The committee found overwhelming support for programs designed to attract foreign students to Australian educational institutions and for Australian students to study overseas. Some submitters called for the numbers of students involved in the overseas study programs to be increased. Dr Broinowski stressed the importance of more Australians spending 'more time in our region—if necessary, with the support of

14 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 53.

15 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 54.

16 *Submission 28*, p. 2.

17 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 54.

a public diplomacy program—going, learning and coming back'.¹⁸ Mr Freeman suggested that Australia might boost the numbers of people coming to Australia and send more Australians to the region.¹⁹ RMIT recommended that in the short term, the opportunities for 'Australian students to study abroad and for international students to study in Australia should be increased, and with it financial support for them to take up these opportunities'. It suggested that:

This need not simply be a matter of more funded scholarships, although they would be welcome: such a strategy might also involve tax incentives for individuals or employers sponsoring staff studying overseas or international students studying in Australia; remission of HECS debt for existing Australians studying overseas, and government to government arrangements regarding student exchange and scholarship programs.²⁰

7.21 The committee notes the immediate benefits to public diplomacy of Australians studying and working overseas and of foreign students and professionals doing the same in Australia. The committee was also interested in how Australia consolidates and builds on the relationships that develop while students are studying in the country. In the following section it considers measures taken to maintain contact with overseas students.

Opportunities to build on education programs

7.22 While acknowledging the value of programs such as the Youth Ambassador program and the Endeavour scholarships, some witnesses suggested that opportunities were being missed to capitalise on the benefits already deriving from the programs. Indeed, responding to a question about whether the Australian Leadership Awards Program could contribute more to Australia's public diplomacy, Mr March indicated that more could be done:

[T]he case was put to us that for a small amount of money and a small amount of effort a lot more could be made by harnessing that experience and harnessing that network and working with it. We have got that message and we are looking at how we can take it forward.²¹

7.23 Most of the suggestions concerned with Australia's education programs and lost opportunities related to alumni.

Alumni

7.24 Previous parliamentary inquiries have given much attention to alumni associations as a means of developing and strengthening relationships with overseas

18 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 35.

19 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 38.

20 *Submission 9*, p. [3].

21 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 70.

students who have studied in Australia.²² In its report on Australia's relations with China, the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee presented evidence suggesting that developing alumni programs 'is one of the most effective ways of strengthening linkages' with another country. Evidence indicated that more could be done in this area. For example, the Australia–China Council informed the committee that 'with greater funding it could take a more proactive role in developing alumni associations for Chinese students that had studied in Australia'.²³ At that time, the committee noted the active alumni program run through the British Council, 'whereby UK alumni are invited to sporting, cultural, educational and networking events aimed at promoting the UK'.

7.25 In its report on Australia's relations with Indonesia, the JSCFADT also referred to evidence supporting the development and maintenance of strong alumni ties. One witness before that committee, Professor Hal Hill, ANU, made reference to the role that strong alumni networks can play in promoting Australian education. He suggested that there was scope for the Australian Embassy in Jakarta to do more in this regard. The view was supported by his colleague, Dr Chris Manning, ANU, who noted that by the time students had reached important positions in Indonesia, their association with Australia has dissipated significantly. To avoid the weakening of ties, he proposed that Australia draw from the Japanese experience and provide government support for the alumni relationships.²⁴

7.26 Evidence to this committee adds weight to these findings about the importance of continuing engagement with alumni. DFAT recognised the contribution that alumni could make to Australia's public diplomacy. It stated that the department regards alumni as 'another natural partner in our efforts to promote Australia's standing as a diverse, tolerant and open society'. According to DFAT, overseas posts actively foster links with these organisations.²⁵

7.27 A number of witnesses agreed with evidence presented to previous committees in that there is scope to strengthen alumni associations. Mr Mirchandani was of the view that ongoing relations with overseas students who had graduated from Australian universities could be followed up more strongly than they are:

22 Senate Foreign Affairs and Trade References Committee, *Opportunities and challenges: Australia's relationship with China*, November 2005, pp. 287–90.

23 Senate Foreign Affairs and Trade References Committee, *Opportunities and challenges: Australia's relationship with China*, November 2005, p. 289.

24 Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade, Foreign Affairs Sub Committee, *Near Neighbours—Good Neighbours*, May 2004, paragraphs 4.174–4.175. Professor Hal Christopher Hill was Deputy Convenor and H.W. Arndt Professor of Pacific and Asian Studies, Indonesia Project, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University. Dr Chris Manning, was Head, Indonesia Project, Economics Division, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University.

25 *Submission 18*, p. 52.

Students come to Australia; they certainly regard Australia very well; they develop good contacts with the institutions; and they could form the great basis of an alumni association, if you like—a global alumni association, which could work on Australia's behalf.

My personal belief...is that this has not been followed through, shall we say, by the relevant department in a strategic way as to how you nurture these relationships, how you keep them as long-term relationships, how you follow the careers of those who are marked as successes back in their own countries and maintain the contact so that they become key influences on Australia's behalf.²⁶

7.28 Dr Julie Wells, Director, Policy and Planning, RMIT University, gave the following example:

We run a number of promotional events with our alumni offshore. For example, we recently ran one in Singapore, which was a careers expo run in partnership with the City of Melbourne. When we approach DFAT for support or engagement, we get enthusiastic cooperation, but it is not systematic and it is not strategic; it is ad hoc.²⁷

We will get approaches from DFAT. For example, we recently received a request from a DFAT official to visit us and talk about our alumni in Mauritius. But we are operating in a context-free zone, and I think we could make much more of this if the focus around public diplomacy could be shifted to accommodate an industry engagement framework that involves universities.²⁸

7.29 Ms Fiona Buffington acknowledged that the department had found it hard to keep track of the many who had participated in the Colombo Plan between 1950 and 1985 because it pre-dated the era of computer databases.²⁹ She informed the committee that they had reviewed and evaluated the lack of engagement with students from the Colombo Plan.

7.30 Turning to the Endeavour scholarships and the Australia scholarship scheme, she advised the committee that from the beginning, 'we have been setting up a database so that will be able to track and stay in touch with the students, hopefully for their lifetime'.³⁰ She explained the potential to use this data base to keep in touch with former students which would enable the posts to engage them in future activities:

...coordinated within the regions themselves so that when people see a parliamentary committee coming through or a treasurer coming through at post and they are scanning to see some useful engagements for a treasurer

26 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 44.

27 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 22.

28 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 22.

29 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 54.

30 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 54.

or a parliamentary committee the Australia scholarships alumni will be on that radar.³¹

7.31 The database will not include all international students studying in Australia but only those who have come in through these specialist programs.³² Ms Buffington acknowledged the large number of people who could form an international network of former students but explained the reason for concentrating on a specific group:

In places like Malaysia we are now talking about a million people who would have an Australian qualification. So we are specifically targeting the Endeavour, Australian scholarships and Colombo Plan type scholars for that particular activity. The universities and other institutions also do a wonderful job in trying to stay in touch with their alumni and have very positive engagements. We are usually aware of that. So it is not that we are trying to duplicate that. We have a very elite group as part of the Colombo, Endeavour and Australian scholarships and we have broader alumni events. In the case of Vietnam, DEST has actually helped pay for the base of that alumni database in order to stay in touch. It will not be an all-encompassing thing. We will lose the opportunity of why we are trying to target these people for these Endeavour scholarships if we try to make them feel part of an alumni of a couple of million.³³

7.32 It should be noted that Mr March informed the committee that:

...the white paper analysis process did clearly signal to the aid program that for modest investments you can get a potentially significant return by working through alumni networks and doing more with the people on return, and that is certainly what we are going to do with both leadership awards as well as the youth ambassadors.³⁴

7.33 Even so, with regard to the Australian Leadership Awards, he noted that although AusAID was considering alumni opportunities, thoughts on that matter were, at this stage, still 'reasonably unformed'.³⁵

7.34 Apart from the 'coordinated database' being developed by DEST, there were few if any other clearly defined activities designed specifically to build on and strengthen the connections established with former Australian educated overseas students. The language used in evidence was about possibilities—what could be done—not about what was being done. There was no mention about actual activities or achievements stemming from initiatives based around using alumni associations to enhance Australia's public diplomacy.

31 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 57.

32 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 54.

33 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 58.

34 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 72.

35 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 70.

Committee view

7.35 The committee not only supports programs such as the Australian Leadership Awards Program but also strongly endorses measures that would open up more opportunities for international students to study in Australia and for Australian students to study overseas. These education programs are important building blocks for Australia's public diplomacy.

7.36 As a group and as individuals occupying key positions in their communities, overseas graduates of Australian universities have the potential to be effective advocates for Australia—goodwill ambassadors who can help to build or strengthen bridges between Australia and other countries. Their knowledge and understanding would enable them to educate others in their communities about Australia and its people and help to dispel stereotypical or outdated notions.

7.37 Based on the findings of other parliamentary committees as mentioned above and evidence before this inquiry, the committee believes that the Australian Government should offer stronger and more effective support for the various alumni organisations for foreign students who have studied in Australia. The scope to build on their contribution to Australia's public diplomacy warrants much closer government consideration. This observation is supported by previous parliamentary committees that have noted or recommended that the government could 'take a more active role in working with Australian educational institutions to develop effective alumni programs'.³⁶

7.38 The committee welcomes the development of a database of overseas students who have studied under the Australian Leadership Awards Program. It believes that this database should have the highest priority but the committee sees it as only the first step in the right direction.

Recommendation 3

7.39 The committee recommends that the government take a more active role in working with Australian educational institutions to develop stronger and more effective alumni programs for overseas students who have studied in Australia.

Visitors programs

7.40 There are also shorter term programs designed to bring people from other countries to Australia for visits or to draw groups of people together to converse on particular subjects. For example, the Coolum Forum is an initiative of the Australian and Thai Foreign Ministers designed to bring together East Asian leaders from business, politics, government and academia for an informal meeting in Australia. It provides an opportunity for these young and emerging leaders not only to talk about

36 See Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Opportunities and challenges: Australia's relationship with China*, November 2005, p. 291.

concerns that their countries share but to network and establish contact with counterparts throughout the region.

7.41 The following section looks in greater detail at a few of Australia's public diplomacy visitors' programs.

International media visits program and special visits program

7.42 Under the International Media Visits Program, DFAT brings international journalists and commentators to Australia. In 2005–06, the program hosted 16 media visits involving 63 journalists. The aim of a visit may be very specific. For example, Mr Craig Burns, Executive Manager, International Division, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, noted that this program has given attention to the free trade agenda. He noted:

...groups of Chinese or Japanese journalists are brought to Australia, they travel around and see, in our particular area of interest, agriculture in Australia, to determine the level of threat that it might be to Chinese or Japanese agriculture or whatever the case may be. That is a clearly identifiable program within DFAT which does that directly by trying to get to the journalists in the other countries.³⁷

7.43 A recent post report from Beijing not only referred to a similar visit by journalists from major newspapers including from Gansu and Henan provinces but recorded some of the public diplomacy benefits:

The visit resulted in 17 well-focused articles totalling around 17,000 words. The articles picked up on Australia's high-value, high-tech agricultural sector and our arguments that Australian agricultural output would not have the capacity to pose a significant threat to Chinese farmers, but would rather meet an existing gap in demand as well as supply new products to increasingly affluent consumers.³⁸

7.44 DFAT's special visitors program is another activity designed to inform people from overseas about specific aspects of Australia. This program arranges for 'influential and potentially influential people' to meet Australian government, business and community figures. In 2005–06, DFAT organised 26 visits.

7.45 In addition, some visitors programs are run by agencies outside DFAT. Examples of these programs are discussed next.

The Australian Centre for Democratic Institutions

7.46 The Australian Centre for Democratic Institutions conducts high-level courses for political leaders and officials from parliaments and political parties in the Asia

37 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 72.

38 DFAT, answer to written question on notice, p. 71.

Pacific region. Dr Benjamin Reilly gave the example of having the heads of five of the main Islamist parties from Indonesia visit Australia. He advised the committee:

...on the first day we were going around and asking everyone what they wanted to achieve, and one of them said, 'Well, our objective is to introduce sharia law, so we want to find out how to get our objective up.' After two weeks in Australia and also mixing with people from the region, I think maybe that was not quite as high up on the priority list.³⁹

In his view, people who visit Australia through programs conducted by the Centre 'come away with an improved perception of Australia'.⁴⁰

Asialink conversations

7.47 The Asialink conversations started in 2002 at the initiative of Asialink Patron, Mr Baillieu Myer AC. One of the main motivations in establishing this dialogue was 'to counter the perception that Australia had "turned its back on Southeast Asia", and to help identify new methods for strengthening Australia/ASEAN relations'.⁴¹ Asialink has run three of these meetings: one in Australia, one in Malaysia and, most recently, in Ho Chi Minh City just after APEC. The meetings, which take place over a few days, bring together key leaders from ASEAN and Australia to discuss critical questions facing the region and beyond. According to Asialink:

...the term 'conversations' was chosen to suggest a very personal event, markedly different from the standard conference—a smaller, more intimate gathering designed to foster a frank and robust exchange of ideas and to build new networks and friendships.⁴²

7.48 It believed that this type of activity needs more support and explained further some of the benefits gained from the project.⁴³

...it is about the networking of the individuals and maintaining the contact with those individuals, because you invest an awful lot in them, both in identification and in then taking them to a place and giving them a good time and a meaningful experience of dialogue... We have robust discussions about the fact that our Indonesian colleagues think that we are attempting to balkanize them, and a lot of fairly robust discussion about our treatment of our Aboriginal community, and with that sort of discussion you do make

39 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 36.

40 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 36.

41 *Asialink, 2004 Asialink Conversations, Report of Proceedings*, Jim Leibold, rapporteur and editor, p. 3.

42 *Asialink, 2004 Asialink Conversations, Report of Proceedings*, Jim Leibold, rapporteur and editor, p. 3.

43 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 4.

connections with people that are very different from a kind of stand-and-deliver conference.⁴⁴

7.49 Ms Jennifer McGregor, Chief Executive Officer, Asialink, noted that the Asialink conversations produce a report which she regarded as important.⁴⁵ She indicated that the Coolum Forum does not. She also noted the importance of taking measures to ensure that the benefits flowing from the meeting continue into the future: that there is ongoing contact and follow-up activities to capitalise on the investment:

...when you are socialising with people for two and three days, you do form a bond. Our view is that you have to maintain that relationship with those people, so what we tend to do is then link those people with other programs that we are running—invite them back here to speak; if we have conferences in-country, we will invite them to speak. With subsequent conversations, we bring back members of the group together, not the whole group.⁴⁶

Committee view

7.50 The committee recognises the benefits to Australia's public diplomacy that derive from the many visitors' programs conducted by DFAT and other agencies. It notes the comments by Asialink about providing opportunities to build on the relationships formed during visits or meetings. The committee suggests that any future planning for a visitors or training program include as part of the plan consideration of measures for maintaining contact with those involved in the program and for further cultivating the relationships that have formed between the visitors and the hosts.

7.51 The report from the post in Beijing on a media visit to Australia by Chinese journalists provided an example of another measure that adds value to the various visitors programs—informative reporting on the results of the visit. The committee suggests that any plan for a visitors or training program recognise the longer-term benefits of such activities by requiring a report on the activity which includes an account of the public diplomacy benefits that flowed from the visit.

Recommendation 4

7.52 The committee recommends that:

- **all visitors' or training programs sponsored or funded by the government have clearly identified public diplomacy objectives;**
- **DFAT ensure that all government sponsored or funded visitors' or training programs adopt a longer-term perspective and include measures or plans that are intended to consolidate and build on the immediate public diplomacy benefits that accrue from such activities; and**

44 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 5.

45 See for example, Asialink, *2004 Asialink Conversations, Report of Proceedings*.

46 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 5.

- **as an accountability measure, the organisers or sponsors of a visitors' or training program report on how the program has contributed to Australia's public diplomacy.**

Speaking the language, understanding the culture

7.53 Previous parliamentary inquiries have underscored the need to develop literacy in Asian languages as part of Australia's overall strategy to strengthen bilateral ties. Although the following observations relate to evidence taken in relation to the committee's inquiry into China, they apply to the other countries of Asia.

7.54 Many witnesses to the China inquiry believed that Australia was struggling to maintain its existing capacity to teach future generations of specialists, politicians and business leaders in Asian languages—particularly Chinese. They called on measures to be taken to improve the number of Australians competent not only in the Chinese language but also in their understanding of Chinese culture. A number of witnesses emphasised that China literacy needs to extend beyond language to knowledge of Chinese culture and philosophy.⁴⁷

7.55 The JSCFADT came to the same conclusion about the importance of raising awareness in Australia about Indonesia and of ensuring that opportunities and incentives were made available to encourage Australians to study Indonesian language and culture. It recommended that:

Indonesian studies be designated a strategic national priority and that the Australian Research Council and Department of Education, Science and Training be requested to recognise this in prioritising funding for both research and teaching.⁴⁸

7.56 On a broader scale, the same concerns were raised during this inquiry about Asian studies in Australia more generally. Mr Mirchandani observed that 'it is always easier to influence people if you understand their language and culture and speak their language and culture'.⁴⁹ He submitted:

Australian agencies have a range of expertise in languages which are currently largely being used for intelligence and related security roles, rather than in strategic communication. It would be of immense value if these language skills were harnessed in the greater sphere of public diplomacy. (An Australian voice, speaking in fluent and idiomatic Arabic on, say *Al Jazeera*, would carry much more weight than that voice speaking

47 Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Opportunities and challenges: Australia's relationship with China*, March 2006, pp. 274–5.

48 Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade, Foreign Affairs Sub Committee, *Near Neighbours—Good Neighbours*, May 2004, Canberra, p. 147.

49 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 46.

in English and having a translation appear as a subtitle—a translation which may not be as nuanced as the speaker would like.)⁵⁰

7.57 He suggested that 'the creation of a school of languages for the specific purpose of public diplomacy would be an attractive career to many of today's school leavers and could easily fit into current curricula of Universities or Communications courses'.⁵¹

7.58 Ms McGregor was of the view that having Australians conversant in Asian languages particularly in Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian and Korean was of significant value to public diplomacy. She said that to 'have a cohort of very highly trained and capable people is very desirable in terms of public diplomacy'.⁵² Even so, she noted that the status of Asian language education in Australia was a 'very vexed issue'. She explained:

A national languages policy was recently negotiated in Australia. There is a difficulty in terms of getting states and territories to commit to this area and to get quality teacher supply coordinated. We had a huge injection of funding through [the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools] NALSAS, but now the figures do not really reflect the value for money from that investment. It is not my personal area of expertise, but where we go from here I think is a very difficult area. It requires a huge investment for us to really develop critical mass in even, say, the four priority languages of Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian and Korean.⁵³

7.59 Asialink did note in its submission, however, that at the school level:

Australia's commitment to ensure that future generations have a good understanding of the Asian region is international best practice. Australia has been ahead of all other Western countries in investing in this area of school reform necessary for an education for the 21st century.

Australia's commitment to Asia literacy, demonstrated through the long-term funding provided to the AEF, impresses representatives of Asian governments, Asian institutions and business...⁵⁴

7.60 The committee recognises the need for government to continue to support the learning of languages, particularly Asian languages, in Australian educational institutions. It also encourages the government to consider introducing added incentives for Australian students not only to study an Asian language but to combine their studies with cultural studies.

50 *Submission 2*, p. 4.

51 *Submission 2*, p. 5.

52 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 10.

53 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 10.

54 *Submission 8*, p. 4.

Recommendation 5

7.61 Consistent with the findings of previous parliamentary reports,⁵⁵ the committee recommends that the government consider introducing additional incentives for Australian students not only to study an Asian language but to combine their studies with cultural studies.

Conclusion

7.62 The committee has underlined two main elements that contribute to effective public diplomacy. The first is the importance of crafting and delivering messages and images that will be received and interpreted as intended—this presupposes that the messages and images are based on a sound understanding of the audience. Secondly, effective public diplomacy relies on strong and lasting people-to-people links.

7.63 There are many organisations, both state and non-state, engaged in activities that contribute to Australia's public diplomacy. They are, in their own distinctive way, conveying messages and images unique to their concerns and building their own relationships based on their particular interests. The following chapters examine how the activities of these many and varied organisations come together as a joint endeavour in understanding, informing and engaging with people from overseas.

55 Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Opportunities and challenges: Australia's relationship with China*, March 2006, pp. 274–5. Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade, Foreign Affairs Sub Committee, *Near Neighbours—Good Neighbours*, May 2004, Canberra, p. 147.

Chapter 8

The role and coordination of public diplomacy activities by government departments and agencies

Introduction

8.1 Public diplomacy encompasses a wide range of activities and involves people from disparate agencies. The numerous organisations involved in public diplomacy and the diversity of their interests means that public diplomacy programs may not always integrate or mesh smoothly. The 2005 UK review of public diplomacy noted that:

The breadth of the Strategy makes it difficult to provide a clear steer on where there is greatest need for resources or where activity will have the greatest impact. This in turn means that public diplomacy activity carried out by the various partners is not always aligned. While it is important for individual organisations to be able to set and meet their own objectives, a clearer central steer would increase the collective impact of activity.¹

8.2 It stated further:

It is clearly difficult to set out a strategy that is sufficiently high-level to encompass the activities of all the public diplomacy partners, and yet focused enough to direct activity and resources in a meaningful way. This must be addressed if public diplomacy activity is to be effectively directed and co-ordinated.²

8.3 This chapter considers the main government departments and agencies involved in Australia's public diplomacy and how their activities come together as a joint effort to promote Australia's foreign policy objectives.

Government departments and public diplomacy

8.4 Mr Geoff Miller pointed out that many government departments have their own 'international sections, capable officials, and established links to counterpart agencies overseas'. He spoke of the border between what is a concern of domestic policy and what is a concern of foreign policy. In his view the separation has 'practically disappeared':

Almost every government activity now has an international dimension, an international liaison aspect and a set of international meetings of its own'.³

1 Lord Carter of Coles, *Review of Public Diplomacy*, presented to the Foreign Secretary and Chief Secretary of the Treasury, 13 December 2005, paragraph 4.1.

2 Lord Carter of Coles, *Review of Public Diplomacy*, presented to the Foreign Secretary and Chief Secretary of the Treasury, 13 December 2005, paragraph 4.3.

3 *Submission 16*, p. 200.

8.5 He was not concerned so much about who should be engaged internationally on government business but how effectively they carried out their function and furthermore their contribution to advancing a whole-of-government policy. In emphasising the importance of having an effective whole-of-government policy coordination, he wrote:

...a stance in one specialised, perhaps quite technical, area can easily, if run with unchecked, come to assume a weighting in a relationship that tilts it in an unwanted direction, even though this may not be intended by the government as a whole.⁴

8.6 He explained further:

It would be considered precious for DFAT to insist that all of every Department's overseas responsibilities be carried out through it. But coordination is essential if the country is to present a consistent and effective face to its international interlocutors. Unfortunately coordination is also very demanding on scarce time and resources, not least because the would-be coordinator has to have an adequate grasp of what are often complex and can be quite technical issues.⁵

Agencies that contribute significantly to Australia's public diplomacy

8.7 DFAT recognises that many of its programs depend on the cooperation of other government departments and state and territory governments. In some cases, it enlists the assistance of other agencies to help manage or deliver a program. In other circumstances, the department may lend its support to other departments or agencies whose programs contribute to Australia's public diplomacy. Two large autonomous agencies within DFAT contribute to Australia's public diplomacy. Although not directly charged with the task of enhancing Australia's reputation abroad in order to advance the national interest, AusAID and Austrade have a significant role in public diplomacy.

8.8 Government departments and agencies particularly Department of Education Science and Training (DEST), Department of Defence, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), Department of Immigration and Citizenship, and Tourism Australia also actively contribute to Australia's public diplomacy. For example, DEST plays an important role in Australia's public diplomacy efforts by focusing on developing bilateral, multilateral and regional relationships to promote Australia's education and training services. DEST's international staff engage in work to improve Australia's profile with relevant government and private organisations and prospective international students and their families.

8.9 In 2002, the government established 'Study in Australia' as an umbrella brand for the promotion of Australian education internationally. Under this brand, Australia

4 *Submission 16*, p. 200.

5 *Submission 16*, p. 200.

is projected as the country of choice for potential students 'to develop both themselves and their careers through Australia's special balance of lifestyle in conjunction with high academic standards'.⁶ To this end, the department employs a whole-of-government approach and is a member of DFAT's inter-departmental committee meeting on public diplomacy.

8.10 Defence also engages in activities and programs that inform and influence opinion in other countries. Its messages, however, are different from DEST's. Indeed the messages conveyed by Defence activities are complex in themselves. Mr Michael Pezzullo, Deputy Secretary, Strategy, Department of Defence, argued that the use of military power and the different gradations employed in using military power is of itself 'an exercise in public perception management'. He elaborated on this statement:

You can have a military that is postured and not actually employed, but people know that it exists and then that shapes their perceptions of how they should act...You can deploy a military and not actually engage in combat operations, but the very act of your deployment is a public signal. ...You can deploy it for humanitarian, non-combat purposes or, at the other end of the scale, you can engage in war-fighting with other states. Then, of course, there is the actual employment of the military quite consciously from the get-go for war-fighting purposes. Each of those requires public diplomacy techniques and tools, because they themselves are statements about what your nation is willing not only to undertake but also, in undertaking those actions, the signal you are willing to give to others that there are limits to bad behaviour.⁷

8.11 The Pacific Patrol Boat Program conveys a different image of Defence. By enabling participating countries to monitor and manage the maritime resources in their exclusive economic zones, the program:

...creates a perception in people's minds that we are helpful, technically competent, engaged and willing to engage with other folk to build capacity.⁸

6 *Submission 28*, p. 3.

7 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 80.

8 *Submission 19*, p. 5 and *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 84.



Department of Defence

The Pacific Patrol Boat Program

The Pacific Patrol Boat Program provides participating countries with a maritime surveillance capability that enables them to monitor and manage their maritime resources in their exclusive economic zones. The patrol boats are also used by these countries for national activities such as quarantine enforcement, search and rescue operations and disaster relief. (*Submission 19*, p. 5)

8.12 The messages conveyed by DEST and Defence differ again from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). Its main public diplomacy objective is to inform and influence Australia's trade partners about the benefits of Australian agriculture, fisheries, forestry and food. It also sets out to ensure that travellers and people sending goods to Australia are aware of, and comply with, Australia's strict quarantine rules.⁹

8.13 The Australian Sports Commission (ASC), which is interested in sports development, provides yet another very different perspective on the type of government programs that tie in closely with Australia's public diplomacy. The ASC is involved with AusAID in delivering 'sport for development' programs under an umbrella agreement that includes the Australian Sports Outreach Program (ASOP).¹⁰

9 *Submission 26*, p. 1.

10 *Submission 21*, p. 1.

The primary objective of the program is to increase capacity in 'targeted countries to deliver sports based programs that contribute to social development'. The main focus of the programs is on developing leadership, promoting social cohesion and better health as well as contributing to Australia's public diplomacy objectives. According to Mr Greg Nance, ASC, sport for development has a 'great public diplomacy effect'. He provided the following example:

The intangible nature of sport for development...is a real one. You do not have people drinking more water or, say, direct health outcomes in some respects. They are generally longer term. They are generally a feeling of social wellbeing. We have found that increasingly in the Pacific with the preventive nature that sport brings to, say, health outcomes—diabetes being a classic example. We have been brought very close to the World Health Organisation in the Pacific and we are now actively collaborating with them. The Pacific partners, the countries involved, have seen the value of the sport being involved in the preventative side of diabetes, which has reached epidemic proportions in many countries.¹¹



Australian Sports Commission

Sport for development

The Australian Sports commission together with AusAID deliver several 'sport for development' programs mainly in the Pacific region but also in Southern Africa and the Caribbean. The programs use sport as a tool to create better communities, in very difficult economic circumstances, 'through the people or the infrastructure or just the playing of sport'. (*Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007 p. 75)

11 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 79.



Australian Sports Commission

Sports for Development

Australia's reputation for encouraging participation in sport 'gives Australia a unique credibility to provide public diplomacy programs which have real penetration and meaning to countries'. (Submission 21, p. 3)

8.14 To his mind, sport for development is a 'good story'. He informed the committee that following a Pacific Islands Forum education ministers' meeting at which he gave a presentation on the programs, 'every one of the countries represented at the forum approached us to bring the programs into their country.'¹²

8.15 There can be no doubt about the valuable contribution that DEST, Defence, DAFF, the Sports Commission and many other departments and agencies make to Australia's public diplomacy. Each, however, has a special area of interest and conveys an image of Australia relevant to that interest. For Australia's public diplomacy efforts to be effective, the activities undertaken by the various agencies should be coordinated and, although different, complement each other in building a coherent and comprehensive picture of Australia and its people.

8.16 As the department with primary responsibility for implementing Australia's public diplomacy programs, DFAT has a critical role in ensuring that the activities of

12 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 83.

other departments and agencies support, where possible, Australia's foreign and trade policy objectives.

Coordinating the public diplomacy activities of government departments and agencies

8.17 DFAT recognises that effective public diplomacy requires 'whole-of-government cooperation'. It stated:

DFAT utilises formal and informal, and ongoing and ad hoc mechanisms to coordinate with other federal and state government agencies to ensure that Australia delivers consistent and well conceived PD messages and to achieve mutually reinforcing benefits overseas.¹³

8.18 The following section considers how effectively the public diplomacy activities of government departments come together as whole. It examines the inter-departmental committee on public diplomacy as one of the primary means for aligning the activities of government departments and agencies with the objectives of Australia's public diplomacy.

Inter-departmental committee meetings on public diplomacy

8.19 In 2002, Images of Australia Branch (IAB) established an inter-departmental committee (IDC) meeting of public diplomacy teams across government.¹⁴ DFAT coordinates this meeting which brings together 21 key federal agencies 'to share information and identify synergies across the spectrum of agency programs'.¹⁵ The aim of the meeting is to ensure that government departments and agencies project an accurate image of Australia internationally and that their activities are consistent with the whole-of-government approach to key advocacy issues.¹⁶ It meets on average twice a year but gathers on occasion to discuss specific matters.

8.20 Departments on the committee may also conduct coordinating activities with other organisations. DEST informed the committee that:

13 *Submission 18*, p. 55.

14 Members of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Public Diplomacy are: AusAID, Australian Federal Police, Austrade, AQIS, Attorney-General's Department, Australian Sports Commission, CSIRO, Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry, Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Department of Defence, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Department of Education Science and Training, Department of the Environment and Heritage, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Department of Health and Ageing, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Department of Industry Tourism and Resources, Invest Australia, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Tourism Australia, Department of Veterans' Affairs. See *Submission 18*, p. 108.

15 *Submission 18*, p. 55.

16 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2005–06*, p. 194.

...We also have a coordinating role with the states. We meet two to three times a year with the international sides of the departments of education or their equivalents, because sometimes state and regional development departments look after this aspect, where we again try to make sure that we are not duplicative. We try to coordinate and enhance what we are all doing.¹⁷

8.21 DFAT's submission lists the following IDC achievements to date:

- inter-agency subscription to DFAT's monthly international media monitoring summary;
- inter-agency support for Australian Education International's *Study in Australia* project;
- inter-agency support for IAB's *Australia—Trading with the World Kit*; and
- the development of IAB's online public diplomacy Bulletin Board as a central point where all member agencies can post public diplomacy material for use by our posts.¹⁸

The committee regards these as very modest achievements over five years of operation.

8.22 In DEST's view, the IDC 'is an effective vehicle for a coordinated and collaborative approach to public diplomacy activities'. Australian Education International (AEI) is a member of the committee. According to DEST, AEI 'has had the opportunity to brief the group on the *Study in Australia* brand and it has provided a useful forum for discussion on ensuring a consistent approach to branding across a range of government activities'.¹⁹ DEST cited the following as examples of practical cooperation from the forum:

- AEI has provided education briefings to DFAT regional workshops for public diplomacy officers, allowing greater understanding of the education role in the region and building collaboration between the agencies on public diplomacy matters;
- AEI has provided the education footage for DFAT's updated generic film on Australia creating cost-savings and helping to reinforce a consistent education message across government; and
- DEST, through AEI, has provided content for education and science elements of DFAT publications.²⁰

17 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 56.

18 *Submission 18*, paragraph 4.1.2, p. 55.

19 *Submission 28*, p. 8.

20 *Submission 28*, p. 8.

8.23 Again, these achievements are unremarkable. In response to the suggestion that the IDC's achievements are modest, DFAT responded:

The PD IDC has tended in the past to concentrate on general coordination and information sharing, with each agency outlining its current and planned PD activities. Future IDC meetings will adopt a more strategic focus, with agencies providing a written summary beforehand of their current and planned activities to allow a more free-flowing discussion to take place. The next meeting is scheduled to take place in June and will consider several strategic issues, including the Beijing Olympics. Separate, specialised IDCs will continue to handle specific issues (such as Expo 2010 in Shanghai) which require more intensive cooperation, with the PD IDC acting as a general clearing house.²¹

Views on the effectiveness of the whole-of-government approach

8.24 A number of witnesses to the inquiry were less than enthusiastic about the work of the IDC. Mr Freeman, a public affairs practitioner and former DFAT officer, noted that over the years there have been various IDCs. He drew attention in particular to the IDC that existed before the Sydney Olympics. According to Mr Freeman, it worked well because there was a central overriding focus which brought 26 agencies together. Around the table, they were able to agree 'to put all their material under a common banner'.²² Guided by a shared goal, the 26 separate agencies worked as one. Although Mr Freeman was of the view that the work of the IDC was 'really quite encouraging, he suggested that it was 'fairly short-lived'.²³ He questioned the effectiveness of Australia's whole-of-government approach:

There are plenty of individuals—certainly in my former department, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Invest Australia, Australian Education International, Tourism Australia and others—many of whom, I might add, are quite well funded. So there is a lot of individual activity, and a lot of it is quite valuable and useful. But I believe we have never really had something to mandate some of these people to get together, perhaps more frequently than they might do, at a very high level—not a dictatorial advisory or coordinating committee but something that does have some clout. I know there are various mechanisms in place now...but they are either too low level or, in the case of the one that is fairly high level, too narrow in focus. I just do not think we have a fully effective, coordinated approach.²⁴

8.25 In summary, he believed that currently there was very good cooperation at a basic working level—exchanging information, talking about what the departments are producing and how departments might share information and use it for mutual benefit.

21 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, answer to question on notice, 1 May 2007, p. 28.

22 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 25.

23 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 25.

24 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 4.

He observed, however, that this cooperation was at the level of directors of public relations of various government agencies or deputy directors. In his view, the IDC was 'not normally a high-powered policy making or coordinating unit as such; it is a really good on-the-ground grouping'.²⁵

8.26 Media Gurus argued that greater coordination was required among agencies in Canberra. It was of the view, that 'Even at the current inter-departmental Committee level in Canberra, it appears that many disparate "silos" exist, with information carefully guarded and husbanded'.²⁶ It maintained that 'improved coordination needs to be reflected at Australian diplomatic missions overseas, particularly in our bigger embassies/high commissions, many of which have representatives from a range of key agencies, including the Australian Federal Police, Defence, Immigration, Austrade, Education'.²⁷ Mr Mirchandani, Managing Director, Media Gurus, stated:

if you choose half a dozen issues of the week, the year, whatever, which Australia really wishes to promote which still resonate in target countries and target areas then it should be the whole-of-government effort. I would suggest indeed...that portfolio secretaries be the spearhead of this...I would suggest that if necessary there be a parallel committee. We have the Secretaries Committee on National Security. What about a secretaries committee on public diplomacy with similar clout, if you like, to make that happen?²⁸

8.27 Mr Christopher Stewart, member of International Public Affairs Network, also criticised the performance of DFAT in achieving a whole-of-government outcome. He said:

It has formed committees; it has had interdepartmental committees. But what we have not seen on the ground is a whole-of-government approach. We need, in a strategic sense, to be looking ahead five or 10 years and developing a vision for where Australia will position itself in the world.²⁹

8.28 Dr Wells, RMIT University, referred to 'a quite fragmented approach to public diplomacy, which for many people is seen to be the business of one government department'.³⁰ Mr Trevor Wilson also raised concern about the level and effectiveness of coordination across agencies. He said:

I think we do not [do] a bad job in coordinating and getting agreed approaches and objectives across departments, and I certainly think there is value in...not losing a bit of diversity and appropriate differentiation between different parts of the government, but I am not at all convinced that

25 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 25.

26 *Submission 2*, p. 4.

27 *Submission 2*, p. 4.

28 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 45.

29 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 13.

30 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 27.

the coordination that happens is very deep or deep-seated. If you look at the mechanisms that are there, they are actually very loose and very weak. They would not control a strong department that had its own agenda and had its own public affairs outreach program, including overseas.

I do not detect that at the moment there is a sense of what I would perhaps call a collegiate approach to public diplomacy, both in the longer term strategic approach of trying to strive for the right understanding and image...of Australia and also in the problem-solving area. If we are trying to deal with the issue of Australia being perceived as a racist country through our immigration policies or through whatever else—it could be our education programs—it seems to me that the departments responsible for those ought to reach out to other parts of the government and get their advice, and to try and develop some kind of collegiate response. I do not see that happening at the moment.³¹

He explained further:

...there are examples of where the Australian government agencies are cooperating and collaborating on international public diplomacy activities, and that is with these big integrated promotions that they talk about. Quite a lot of money is spent on those. I am not sure that they are really value for money. They certainly do lift our profile in countries where they are happening and there is a good element of cooperation between government agencies who are pooling their money to do this. But I am not really sure how useful they are in changing or influencing for the better an understanding or perception of Australia.³²

8.29 It should be noted that at DFAT's second appearance before the committee, Dr Strahan made a number of observations based on the evidence presented to the committee. He noted that while a lot of agencies had 'very clear ideas of their particular objectives', he thought that 'people had been a little hazy about what public diplomacy means'. He suggested that it would be helpful to reach an agreed definition of public diplomacy which he stated can have 'a guiding overall principle'. He also spoke of the need for those involved in Australia's public diplomacy to have a common public diplomacy language. He then explained that DFAT wants to use the IDC to determine an agreed definition of public diplomacy. Having done so, to then 'bring those general policy objectives which are set by ministers for us more explicitly out into a set of agreed overarching public diplomacy objectives, much like what has happened with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in the United Kingdom.'³³

31 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, pp. 24–25.

32 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 25.

33 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, pp. 42–43.

Committee view

8.30 Clearly, a number of submitters were of the view that coordination between departments and agencies could be improved. The committee is not convinced that the existing arrangements capitalise fully on the individual efforts of government departments and agencies. It notes, however, DFAT's intention for future IDC meetings to have a 'more strategic focus'. It also notes DFAT's intention to have agencies arrive at an agreed definition of public diplomacy and through the IDC to place general policy objectives within the overarching public diplomacy objectives. These are promising initiatives.

8.31 It may be, however, that other measures are required such as a higher level of representation on the committee and more detailed reporting on the results of meetings to enable the IDC to achieve a higher degree of coordination between the various departments. A more focused, high profile and accountable IDC would help to ensure that public diplomacy activities are complementary and, where possible, mutually reinforcing.

A special coordinating unit

8.32 Some witnesses wanted to go further with the creation of a central public diplomacy coordinating body. Dr Alison Broinowski was of the view that 'Australia looks like little bits and pieces of little bits of departments instead of one identifiable thing'.³⁴ In her view a separate unit that would bring together all public diplomacy efforts would be more effective. Mr Trevor Wilson suggested that an answer to the disappearance of corporate memory and the need to respond 'much more on a short-term basis' would be an institutional unit of specialised people.³⁵ Mr Freeman who supported the proposal for an institutional unit, said that 'it need not be a whole-of-government approach that lays down concrete absolutes; it can be a whole-of-government advisory group or committee and so on that would give the broad guidelines and broader messages'.³⁶ He explained further:

...[it] would not be a dictatorial body but one that would set patterns, set directions and set guidance and would...include all the major practitioners. They would be mandated...in Australia we have the ministerial communications unit. We have a powerful ministerial committee. They basically oversight all these activities. I am not necessarily suggesting something as draconian as that, but certainly a requirement that any of the major operators who have many millions of dollars to spend should at least, well in advance, consult with the group about their plans, what they are proposing to do, and seek advice from DFAT and its posts about the likelihood of succeeding.³⁷

34 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 27.

35 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 20.

36 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 20.

37 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 37.

8.33 Mr Kirk Coningham argued that, 'the function of public diplomacy needs to be passed to a new agency with an holistic all-of-government approach to delivering communications expertise and outcomes in the global village for all Australians'.³⁸ He stated:

Coordination is difficult, but it is nowhere near as difficult as it is fundamentally important to this function. If, as DFAT basically admitted, they cannot coordinate the activities of federal government, how can they possibly coordinate the disparate activities of state institutions and public institutions in a team Australia approach? The reality overseas at the moment is that we have bikini-clad girls competing with educational seminars, trade missions and investment seminars, and they are all competing against each other in a very noisy area to very poor effect, I believe, in the end for Australia.³⁹

8.34 Media Gurus noted that Australia 'has a good and positive story to tell and can be a powerful, if niche influence in the world, if it harnesses its resources smartly'. In its view, 'A coordinated, committed high-level approach, along with a series of training programs is vital, if this story is to be told, and told well'.⁴⁰ It concluded:

Past experience has shown (as in the creation of the Policy Implementation Unit by PM&C) that coordination and commitment at the highest level is necessary, if the silos mentioned earlier are to be broken down and a 'team Australia' approach taken. We would recommend the creation of a high level Public Diplomacy Strategy Board along the lines of the U.K Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which is tasked along these lines.⁴¹

8.35 The Public Diplomacy Strategy Board was established following the Wilton Review of the UK public diplomacy.⁴² The second review of the UK's public diplomacy, led by Lord Carter of Coles, found that the Board had led to better co-ordination between public diplomacy partners but that it 'operated as 'a "collective" without clear strategic direction, central control or accountability.' On the recommendation of the Carter review, a new Public Diplomacy Board was set up. It sets overall public diplomacy strategies, advises on resource allocation, performance management and monitoring.⁴³

38 *Submission 1*, p. [2].

39 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 40.

40 *Submission 2*, p. 7.

41 *Submission 2*, p. 6.

42 UK Government, 'Changing perceptions: Review of public diplomacy', March 2002, p. 12. The report was produced by a team of three people: Chris Wilton of the FCO, Jonathon Griffin of the British Tourist Authority and Britain Abroad and Andrew Fotheringham of the British Council.

43 Foreign And Commonwealth Office, 'Promoting the UK', <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1035898725758> Public Diplomacy Review by Lord Carter, presented to the Foreign Secretary of the Treasurer on 13 December 2005, pp. 15–16.

8.36 There are six members of the board that is chaired by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister of State. The vice chairman is an independent member of the Board. Lord Coles argued that the Board should have a strong independent vice-chair who 'could probe, challenge and help to direct all the bodies, and who would have knowledge of the detail and enough standing to be taken seriously by all partners'.⁴⁴

8.37 The Board is supported by a secretariat located in the Foreign Office. According to Lord Coles this unit would 'act as an executive to the Public Diplomacy Board, putting forward proposals for strategy, actions, specific plans, milestones and outputs'.

Committee view

8.38 The committee supports the general view that Australia needs a whole-of-government approach to its public diplomacy. It notes that a number of witnesses saw room to improve the coordination of government public diplomacy activities. The committee also believes that measures should be taken to make the IDC more effective as a coordinating body and in developing a broad strategy for the conduct of Australia's public diplomacy.

8.39 A number of witnesses favoured the establishment of a specialised unit that would have charge of coordinating Australia's public diplomacy effort. The proposals, however, were not fully developed with many questions remaining unanswered—the actual composition of such a unit, where it would be located in the departmental structure and the extent of its authority.

8.40 Before making recommendations regarding the IDC, the committee underlines the important role of public diplomacy in promoting and protecting Australia's interests overseas. Australia's public diplomacy is much more than involvement in international conferences, exhibits, visits, and exchange programs—it is a critical exercise of soft power and has a determining part in Australia's ability to pursue its international objectives. As noted earlier, public diplomacy creates an enabling or a disabling environment in which Australia pursues its international objectives.

8.41 When the committee refers to strategic planning, it takes account of this very serious side of public diplomacy, for example Australia's involvement in the battle of ideas with international terrorism. Therefore, any public diplomacy planning must benefit from engagement with Australia's foreign policy decision makers. At the moment the committee is not persuaded, firstly, that the IDC has formulated a strategic public diplomacy plan and, secondly, that it takes advice from or consults with relevant policy makers in DFAT. The following recommendation is intended to

44 Public Diplomacy Review by Lord Carter, presented to the Foreign Secretary of the Treasurer on 13 December 2005, pp. 15–16.

rectify this disconnection and the reference to the formulation of a coherent public diplomacy strategy presupposes that key foreign policy makers are involved.

8.42 As a first step, the committee believes that the IDC should be allowed the opportunity to prove itself capable of leadership, of providing direction and setting clear objectives for DFAT and all its public diplomacy partners. The committee believes that the IDC should be an advisory body to all government departments and agencies on how best to coordinate and, where possible, complement each others activities. It should also take an active role in ensuring that there is a solid core of public diplomacy specialists available to advise, guide and assist agencies in their public diplomacy activities. Its first task would be to map out a long-term strategic public diplomacy plan.

Recommendation 6

8.43 The committee recommends that the government restructure the interdepartmental committee on public diplomacy (IDC) so that its functions extend beyond sharing information between departments and agencies to include coordinating and monitoring Australia's public diplomacy activities. It recommends:

- (a) more senior representation on the IDC than is currently the case— Departments should be represented at the Deputy Secretary level;**
- (b) expanding the functions of the IDC to ensure that it has a central role in planning and overseeing a whole-of-government long-term strategic plan for Australia's public diplomacy;**
- (c) the IDC have responsibility for ensuring that the synergies among government departments and agencies are identified and exploited in pursuit of the government's foreign policy objectives;**
- (d) the IDC produce a coherent public diplomacy strategy that outlines priority objectives for public diplomacy along the lines of the UK Public Diplomacy Board;**
- (e) the government's public diplomacy strategic framework acknowledge the potential of local governments, particularly the major city councils, to engage in Australia's public diplomacy;**
- (f) the government's strategic framework take account of non-state stakeholders and adopt as one of its key operating principles in its public diplomacy strategy 'work with others, including business, NGOs and Australian expatriates';**
- (g) some cross membership on the IDC and the Australia International Cultural Council;**
- (h) the IDC produce a report on discussions and decisions taken at its meetings to be published on its website;**
- (i) establishing a sub-committee of the IDC with responsibility for ensuring that non-state organisations involved in international**

activities, including diaspora communities, are incorporated into an overarching public diplomacy framework;

- (j) establishing a sub-committee of the IDC that would be responsible for ensuring that Australia's public diplomacy stays at the forefront of developments in technology.**

8.44 The committee does not intend the IDC to encroach on the independence of statutory bodies such as the ABC or of NGOs bound by their own charters. The IDC would recognise and respect their independence. Its objective would be to work in partnership with them, advising and offering guidance and assistance where appropriate to maximise their contribution to Australia's public diplomacy.

Recommendation 7

8.45 The committee recommends that if, after considering the above recommendation, the government is of the view that the IDC cannot or should not be the body to take on this leadership and whole-of-government coordinating and advisory function, the government establish an appropriate separate and permanent body that would do so.

8.46 The following section looks at the coordination of public diplomacy activities between local councils and the Australian Government.

State and local councils

8.47 The committee did not receive submissions from state governments or from local councils with the exception of the City of Melbourne Council. It did receive submissions from state-funded bodies such as the Art Gallery of Western Australia and the National Gallery of Victoria. They are considered in the chapter dealing with cultural institutions.

8.48 The committee notes that the overall lack of response from government bodies in all likelihood is consistent with the general low level of awareness in Australia about public diplomacy and what it means. The evidence provided by the City of Melbourne, however, provides insight into the potential for local councils to contribute to Australia's public diplomacy.

8.49 The Council informed the committee about the significant role that local government councils have in promoting and strengthening international relationships on behalf of their constituencies. The Melbourne City explained that it is committed to developing its relationships with overseas cities beyond a 'civic ceremonial basis into productive connections of broad social, economic and cultural benefit to Melbourne'. According to the Council, it:

...continues to build broad-based relationships with cities and countries, networks and organisations around the world to maximise opportunities and leverage benefits for all partners. Overall the City of Melbourne embraces a global role in a range of ways (summarised under the following themes):

- *Building Prosperity*—sourcing tangible export/import opportunities for Melbourne businesses (primarily from China, India and the United States).
- *World Harmony and Global Fellowship*—participation in municipal, cultural, education and sporting exchange, and building humanitarian links.
- *City Governance and Urban Living*—building Melbourne’s strong international reputation in city design and city management—sourcing opportunities in new urbanising economies and participating in technical exchanges to further strengthen Melbourne’s expertise in this field.
- *The Environment*—international exchange and advocacy in areas such as climate change, urban environmental policy and sustainable built form.⁴⁵

8.50 The Council stated that it often 'provides a conduit at the grassroots level to other levels of government and supports a broader base of community involvement in its international relationships'.⁴⁶ In its view, the partnerships it has formed offer an excellent model for relationship building that warrants consideration by other national, state and capital governments.⁴⁷

8.51 Although the Council expressed its appreciation for the continuing assistance and support provided by DFAT, it proposed a number of measures that could be taken to encourage increased and more productive involvement of local councils in Australia's public diplomacy. It drew attention to the need:

- for greater recognition of the role of capital city governments, in Australia's public diplomacy;
- for a review of opportunities for federal and state funding to be directed towards supporting and developing the activities of local government in facilitating Australian public diplomacy; and
- to explore further opportunities for collaborative public diplomacy activity between Australian capital city governments promoting the attributes of Australia's cities internationally.⁴⁸

8.52 The Centre for Local Government at the University of Technology Sydney is also very conscious of the work that local councils do in the area of public diplomacy.

45 *Submission 11*, p. 2.

46 *Submission 11*, p. 3.

47 *Submission 11*, p. 6. It stated: 'We believe the Council’s international framework offers significant opportunity to contribute positively at a broader level in Australia’s public diplomacy programs, particularly as a capital city government.'

48 *Submission 11*, p. 2.

It noted that a substantial number of local councils have moved on from Sister City links to much more robust technical and economic partnerships.⁴⁹ It stated:

...local government across the world is playing an increasing role in international relations. This reflects the patterns of globalisation and the resulting trend for cities and regions to deal with each other rather than rely exclusively on connections via national and/or provincial governments.⁵⁰

8.53 The Centre identified a number of areas where the work of councils, such as the City of Melbourne, could be used to better effect in promoting positive messages about Australia and in deepening and broadening the relationships that they have developed. It suggested that:

- The Australian government should systematically explore the potential for enhancing current public diplomacy programs by engaging more effectively with local government's international activities, and set clear objectives for the contribution local government could and should make to national efforts.
- Similarly, the Australian government should identify a range of specific opportunities for local government involvement in priority regions such as the Pacific.
- Enhanced arrangements for public diplomacy should include local government wherever appropriate and should recognize the role played by the Australian Local Government Association. There needs to be a direct relationship between the Australian government and local government, given that the states offer little support for local government's international activities and may in some cases see local government as a competitor rather than ally.
- Additional resources should be directed to local government programs in priority regions, recognising that funding needs to be maintained for extended periods to achieve sustainable outcomes. As the Melbourne experience shows, in the area of trade and economic development, there are also opportunities to capitalise on expanded private sector involvement at local and regional levels, in partnership with local government.⁵¹

8.54 Looking more broadly at the state level, Asialink noted:

There is scope for greater co-ordination between the federal agencies involved in public diplomacy and between the federal and state agencies. An example is Asialink's Visual Arts Touring program where a planned and collaborative approach from DFAT's Foundations, Councils and Institutes and Cultural Relations Branch would enable us to significantly

49 *Submission 11A*, p. 1.

50 *Submission 11A*, p. 1.

51 *Submission 11A*, p. 3.

expand the reach and impact of the program through strategic regional or multilateral touring.⁵²

8.55 While the committee is disappointed that it did not receive direct evidence relating to state government involvement in Australia's public diplomacy, members are aware from anecdotal evidence that the involvement of other city councils in promoting Australia's public diplomacy is extensive. The committee believes that this is a resource that should be effectively harnessed to the advantage of its broader foreign policy.

Committee view

8.56 Much of the evidence presented in this chapter relied on that provided by the City of Melbourne. The enthusiasm shown by this council in developing its public diplomacy and its keenness to publicise its work, however, speaks volumes for its awareness of international trends and its astuteness in giving high priority to building an international reputation.

8.57 The committee notes the commitment by the City of Melbourne to public diplomacy and appreciates that its active involvement in this area places it in a good position to offer constructive advice on how the Australian Government could work with councils to improve Australia's overall public diplomacy. It also notes the recommendations by the Centre for Local Government which supported those of the City of Melbourne. The committee supports these recommendations but notes in particular the call for greater recognition by the Australian Government of the role of capital city governments in Australia's public diplomacy and for it to engage more effectively with local governments' international activities. It also draws attention to the suggestion that the Australian Government explore opportunities for collaborative public diplomacy activity between Australian capital city governments involved in promoting their city internationally.⁵³

Recommendation 8

8.58 The committee recommends that the Australian Government explore opportunities for greater and more effective collaboration and coordination with Australian capital city councils in promoting Australia's public diplomacy.

Conclusion

8.59 The committee recognises the contribution that government departments and councils such as the City of Melbourne make to project a positive image of Australia overseas. Their activities inform overseas audiences about various aspects of Australia and establish strong links with particular organisations or groups of people overseas. The committee is of the view, however, that there is potential for these individual

52 *Submission 8*, p. 6.

53 *Submission 11*, p. 2.

efforts to connect better with one another and to make an even greater contribution to Australia's public diplomacy. The committee believes that the government should consider measures that would make the IDC a more effective coordinating body before considering establishing a specialised whole-of-government public diplomacy unit.

Chapter 9

Coordinating public diplomacy activities—cultural and educational institutions

9.1 Public diplomacy involves not only government departments and agencies but a range of other bodies, including cultural and educational institutions whose activities can be described as 'cultural diplomacy'. This chapter looks at the role of cultural and educational institutions in public diplomacy and considers how well their activities are integrated into the government's public diplomacy framework. The committee uses the term cultural diplomacy to mean 'the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding'.¹

9.2 Many commentators and numerous reviews or inquiries have expounded on the contribution that cultural diplomacy makes to enhancing a country's image and to improving its relations with other countries. They recognise that cultural diplomacy builds goodwill and helps create 'a foundation of trust' with other people.² Cultural diplomacy is able to speak a common language when formal relations are strained and to reach communities that traditional diplomacy cannot. It can open doors that would otherwise remain closed and bring people together despite political and cultural differences. In this way, cultural diplomacy is a foundation plank of public diplomacy.

The role of cultural institutions in Australia's public diplomacy

9.3 The committee received a number of submissions from cultural institutions all of which were fully aware of their role in building a positive image of Australia. For example, the Arts Council of Australia recognised the importance of the promotion of the arts to Australia's international reputation. It stated:

With Australia playing an ever-increasing role in the global arena from business and trade relations to environment and security issues, it is vital that Australia's 'world class' creative sector is part of the Government's

1 Definition taken from Milton Cummings, *Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government: A Survey*, Center for Arts and Culture, Washington D.C., 2003, p. 1 and used in Elizabeth Ash, Program Manager, ART in Embassies Program, U.S. Department of State and Aimee Fullman, Center for Arts & Culture, *Art as Diplomacy: 21st Century Challenges*, 17 May 2004, p. 2; U.S. Department of State, Report of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy, *Cultural Diplomacy: The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy*, September 2005, p. 3.

2 See for example US Department of State, *Report of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy: The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy*, September 2005, p. 1.

broader international strategy of building a better understanding of Australia's identity, culture and values.³

9.4 DFAT similarly appreciates that international cultural relations are an integral part of the government's public diplomacy. It understands that there is a clear and definite connection between cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy. Furthermore, it accepts that government departments and agencies often rely on the achievements of cultural diplomacy to promote Australia's foreign policy objectives. DFAT's submission observed that cultural programs:

...can provide a more neutral platform for projecting an image of Australia and generating a better understanding of our values. Where audiences might be wary of more official, apparently political PD activities, CD can foster a sympathetic environment in which to pursue foreign and trade policy goals.⁴

9.5 As mentioned earlier, over the past few years, the JSCFADT and the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee have inquired into Australia's relations with a number of countries including Japan, China, the Republic of Korea and Indonesia. Although not focused on public diplomacy, each report has commented on the centrality of cultural exchange as a means of building strong and enduring relationships between Australia and overseas countries.

9.6 The importance of cultural links resonates through many of the submissions made to this inquiry.⁵ Dr Gerard Vaughan, National Gallery of Victoria, noted that 'art exhibitions and the loan of works of art to promote the interests and the cultural persona of a particular country has never been stronger'.⁶ He explained that:

...the presence in another country of great cultural objects or works of art can give tremendous focus to the culture and history of the country from which they have come.⁷

9.7 In this way cultural exchanges not only inform other people about the culture, creativity and ideals of a country but they help to build bridges between countries that in turn support formal diplomacy. The Art Gallery of Western Australia noted:

In places like the Indian Ocean Rim, often personal and cultural understanding is the key to advancing diplomatic and other initiatives in the area. As well, in countries where political and diplomatic relations are

3 *Submission 13*, p. 2.

4 *Submission 18*, p. 9.

5 See for example, National Gallery of Victoria, *Submission 6*, p. 1; Museums Australia, *Submission 12*.

6 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 36.

7 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 36.

strained, it is often possible to maintain cultural relations and use them as the way back into relationships in other areas. It is a two-way street and cultural responses in Australia to these areas are as important as any event in the Indian Ocean Rim countries.⁸

9.8 Making a similar point, Museums Australia cited the role museum staff had in keeping communication open and conversations going among colleagues in both East Timor and Indonesia at a time when relations between the countries were at their lowest ebb.⁹

9.9 The range of cultural institutions and activities with the potential to be part of Australia's public diplomacy is extensive as shown by Ms Erica Sanders, Executive Director, Museums Australia, Victoria Branch. She informed the committee that coordination of these activities would go across galleries, museums, science centres and heritage. Furthermore, she would include 'botanical gardens and national parks and the environmental heritage in that collective statement'. She stated:

They have got a lot to offer in terms of public diplomacy. The people and professionals involved with it are looking after Australia's cultural heritage. They have the stories of Australia's culture, they have the networks that capture and present a current and past Australian culture, and they are professionals in presenting and interpreting Australian culture, which is very useful in public diplomacy.¹⁰

9.10 Asialink underlined the need for all those involved in promoting Australia overseas through cultural activities to co-operate:

Collaboration between government, NGOs, universities and the private sector is now clearly identified as the way of the future as all parties share networks, expertise and experience and all benefit strategically from an enhanced image of Australia abroad.¹¹

9.11 Clearly, the challenge for governments is to work closely with the various cultural institutions to form creative and productive partnerships that will be instrumental in achieving Australia's foreign policy objectives. The following section considers two main aspects of cultural diplomacy in Australia—the integration of cultural diplomacy into the broader public diplomacy framework and the level of government support it attracts.

9.12 The Australian Government has its own idea about the type of contribution that cultural institutions could be making to public diplomacy. Dr Strahan informed

8 *Submission 3*, p. 1.

9 *Submission 12*, p. 8.

10 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 30.

11 *Submission 8*, p. 1.

the committee that Australia's cultural diplomacy is guided by its foreign and trade policy objectives. He maintained that the policy 'is not to have isolated or feel-good cultural events that are not part of a thought-out strategy for moving forward these broader public diplomacy goals'.¹²

9.13 Although cultural institutions recognise their role in promoting Australia, their priorities may not necessarily reflect those of government. Their objectives tend to be more specific and narrow. Indeed, one of their strengths from a public diplomacy perspective is their perceived independence from government.

9.14 The Australia International Cultural Council (AICC) is one of the government's key mechanisms for ensuring that cultural diplomacy is a vital and productive component of Australia's public diplomacy. It aims to promote Australia and its cultural assets in a coordinated, targeted and innovative way.¹³

The Australia International Cultural Council

9.15 The AICC was established in 1998 and is a consultative group chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Its objective is to project a positive image of Australia which advances Australia's foreign and trade policy interests and promotes and enhances the export of Australian cultural products.¹⁴ Two of its primary functions are:

- to coordinate programs of high-quality Australian artistic presentations and collaborations overseas; and
- to enhance cooperation and coordination between government, arts and business organisations involved in promoting Australian culture overseas.¹⁵

9.16 DFAT noted that the AICC 'draws together representatives from government, the arts and cultural community and business with a common interest in more effective international showcasing of Australian arts and culture'.¹⁶ It added that 'a

12 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 46.

13 Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, <http://www.dfat.gov.au/aicc/index.html> (accessed 24 May 2007) and *Submission 17*, pp. 4–5.

14 Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, <http://www.dfat.gov.au/aicc/index.html> (accessed 24 May 2007).

15 Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, <http://www.dfat.gov.au/aicc/index.html> (accessed 24 May 2007).

16 Members of the Council, (as at 24 May 2007).
 Senator the Hon George Brandis SC, Minister for Arts and Sport
 Mr Luca Belgiorno-Nettis, Associate Managing Director, Transfield Holdings Pty Ltd
 Ms Kate Brennan, Chief Executive Officer, Federation Square
 Ms Gillian Bird, Deputy Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
 Mr Geoff Buckley, Managing Director, Tourism Australia

senior officials group—comprising DFAT, the Australia Council, the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Austrade, the Australian Film Commission, Tourism Australia and a representative of State and Territory Arts agencies—advises the Council'.¹⁷

9.17 According to DFAT, the AICC 'supports and funds Australian cultural campaigns in priority countries in Asia, North America and Europe'. These focus programs run over several months to two years and involve a wide range of activities.¹⁸

9.18 The Australia Council for the Arts (the Australia Council) is another major body that has a role in coordinating the promotion of Australian arts.

The Australia Council for the Arts

9.19 The Australia Council is the Australian government's principal arts funding and advisory body. The organisation was restructured in 2005 and now comprises the office of the CEO and eight divisions.¹⁹ Two of its key objectives are to invest in artistic production and the development of artistic practice and to present Australia's distinctive cultural works nationally and internationally. To this end, it supports 'the excellence, diversity and distinctiveness of Australia's arts and artists'.²⁰ According to the Council, as part of its responsibilities, it supports a range of international initiatives. It stated that it has consistently focused on 'promoting and showcasing contemporary Australian arts internationally through long-term artistic engagement for Australian artists and companies'.²¹

Ms Kathy Keele, Chief Executive Officer, Australia Council
Mr Michael Chugg AM, Executive Chairman, Chugg Entertainment
Mr Chris Fitchett, A/g Chief Executive, Australian Film Commission
Ms Carol Henry, Chief Executive, Art Exhibitions Australia
Mr Ian McRae, Consultant
Ms Hetti Perkins, Senior Curator, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts, Art Gallery of NSW
Mr Ron Radford AM, Director, National Gallery of Australia
Mr John Stanwell, Director, artsACT
Mr Heath Watt, A/g Chief Executive Officer, Australia Network.

The Council is chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs

17 *Submission 18*, p. 25.

18 *Submission 18*, p. 25.

19 Australia Council, *Annual Report 2005–06*, p. 11.

20 Australia Council, *Annual Report 2005–06*, p. 10.

21 Australia Council for the Arts, website, http://www.ozco.gov.au/council_priorities/international/ (accessed 24 May 2007).

9.20 More specifically, in its Annual Report, the Council cited three programs as part of its 'taking Australian arts to the world' objective—Australian Performing Arts Market; Undergrowth: Australian Arts UK; and cultural exchange residences. With regard to the last program, the Annual Report stated that the '100 much-prized international residencies...in the past year gave artists a valuable career boost, built important world networks and contributed to the continuing evolution of Australian contemporary art'.²²

9.21 The Council informed the committee that it has been an active facilitator of partnerships with key agencies to deliver international programs.²³ It supports the work of Asialink and noted, for example, Asialink's Arts Residency Program which supported 39 artists residencies in 12 Asian countries and the Asialink Literature Touring in Asia program.²⁴ It stated that to make certain that its work continues to maintain a highly positive interest in, and understanding of, contemporary Australia, it needs 'to ensure that all agencies responsible for promoting and profiling Australia internationally, work closely and collaboratively in their efforts to achieve long-term success'.²⁵

Planning and coordination of cultural activities

9.22 Despite the work of these two major bodies, representatives from some cultural institutions indicated that the potential to promote Australia's reputation was not fully exploited.²⁶ They believed that opportunities and possibilities were not explored.²⁷ One problem area they cited in particular concerned planning and coordination. Museums Australia argued that 'Australia's cultural endeavours in other countries are dependent—often haphazardly—on the...commitment of individuals at the local level of missions abroad. Such officers have to balance...multiple demands of the post'.²⁸ The Art Gallery of Western Australia gave the following example:

...although there have been attempts in the past to use culture to underpin initiatives with other countries during periods of exchanges for the development of trade and other relations between countries, it seems that the use of culture was at best last minute, funding was not always related to costs and timing and exploitation of the use of art exhibitions, symphony

22 Australia Council, *Annual Report 2005–06*, p. 53.

23 *Submission 13*, p. 5.

24 Australia Council, *Annual Report 2005–06*, pp. 53–54.

25 *Submission 13*, p. 5; Australia Council for the Arts, website, http://www.ozco.gov.au/council_priorities/international/ (accessed 24 May 2007).

26 Dr Gerard Vaughan, National Gallery of Victoria, was one of a number of people who suggested that 'more can be done'. *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 36.

27 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 37.

28 *Submission 12*, p. 12.

orchestra tours, etc., were not tied strongly enough to the activities aimed at particular outcomes in such exchanges.²⁹

9.23 Asialink added weight to the view that cultural diplomacy does not receive adequate support. It drew attention to what it termed 'a disturbing trend'—the increasing under-representation of Australia in significant regional events.³⁰ It was of the view that there is scope for greater coordination between federal agencies involved in public diplomacy and between federal and state agencies. It cited its Visual Arts Touring Program as an example of where:

...a planned and collaborative approach from DFAT's Foundations, Councils and Institutes and Cultural Relations Branch would enable us to significantly expand the reach and impact of the program through strategic regional or multilateral touring.³¹

9.24 The representatives from the cultural institutions identified, in particular, the lack of overarching long term strategic planning as a significant impediment to the more effective use of culture to promote Australia abroad. They could see the potential for strong cultural content to underpin Australia's diplomatic and other initiatives, but argued that it would need 'advance planning and funding in place to proceed.' In the view of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, there is an opportunity:

...to build key events and infrastructure that reflect these interests in international relations within Australia itself. To work, all of the above would have to be part of a long term strategy for the future international interests of Australia.³²

9.25 Ms Helen O'Neil, Australian Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG), also called for better strategic planning in Australia's cultural diplomacy. She told the committee:

...to make cultural diplomacy really work, we need clear, long-term strategic planning. Most of the AMPAG companies are working three years ahead, and it is no use thinking up a good idea for a culturally based event to fit in with a diplomatic event if there is just six months advance notice.

We need a plan that clearly identifies the resources and investment needed to carry out the goals it sets. There is no point in great ideas and good goals,

29 *Submission 3*, p.1.

30 Also mentioned in paragraph 14.43. For example, Asialink *Submission 8*, p. 1:

- Singapore Biennale 2006 had 46 Asian artists, 25 EuroAmerican, 22 others and 1 Australian;
- Shanghai Biennale 2006 had 49 Asian artists, 39 EuroAmerican, 4 others and 1 Australian;
- Taipei Biennale 2006 had 25 Asian artists, 14 EuroAmerican, and no Australians.

31 *Submission 8*, p. 6.

32 *Submission 3*, p. 2.

if you cannot actually achieve them. We also need regular checks on the effectiveness of the plan. It might be monitoring of the regard in which our work is held amongst peer groups, public opinion surveys, reviews and, of course, the return invitations. We have been attracted to a proposal floated by the former minister for the arts, Senator Kemp, for a special fund to tour performing arts...³³

9.26 Ms Jane Cruickshank, Australian Film Commission, drew the same conclusion about the need for strategic planning. She stated that the 'building of audiences for Australian film needs to be more than just a one-off event'.³⁴

9.27 Clearly, a number of cultural organisations were of the view that they had a valuable contribution to make to Australia's public diplomacy but that a lack of strategic planning in particular meant that opportunities were not fully exploited.

9.28 Dr Vaughan identified a practical example of where opportunities existed but were not taken advantage of because there were no appropriate systems in place.

...we would welcome the establishment or perhaps some further definition of a mechanism whereby the kinds of exhibitions that we put on overseas...could be used more by Australians: by the government of Australia, by diplomatic channels, by trade organisations. If you take that exhibition *European Masterpieces* from the National Gallery in Melbourne, 200,000 people came to see the show in Portland, Oregon, for example. Wouldn't it have been fantastic if somehow that had all coincided with a trade mission or some Australian events that might have taken place in Portland, Oregon?

We want to do a bit of business in Los Angeles. We want to try and raise some money from expats in America because we want to start buying more contemporary American art for our collection, and we think that perhaps a visit to Los Angeles and New York at some point in the future would be great. How much we would value the opportunity to tag along with that Australia in Los Angeles Week, for example. So many things happen. Perhaps we could have a presence there and have some events and see whether we could perhaps get a few Aussies living in the US or a few Americans who do business in Australia to think about supporting our fund

33 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, pp. 49-50.

34 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, pp. 18-19. She went on to state: 'We need a long-term strategy on where we are targeting Australian film, if that is to do with public diplomacy as well. For instance, we were talking about South Korea, where we are looking at doing quite a large festival in early 2008. Apart from the Embassy Roadshow, which comes in through the embassy or the posts in that country, there is very little highlight on Australian film. On the other side of the coin, Korean film is building quite an audience in Australia. So to do that exchange would take us a number of years to build it. A one-off event gets people excited about it once and then it goes away and comes back. It would be a longer term strategy in building audiences in targeted countries'.

for contemporary American art, because we need to get more of it into the collection. It is that kind of thing. We do feel that there are great opportunities all the time, but we do not really have systems in place to take advantage of it.³⁵

9.29 Taking up this point, Ms Carroll, Asialinks Arts, noted that DFAT officers are fantastic but that cultural diplomacy is not their focus which often shows. She particularly mentioned that they are 'often moving through' and added:

There are reasons for that, and often very good reasons, but one of the problems is continuity and the long-term relationships that you do build in this area. If there were a capacity to have it more centralised with some proper funding then everybody would commit to that. I cannot speak for the states. Everyone, I am sure, would commit to that because I think everyone in my area acknowledges that it is an area we do not do well enough in.³⁶

9.30 Museums Australia suggested that most countries operate through one international agency when pursuing cultural presentations outside of their own country. It recommended that a dedicated national organisation or agency be created to coordinate and manage Australian cultural presentations abroad. It gave the example of the British Council, Germany's Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (IFA) and France's Association Française d'Action Artistique (AFAA).

9.31 It should be noted that, in the May 2007 Budget, the Australian Government provided \$20.4 million over four years to enhance Australia's cultural diplomacy and improve market access for Australia's cultural exports. This budget allocation will be implemented through the AICC. This increase in funding is discussed in chapter 14.

Committee view

9.32 The committee notes the observations made by a number of representatives from cultural institutions that there is scope for better and more effective coordination between the institutions and government agencies involved in the overseas promotion of Australian culture. It is also aware of the criticism that, at the moment, there is a lack of long-term strategic planning which means that cultural institutions are not able to take full advantage of opportunities to showcase Australian art and culture and to contribute more effectively to Australia's public diplomacy.

9.33 The committee believes that there should be closer liaison between the IDC and the AICC in order to encourage better coordination and cooperation between cultural institutions and relevant government agencies in the area of public diplomacy. A stronger, more accountable IDC, as envisaged in the committee's Recommendation 6, should result in cultural institutions being recognised in the government's long-term

35 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, pp. 39–40.

36 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 11.

strategic planning and in better collaboration between these institutions and relevant government agencies, especially overseas posts. A number of key departments having dual membership of the IDC and the AICC could be a practical way to ensure that the interests of cultural institutions were represented in the main coordinating body for public diplomacy and that communication between the two groups was regular and focused.

9.34 The committee also suggests that, in light of the concerns raised by the cultural institutions, especially the need for longer-term strategic planning, the AICC review its responsibilities, functions and performance in this area. Having considered evidence relating to the coordination and planning of international cultural activities, the Council then report on its deliberations and findings that would be made available to the committee and also made public by publishing them on DFAT's and the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts' website.

Recommendation 9

9.35 The committee recommends that the AICC take note of the evidence relating to the coordination and planning of international cultural activities with a view to addressing the concerns raised in evidence. Close consultation with the relevant sections in the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, DFAT and Australia's cultural institutions would be central to AICC's consideration. The committee suggests that a report of the Council's deliberations and decisions be made available to the committee and also made public by publishing them on DFAT's' and the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts' websites (also see recommendation 6).

Recommendation 10

9.36 The committee recommends further that the government consider that the AICC be co-chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Arts and Sports. The committee suggests that this would contribute significantly to greater coordination and cooperation in the area of cultural diplomacy.

9.37 The committee draws attention to the call by NGOs, particularly cultural institutions and universities, for a better industry framework. Many believe that their efforts to contribute to Australia's public diplomacy are undermined by a system that does not take full advantage of the complementarities that exist between the many organisations that engage in public diplomacy.

9.38 Recommendation 9 would alert the AICC and relevant departments to the absence of long term strategic planning that continues to frustrate and disappoint cultural institutions endeavouring to take Australian art and culture to the world. The recommendation would not, however, tackle the practical problems of ensuring that the activities of government agencies, particularly the overseas posts, and cultural institutions complement one another. The committee believes that there is a need for a formal institutional structure to provide the necessary framework for the long term planning and coordination of cultural activities overseas.

9.39 It suggests the establishment of a modest unit in DCITA that would be the central point of contact for all cultural institutions planning overseas activities. The committee believes that this unit should have responsibilities similar to that of the IAB in DFAT. It would advise and inform the arts and diplomatic communities about proposed cultural events and help coordinate, where necessary, overseas cultural activities. It would act as an effective conduit between the arts and diplomatic communities to ensure that opportunities to promote Australia's interests through culture are fully exploited.

Recommendation 11

9.40 The committee recommends that the government establish a small but specifically tasked cultural and public diplomacy unit in the Department for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts. In liaison with DFAT, the unit would provide the necessary institutional framework to ensure that Australia's cultural institutions are well placed and encouraged to take full advantage of opportunities to contribute to Australia's public diplomacy.

Public diplomacy and the education sector

9.41 The committee has highlighted the important role that Australia's educational institutions have in public diplomacy. In chapter 7, it mentioned specific programs such as the Australian Leadership Awards Program that have been, and continue to be, highly successful in boosting Australia's reputation overseas and generating goodwill toward the country. As noted earlier, graduates from these programs return to their homes better informed about, and well-disposed toward, Australia. They go on to build careers in all walks of life and make ideal ambassadors for Australia.

9.42 The committee also referred to seminars, conferences and 'conversations' held by Australian educational institutions that provide opportunities for foreign students, post-graduates, professionals and specialists to come together to discuss issues of shared importance. These meetings lay firm foundations for continuing exchange between the participants and the deepening of relationships between people of different countries. (paragraphs 7.10–7.11, 7.16–7.38).

9.43 Educational institutions, however, offer many other and diverse means to nurture people-to-people links. Professor Joseph Siracusa, RMIT, spoke of the opportunities offered through university programs for Australian students to be actively engaged in promoting Australia. He gave the example of 80 young Australians who were working on designs with 80 young counterparts in Ho Chi Minh City:

For the next 26 weeks, they will be communicating with and getting to know each other. Groups of four will be designing certain projects which will go on display at our campus in Ho Chi Minh City and Melbourne...I could not believe that they are doing our homework for us...I did not realise that they were right at the cutting edge. They are dealing with young Vietnamese of their age and past that entire Vietnam War generation...They are doing all of our work. I said to them, '...you're doing

exactly what we want to do, which is tell the story,' and you do that through individuals. We only want government help to assist.³⁷

9.44 He suggested that the relationship between the universities and the Australian government was symbiotic.³⁸

9.45 Presenting the general view, Asialink noted that school education provides 'a major opportunity for Australia's public diplomacy to build and strengthen international collaboration, security and harmony into the future'.³⁹ Dr Wells, Director, Policy and Planning, RMIT University, also recognised the opportunities that universities offer to advance public diplomacy.

9.46 Although she noted that RMIT's relationship with DFAT was 'very constructive and positive', she observed that it was 'issues based and ad hoc'.⁴⁰ Her concern was that the current approach did not offer a broader framework for engagement that would allow opportunities to be explored.⁴¹ She spoke of the context-free zone and of the ad hoc means of conversing or consulting with DFAT particularly in terms of alumni, marketing, recruitment and transnational education provision.⁴² The matter of alumni was considered in chapter 7.

9.47 Dr Wells informed the committee that they were 'struggling with silos' and called for a 'systematic approach to industry partnerships in furthering Australian public diplomacy, with universities at the front and centre of it'.⁴³ She elaborated on her argument for a strategic and systematic approach:

...we need a different relationship with government which is more of recognising government as... a key client and a partner, because we have a very strong public benefit mission built into our activities. For me, this is not a discussion about regulation or even a discussion about pumping more money into universities—although of course we would like that; it is an argument about facilitating an active partnership with government where we have common goals.⁴⁴

9.48 She suggested that 'if DEST is the government's departmental vehicle for promoting its policies around universities, there are opportunities for more of a whole-

37 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 28.

38 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 26.

39 *Submission 8*, p. 3.

40 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 22.

41 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 24.

42 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, pp. 22 and 25.

43 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 22.

44 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 27.

of-government approach to the contribution universities can make to advancing Australia's image abroad'.⁴⁵ According to Dr Wells:

It is not just a matter of our contact being ad hoc and irregular and issues based. It is also that I think the departments do not always talk to each other around their common goals and interests. There is opportunity for interagency work, but I think there is also an opportunity for DFAT to address what struck me as a bit of a vacuum in its discussion of public diplomacy when I read its annual report, and also in its submission to the inquiry, which is that it is very focused on cultural diplomacy, sporting diplomacy and political diplomacy dressed up as 'soft power', I suppose. It is not focused on industry engagement and so I would like to see an industry engagement strategy which engaged DFAT but also brought in the other agencies which have an interest in the outcomes of such a strategy—such as DEST—and which provided an overarching framework within which universities and DFAT could actually explore these opportunities in a more systematic way. At the moment the points of contact are not well understood or well known.⁴⁶

9.49 RMIT drew its concerns together and recommended that the Government 'recognise and support the education industry's capacity to support public diplomacy by establishing an explicit strategic dialogue with institutions; perhaps through Australian Education International'.⁴⁷

Committee view

9.50 The comments made by the Australian educators appearing before the committee follow closely those put by the cultural institutions. Both cultural and educational activities involve the exchange of ideas and information. They bring people together to develop a greater understanding and mutual appreciation of different cultures and ways of life. Witnesses spoke in broad terms about how cultural and educational activities help to portray a positive image of Australia and gave specific examples drawn from personal experience of where an activity had made a difference. They were of the view, however, that the government could do more to take full advantage of their activities to promote Australia's interests overseas.

9.51 In this regard, the committee makes a similar suggestion to DFAT as it did to the AICC. It suggests that DFAT take note of the evidence presented to this committee, especially the comments and recommendations by RMIT in relation to the establishment of a better framework for industry engagement that would allow opportunities to be explored. The committee suggests that DFAT initiate and sponsor

45 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 24.

46 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, pp. 24–25.

47 *Submission 9*, p. 3.

an open and public debate on measures that could be taken that would allow both government departments and educational institutions to work better together as partners to promote Australia's interests abroad. It would appear that a more structured and formal arrangement is required to allow people from educational institutions who are promoting Australia abroad to meet and plan activities. The objective of such a group would be to develop an industry engagement strategy and to establish clear 'points of contact' between educational institutions and relevant government agencies. Any such formal grouping should be in direct and regular contact with the IDC and be part of Australia's strategic plan for public diplomacy.

Recommendation 12

9.52 The committee recommends that DFAT ensure that its public diplomacy framework accommodates the concerns of the educational institutions especially with regard to industry engagement by formulating with DEST and the Vice Chancellors of Australian Universities appropriate strategies to facilitate a more productive engagement by these institutions in Australia's public diplomacy.

Recommendation 13

9.53 The committee also recommends that DFAT initiate and sponsor a public debate on measures that could be taken to promote a more productive partnership between government departments and educational institutions in promoting Australia's public diplomacy.

9.54 In the following chapter, the committee continues its consideration of the coordination of Australia's public diplomacy activities but looks at the activities of associations and individuals not always readily identified with public diplomacy.

Chapter 10

Public diplomacy and the wider society

Introduction

10.1 The committee in this report has clearly shown that public diplomacy is not only the concern of diplomats, analysts, or individuals involved in international relations. It noted previously that private activities—from art, education, popular culture to fashion, sports and news—have a bearing on foreign policy including national security, trade, tourism and other national interests.¹

The new diplomacy

10.2 Some commentators now refer to a 'new diplomacy' which is a multi-stake process.² They recognise that foreign ministries must develop a public diplomacy framework that involves a wider society that goes beyond government departments and agencies and cultural and educational institutions.³ NGOs, journalists, sports and business people as well as a country's diaspora are engaged in activities that may feed into public diplomacy. This means that, to have an effective public diplomacy policy, a foreign ministry should build effective linkages with all these constituent entities that affect international policy. Indeed, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office has adopted as one of its key operating principles in its public diplomacy strategy 'work with others, including the business and diaspora communities and NGOs'.⁴

10.3 Thus, diplomats are now engaged in building 'extensive networks at home and abroad'.⁵ Professor Krishan S Rana, Professor Emeritus, Service Institute, New Delhi,

1 See Joshua S. Fouts, Director, Center on Public Diplomacy, University of Southern California, 'Rethinking Public Diplomacy for the 21st Century: A Toolbox for Engaging the Hearts and Minds of the Open Source Generation', Prepared for presentation at the APSA Political Communication Conference on International Communication and Conflict, 31 August 2005, p. 4.

2 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 9.

3 See paragraphs 2.2–2.17 of this report and also Evan H. Potter, *Canada and the new Public Diplomacy*, Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 2002, pp. 3–4.

4 The United Kingdom Parliament, Further memorandum submitted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Public Diplomacy Strategy Board, Letter to the Chairman of the Committee from the Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 22 May 2003, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmselect/cmfaff/859we12.htm> (accessed 24 May 2007); Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Public Diplomacy Strategy, May 2003, http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/PUBLICDIPLOMACYSTRATEGY_May2003.pdf (accessed 24 May 2007).

5 See comments by Jorge Heine, 'On the Manner of Practising the New Diplomacy', The Centre for International Governance Innovation, Working Paper No. 11, October 2006, p. 9.

described the changing nature of foreign diplomacy with its emphasis on managing and coordinating the many and varied agents of public diplomacy:

The gatekeepers of external contracts have become shepherds that try and keep the flock that goes to foreign pastures more-or-less together, trying to push them to act with coherence.⁶

10.4 This chapter looks at this new 'multi-stake' diplomacy. It considers how the government works with the many non-official organisations or groups who are engaged in international activities that may have a bearing on Australia's public diplomacy.

Non-state participants in Australia's public diplomacy

10.5 Students of public diplomacy in Australia recognise the challenges presented by the increasing number of organisations participating in public dialogue and influencing international perceptions of Australia. Professor Naren Chitty, Professor of International Communication at Macquarie University, wrote:

...while the nation state, particularly the powerful nation state, remains a key actor, other actors have grown in importance. These actors include international organisations, multinational corporations, non-government organisations, religious organisations and movements, publics, markets, high profile individuals and even terrorist networks.⁷

10.6 These private organisations with overseas connections are removed from government control or funding, but nonetheless exert significant influence on Australia's public diplomacy. According to Professor Chitty: 'non-state actors must be drawn into the picture if one is going to have an effective scheme'.⁸

NGOs

10.7 There is growing recognition that some NGOs can assist in effective communication with communities in other countries. Many of these organisations—International Red Cross, Amnesty International—have credibility, respect and established global networks.⁹ Although they tend to be fiercely independent, and sometimes highly critical, of governments, they nonetheless present opportunities to assist or complement a government's public diplomacy efforts. Professor Kishan S. Rana, noted:

6 Kishan S Rana, Professor Emeritus, Foreign Service Institute, New Delhi, *Foreign Ministries: Change and Reform*, Working paper, November 2005, p. 3.

7 *Submission 15*, p. 5.

8 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 36.

9 See for example, Mark Leonard with Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, The Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2002, pp. 55–57.

Official trade negotiation and domestic socio-economic development networks now include NGOs as regular partners, some including them in their delegations to global conferences. Foreign ministries in the West also use them as partners on world hunger and disaster relief, and in relation to human rights advocacy. The NGOs, having gained a status as interlocutors, would like to become part of the policy formulation process; there are finite limits to how far foreign ministries can accommodate them in decision-making councils—they are after all special interest groups, sometimes making conflicting demands.¹⁰

10.8 In evidence presented to the committee, Mr Geoff Miller also noted the increasing presence of NGOs in multilateral diplomacy which in his view is 'growing in volume, scope and complexity'.¹¹ He drew attention to the growth in 'the size, power and roles of multinational corporations, and the degree to which they now routinely involve themselves in issues that once would have been regarded as the prerogative of governments'.¹²

10.9 Mr Trevor Wilson referred to the 'terrific job' that Australian NGOs of all kinds are doing for the country's reputation. They include in particular church organisations or non-government humanitarian groups that are identified as Australian.¹³ Dr Mark Zirnsak, Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, noted the need for the Australian Government to work with NGOs to facilitate and build on their ability to engage in public diplomacy. He said:

Often non-government organisations or civil societies have an ability to reach other parts of the overseas community in ways that governments may not be able to. Government could then also get recognition for the positive actions it has taken in a number of areas and the need to work with NGOs to give overseas communities realistic expectations about what an Australian government might do, particularly in the areas of the promotion of human rights and peace-building. We commend the government on its

10 Kishan S. Rana, *Foreign Ministries: Change and Reform*, Working paper, November 2005, p. 12. In 2005, he was Professor Emeritus, Foreign Service Institute, New Delhi and Senior Fellow, DiploFoundation, Malta and Geneva. He retired as ambassador to Germany in 1995, after 35 years in the Indian Foreign Service (serving as ambassador/high commissioner in Algiers, Prague, Nairobi, and Mauritius, and consul general in San Francisco). He was a joint secretary in Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's office from 1981 to 1982. Rana specialised in economic diplomacy, and worked initially on Chinese affairs. Since 1995 he has worked as a business advisor, assisting international and Indian companies, and taught at the Foreign Service Institute, New Delhi. He has written a study of the diplomatic process, *Inside Diplomacy* (October 1999), and is co-author of *Managing Corporate Culture*, a book on business culture in India (November 1999).

11 Geoff Miller, 'Current and emerging challenges to the practice of Australian diplomacy', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 56, no. 2, 2002, p. 199 and *Submission 16*.

12 *Submission 16*, p. 199.

13 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 30.

efforts with regard to sending volunteers overseas as a form of public diplomacy.¹⁴

10.10 Members of the Foreign Correspondents' Association (FCA) provide an example of another group of people whose activities contribute to overseas perceptions of Australia. They maintain that it is 'foreign news agencies and journalists that predominantly shape the views overseas audiences form of Australia'.¹⁵ For example, the FCA noted:

It is they who report on the reality of life, politics and business—unhindered by the constraints of being public servants or being otherwise dependent on the government.¹⁶

10.11 According to Mr Urs Walterlin, President of the Association, 'If you talk to us, 'you talk to the world'.¹⁷

10.12 The Association was of the view that Australian Government entities other than Tourism Australia are yet 'to discover what opportunities the FCA can offer'. It noted that the only departmental contact the FCA has had in the past few years was with the DFAT. It stated further that most years the department sponsors an annual visit to Canberra for a group of members to observe the delivery of the budget. According to the FCA, it has recently indicated to DFAT its desire to widen the list of potential interview partners to include ministers and senior bureaucrats as well as the government offering assistance to visits projects such as the North West Shelf oil and gas fields. It was FCA's view that:

...the Australian Government not only *could* but also *should* use the FCA much more to communicate messages to the world. It is very clear that our members significantly shape the image the world has of Australia. We believe the Australian Government has not yet realized this and is underestimating or not recognizing at all the impact our members' work has.¹⁸

10.13 The Association made a number of recommendations, key among them was that ministers of all portfolios give priority to invitations to speak before the FCA and further that their departments develop direct lines of communication with the Association to facilitate visits by members to places and projects of interest.

14 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 52.

15 *Submission 29*, p. 4.

16 *Submission 29*, p. 4.

17 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 33.

18 *Submission 29*, p. 4.

Sporting diplomacy

10.14 Sporting activities are among the range of private activities that could have a bearing on foreign policy. In chapter 8, the committee considered the government-sponsored Australian Sports Outreach Program and noted that the work being done by the Australian Sports Commission in sports development in overseas countries was commendable.

10.15 The committee, however, has not explored in detail the connection between the sporting activities of private organisations or clubs and Australia's public diplomacy. It notes that in 2005, the Lowy Institute produced a report which considered Australia's membership of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and the opportunities this membership offered to deepen people-to-people links with Asia.¹⁹

10.16 The author of the study argued that 'AFC membership means that, for the first time in its history, Australia will have a significant, on-going sporting relationship with a large number of Asian (and Middle Eastern) countries'.²⁰ This study makes valuable reading and suggests a number of ways to integrate sport into the various public diplomacy programs particularly those conducted under the auspices of the bilateral councils. The committee notes the reference in the study to sport providing a 'common point of conversation'.²¹ The recent very public debate about the proposed tour by the Australian Cricket team to Zimbabwe illustrates how sport can become the focal point of what is a public diplomacy concern.²² A good reputation built on a solid bank of goodwill means that Australia's message can be heard over the controversy generated by the occasional international sporting incident.

10.17 In this regard, the committee again draws attention to the work being done by the ASC in sports development and the substantial body of goodwill that these types of activities build up over time. The Lowy report suggests that there are other potential sporting activities worth exploring that could contribute to Australia's public diplomacy.

19 Anthony Bubalo, *Football Diplomacy?*, Lowy Institute for International Policy, Policy Brief, November 2005, pp. 1, 3, 6, 9–11, and 65.

20 Anthony Bubalo, *Football Diplomacy?*, Lowy Institute for International Policy, Policy Brief, November 2005, p. 3.

21 Anthony Bubalo, *Football Diplomacy?*, Lowy Institute for International Policy, Policy Brief, November 2005, p. 6.

22 In May 2007, it was widely reported that Cricket Australia had been instructed by the Australian Government to cancel the planned one-day cricket series in Zimbabwe in September 2007 on the grounds that the cricket tour would provide a propaganda opportunity for the Mugabe regime. See media reporting, for example, *Cricket World*, 13 May 2007, <http://www.cricketworld.com/australia/article?aid=11311>

Business diplomacy

10.18 Business is yet another area that intersects with a country's public diplomacy programs. This inquiry did not take evidence on business diplomacy but mentions this activity to indicate how widely the net can be cast when taking account of the many organisations that, deliberately or not, affect public diplomacy. A recent issue of the *Journal of Business Strategy* was devoted especially to the role of business in public diplomacy. The editor summarised the views of the authors contributing to this edition which tended to agree that, 'one way or another, business has a role in public diplomacy, whether by default or intention'.²³

10.19 Based on its work, Invest Australia demonstrated its awareness of the business community as a public diplomacy resource. It advised the committee that towards the end of 2006, it initiated the Australians Abroad pilot program to 'increase positive public diplomacy within the international business community'. It informed the committee that a key strategy of the program is 'to educate and encourage endorsement, word-of-mouth marketing and reinforcement of key messages by influential Australian business leaders based in key international markets'.²⁴ It explained:

Two key expatriate organisations in the US—Advance and the American Australian Association—were selected through a competitive process to raise the level of awareness of Australia as an investment location. They have been responsible for distributing Invest Australia's e-newsletter, Inflow, to their membership and organising networking events in the US on behalf of Invest Australia.²⁵

10.20 Without the need for further evidence, the committee notes that both sport and business open up avenues for dialogue and engagement between Australia and other countries and provide the opportunity for Australia to deepen and broaden its people-to-people links.

Committee view

10.21 The committee acknowledges that the many and varied activities undertaken by NGOs, civic activists, writers, journalists, business and sports people, religious groups and leaders and many other individuals and organisations may affect Australia's public diplomacy. In some cases, their activities may complement or support the government's public diplomacy objectives but, in others, they may not. Clearly DFAT has an interest in monitoring the influence that various organisations have on Australia's public diplomacy and their potential to contribute to efforts to promote Australia's image abroad. Furthermore, where the potential does exist, it is important for DFAT to be able to take full advantage of those opportunities and to

23 Editor's notes, *The Journal of Business Strategy*, vol. 27, iss. 3, Boston, 2006, p. 3.

24 *Submission 24*, p. 6.

25 *Submission 24*, p. 6.

coordinate and integrate the relevant activities into Australia's public diplomacy strategies.

10.22 The committee now turns to Australia's diaspora as another group relevant to the promotion of Australia overseas.

Diaspora

10.23 A 2004 Lowy Institute Paper looked at Australia's diaspora and concluded:

Australia's expatriates should be seen as an integral element of our diplomatic efforts. A strategically located diaspora can help our international representatives to do their job: to gather information, build relationships and advocate Australia's interests. They can also assist our public diplomacy effort, serving as goodwill ambassadors and helping to project an accurate and contemporary image overseas...Properly mobilised, the members of our diaspora could be powerful instruments of Australia's soft power.²⁶

10.24 After inquiring into Australia's diaspora, the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee reinforced this view. It argued that Australia should embrace its expatriate community as part of Australia and recognise that they are an important part of the society. Importantly, it noted:

...expatriate Australians represent an underutilised resource: not only are they an asset in terms of promoting Australia and its social, economic and cultural interests; they are also ambassadors for our nation, which is otherwise disadvantaged by our geographic remoteness and small population.²⁷

10.25 Although estimates of the number of Australians living overseas vary, figures provided by DFAT to the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee in 2004 indicated that there were well over 750,000 Australians resident overseas.²⁸ The Lowy report suggested that the figure of Australians living overseas was close to one million with perhaps three quarters of that number relocated on a long-term basis.²⁹

10.26 The views of some witnesses to this committee were consistent with the findings of the Lowy and the Senate committee reports. They were of the view that

26 Michael Fullilove and Chloë Flutter, *diaspora: the World Wide Web of Australians*, Lowy Institute Paper 04, The Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2004, p. 46.

27 Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee, *They still call Australia home: Inquiry into Australian expatriates*, March 2005, p. v.

28 Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee, *They still call Australia home Inquiry into Australian expatriates*, March 2005, p. 18. The figure quoted for Australian residents overseas was 759,849 for the period 2002–2003.

29 Michael Fullilove and Chloë Flutter, *diaspora: the World Wide Web of Australians*, Lowy Institute Paper 04, The Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2004, p. vii.

Australia's diaspora is 'far-flung, influential and well-disposed'.³⁰ Ms Buffington cited two cases where prominent Australians have given a boost to Australia's public diplomacy. Professor Ian Frazer, a former Australian of the Year, gave a symposium in Bangkok in April 2007 and spoke to the media about his discoveries. He also addressed a lunch-time meeting at the Australian Consulate in New York. Professor Peter Doherty, a Nobel laureate, also took part in similar promotional work in India. Ms Buffington explained further that Professor Doherty had been a very positive Nobel laureate:

He has done a lot of multimedia for us in terms of the sort of material that we would show at education exhibitions, where he is talking about the impact of an Australian education as a foundation for his work that gained him the Nobel prize. He has been very generous with his time. So there are a lot of subtle ways that we also engage the global community, both in the overt sense of promoting Australia as an education destination but also in the subtle showcasing of that excellence.³¹

10.27 Indeed, Australian scientists through their extensive international connections and their high standing in the science community have played a major role in promoting Australia's interests.

10.28 Australian expatriates do not have to be famous to contribute to Australia's public diplomacy. Dr Wells was of the view that the millions of Australians living and working offshore were a resource to be exploited 'as part of an industry engagement framework'.³² She said:

...so much of people's impressions and understanding of Australian values and the Australian way of life come from a person to person engagement. It is our industries and our industry representatives who are doing a lot of that person to person engagement on the ground. It is our expatriate diaspora, which is working with industry offshore, that is doing that engagement on the ground.³³

10.29 Similarly, Mr Mirchandani also drew attention to the potential for Australia's diaspora to have a constructive role in Australia's public diplomacy. His view of public diplomacy was 'Team Australia'. He explained:

Team Australia is anyone who is going abroad to interact in overseas countries at whatever level. They should all form part of the Australian narrative...Every Australian overseas is a small part and a carrier of this narrative. It would be great if they were empowered, trained, informed—

30 *Submission 2*, p. 5.

31 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 54.

32 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 25.

33 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 25.

many going overseas do not even know that—about what this narrative is and therefore they could lend their weight to it.³⁴

10.30 He noted a private sector summit on public diplomacy held by the US State Department which supported the creation of a corps of private sector foreign service officers made up of academics and businesspeople with specialised expertise. The suggestion was that they could work abroad on short-term assignments. Mr Mirchandani was of the view that Australia should be considering creative proposals based on the notion that, 'Everyone is an Australian, and everyone is a diplomat when he or she is overseas'.³⁵

10.31 According to Mr Mirchandani, expatriates would love to be involved as long as it did 'not take them into areas of discomfort in policy terms'. He indicated that they do not really need financial incentive, 'but recognition would certainly play a part in spurring them on'.³⁶ As noted previously, Invest Australia has already taken active steps to involve expatriates in their promotional work.

10.32 The Lowy report acknowledged DFAT's excellent work in connecting with Australian expatriates. It noted, however, that while many Australian diplomats use their contacts with expatriates to promote the national interest, the Australian government has not given priority to this type of activity. Overall, the report claimed that there is no strategic, whole-of-department—let alone whole-of-government—effort to interact with the diaspora or to use it to achieve the department's goals, including advocacy, information collection and public diplomacy. In particular, the authors identified the following gaps:

- (a) There is no central unit within DFAT or any other department to engage with the diaspora.
- (b) Outside the performance of consular duties, there is no regular surveying of contacts with the diaspora in diplomatic posts, or a specific diaspora element in post evaluation reviews.
- (c) The issue is not emphasised in official DFAT documents such as annual reports and white papers.

10.33 The report suggested that the bureaucratic focus on the diaspora should be sharpened. The authors did not believe that a large new bureaucracy was necessary but that certain modest, targeted reforms to DFAT's processes could address present shortcomings, namely:

- A unit should be created to generate new ideas on expatriate engagement, capture the experiences of different diplomatic posts, and distribute best practices throughout the system. This unit should be located in DFAT but

34 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 45.

35 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 45.

36 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 50.

work with other arms of government, such as the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), Austrade and Invest Australia.

- Diaspora engagement should be made an explicit aim of the Department and be included in post and divisional objectives and ministerial directives to heads of mission. Posts should, of course, be allowed flexibility as to how this end is achieved, given the variety of environments in which they operate. For example, there are likely to be more opportunities to work with expatriates to advance Australia's interests in global cities such as New York, London and Hong Kong. However, the ambition should be consistent, even if the programs are not.
- A tailored, up-to-date and comprehensive website should be created to function as a 'one-stop shop' for expatriates. It should be administered by the government to ensure it is regarded as trustworthy by users.³⁷

10.34 The Legal and Constitutional References Committee made some similar recommendations which were supported by government members of the committee. It recommended the establishment of a policy unit within the DFAT to facilitate the coordination of policies relating to Australian expatriates.³⁸ The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade is of the view that this recommendation could be expanded to include public diplomacy in the duties and responsibilities of the proposed unit.

10.35 The Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee also recommended that the consular role for foreign missions be revised to contain a specific requirement that posts engage with the local expatriate community in all ways appropriate to that location.³⁹

10.36 In its response to the Senate committee's recommendation, the government did not support the establishment of a special policy unit within DFAT dealing with expatriate matters. It stated that Australian missions work 'closely and actively with Australian expatriate communities, organisations and social groups to maintain positive and productive links to promote Australian goods and services as well as information and cultural activities'.⁴⁰ The government accepted the recommendation that the consular role for foreign missions be revised to require posts to engage better with the local expatriate community. It noted, however, that this requirement already existed. The government explained that Australian missions 'provide a broad range of

37 Michael Fullilove and Chloë Flutter, *diaspora: the World Wide Web of Australians*, Lowy Institute Paper 04, Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2004, p. 50.

38 Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee, *They still call Australia home Inquiry into Australian expatriates*, March 2005, p. 123.

39 Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee, *They still call Australia home Inquiry into Australian expatriates*, March 2005, p. 124.

40 Government Response to the Legal and Constitutional References Committee on its inquiry into Australian expatriates, *Senate Hansard*, 7 December 2006, p. 106.

services across, inter alia, consular, immigration, trade, cultural and business activities, as part of which there is a continuous process of engagement with local expatriate communities'. It reported that there was to be 'an expansion of consular services, with an additional 15 officers to be posted to Australian missions over the next two years [from 2006], as well as the appointment of 16 local support staff [to] further improve the service delivered to Australians abroad'.⁴¹

10.37 Even so, evidence to the committee strengthened the call for measures to be taken to ensure that the network of Australians living abroad is regarded as a vital part of the Australian community, with significant potential to make a valuable contribution to Australia's public diplomacy. RMIT argued that the government should make better use of the network of Australians living and working overseas and cited from the Lowy report:

...many of these Australians enjoy positions of influence and authority in academia, business, communications and the arts; and are favourably disposed to promoting Australia's influence through public diplomacy channels...Support for country-based professional networks—in the form of resources for partnered activity with Government—would sustain and give focus to this work. This is another area in which universities, with their international staff and alumni linkages, could be engaged.⁴²

10.38 Professor Joseph Siracusa suggested that if Australia wants to promote 'the Australian story', it should consider how the Harvard alumni organises itself around the world, which would provide a proven and successful model. He said, 'A lot of our students spend six months overseas, and they are your great ambassadors, but you have to regularise or systematise this thing'.⁴³ In stressing the important contribution that Australians overseas could make to Australia's public diplomacy, he recommended:

- a stock take of all the talent Australia has and the opportunities they have to tell Australia's story—identify the resources;⁴⁴
- a major conference called 'Australia's World, World's Australia' that would bring together educators, elected people and Australians who work overseas to work out a strategy for Australia's public diplomacy.⁴⁵

10.39 It should be noted that in December 2006, Advance-Global Australian Professionals hosted a gathering of expatriate Australians 'at the top of their fields from around the world and their on-shore peers'. They met in Sydney to identify

41 Government Response to the Legal and Constitutional References Committee on its inquiry into Australian expatriates, *Senate Hansard*, 7 December 2006, p. 107.

42 *Submission 9*, p. 3.

43 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 23.

44 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 26.

45 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 24.

'strategies to leverage their networks and influence in their respective industries and fields of endeavour'.⁴⁶ This meeting confirmed the notion that some of Australia's 'best and brightest' while living overseas, have 'a desire to strengthen the connection with Australia'. Participants also showed a willingness to enquire into how 'best advantage can be made of their personal networks and influence abroad'.⁴⁷ Although, those attending the summit saw themselves as a major element in 'Australia's public diplomacy kit bag' they agreed that they are 'currently almost totally unused with little global application of their talents and resources to Australia's public diplomacy objectives'. A recommendation coming out of the summit was to:

Extend programmes which leverage leading Australian professionals around the world as a major public diplomacy asset, assisting in the promotion of Australia as an excellent trade, investment, education and tourism destination.⁴⁸



Photographer: Jon Love

Advance 100 Global Australians on the steps of the Sydney Opera House at the conclusion of the Summit.

46 *Submission 31*, p. 6.

47 *Submission 31*, p. 22.

48 *Submission 31*, p. 8.

10.40 Invest Australia has clearly demonstrated its interest in using Australian expatriates to assist it in promoting Australia.

Committee view

10.41 The committee notes the government's response to the Legal and Constitutional Committee's recommendation to improve links with Australia's diaspora. It believes, however, that the opportunities to engage Australian expatriates more actively and constructively in promoting Australia overseas are not being fully explored. It suggests that DFAT look carefully at the Lowy report, *Diaspora*; reconsider the relevant recommendations made by the Legal and Constitutional References Committee; and the evidence before this committee with a view to implementing measures that would encourage more active engagement by Australia's expatriates in Australia's public diplomacy.

Recommendation 14

10.42 The committee recommends that DFAT review the findings of the Lowy report, *Diaspora*, reconsider the relevant recommendations made in March 2005 by the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee on Australian Expatriates and consider the evidence set out in this report with regard to Australian expatriates and Australia's public diplomacy. The committee urges DFAT to formulate and implement strategies that would enable DFAT to take advantage of the significant resource of the diaspora and encourage Australian expatriates to engage more constructively in Australia's public diplomacy.

The problem of integrating and coordinating public diplomacy activities

10.43 There are many government agencies, private sector entities and individuals who have made or could make a contribution to the effectiveness of Australia's public diplomacy. As noted in chapter 8, even among government departments there is a need for strong communication networks and clear direction from a recognised central body. Bringing the many non-state organisations into Australia's public diplomacy framework so they can complement the work of government bodies poses a significant challenge for government.

10.44 Australia is not alone in grappling with this problem of successfully integrating the activities of many organisations and individuals into the one framework. A dominant theme in overseas literature on public diplomacy concentrates on the importance of coordination and strategic planning. Many refer to the need 'to foster synergies between activities of governments and societal actors'.⁴⁹ Mark Leonard suggested that:

49 See for example, Bátorá J., *Multistakeholder Public Diplomacy of Small and Medium-Sized States: Norway and Canada Compared*, Paper presented to the International Conference on Multistakeholder Diplomacy, Mediterranean Diplomatic Academy, Malta, February 11–13 November 2005, p. 4.

Each country has a different set of institutions to manage its public diplomacy strategy. Some are part of government, others are independent. Each will have its own mission and priorities, but in order to practice public diplomacy effectively, it is important to examine the institutions as a spectrum and see whether there are gaps between the institutions which are not yet filled.⁵⁰

10.45 Evidence to this committee has already noted the importance of developing a coherent public diplomacy strategy with other stakeholders in government and society.⁵¹ Indeed, the previous chapter drew attention to the observations of some cultural and educational institutions that the lack of strategic planning impedes more effective engagement in Australia's public diplomacy. More generally, Mr Trevor Wilson criticised DFAT's current public diplomacy because of its short-term focus. He suggested that the objective of public diplomacy is a 'strategic building of not so much our image but our reputation, our influence, and good understanding of Australia'.⁵² He said:

I think we need to identify the sorts of strategies that we should be pursuing in our public diplomacy that are above politics—bipartisan strategies, which the community would strongly support. If you look at DFAT's annual reports or those of the Australia International Cultural Council or any of the other institutions and bodies, there are broad statements of principle, but there is no statement of strategy that would actually inform public diplomacy activities; there is no direct connecting thread there.⁵³

10.46 Media Gurus referred to the need to harness and coordinate the relevant activities of all the various contributors to Australia's public diplomacy to take full advantage of their position, 'so that different agencies are not knocking on the same door at the same time'.⁵⁴

Committee view

10.47 In its recommendation to expand and strengthen the role and function of the IDC and to develop a strategic public diplomacy plan (see recommendation 6), the committee recognised the importance of non-state organisations and Australia's diaspora to Australia's public diplomacy. It suggested that:

50 Mark Leonard with Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, The Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2002, p. 11.

51 Jan Melissen, 'Public diplomacy between Theory and Practice', The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, pp. 8–14 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007) and Philip Fiske de Gouveia, Foreign Policy Centre, The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, pp. 4–6 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

52 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 16.

53 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 17.

54 *Submission 2*, p. 5.

- the government's strategic framework take account of non-state stakeholders and adopt as one of its key operating principles in its public diplomacy strategy 'work with others, including business, NGOs and Australian expatriates;
- a sub-committee of the IDC be established with responsibility for ensuring that non-state organisations involved in international activities, including diaspora communities, are incorporated into an overarching public diplomacy framework.

10.48 The final chapter of the report will also draw together some of these suggestions and recommendations made in the body of the report.

Chapter 11

Australia's public diplomacy: training and practitioners

11.1 Most countries now consider public diplomacy a serious business with some looking to specialists in private enterprise to help them with their public diplomacy programs.¹ Participants in a recent international conference in Geneva examining the challenges for foreign ministries believed strongly that traditional training methods were 'no longer enough' for diplomats. They recognised that one of the growth areas in training included public diplomacy.² In looking specifically at the diplomat assigned abroad, they recognised that one of the key tasks was 'to create understanding for the home country' which required the capacity to reach out to people in the host country, 'connecting with the active publics'. They concluded that a diplomat abroad is no longer the principal negotiator, nor the key interpreter of home policy:

His main business is not so much with the foreign ministry in the receiving country as with the entire political class; he needs a dense and stable network of contacts. Personal communication skills and language ability are vital.³

11.2 In this chapter, the committee looks at the role and function of the Images of Australia Branch (IAB) as the unit within DFAT that manages and coordinates the department's public diplomacy programs. It examines how effectively public diplomacy is integrated into the mainstream of DFAT's work and the role of the IAB as the main coordinator for the department's public diplomacy. The committee looks at where this unit is located in the department, the staff dedicated to public diplomacy, and IAB's role in training and preparing staff for public diplomacy activities. The committee also considers the skills required in an effective public diplomacy practitioner and whether DFAT should have a unit of public diplomacy specialists.

Coordinating public diplomacy activities within DFAT

11.3 DFAT has primary responsibility for implementing Australia's public diplomacy programs. In September 2003, DFAT announced a series of initiatives to integrate public diplomacy work more closely into the mainstream of the department's activities.⁴ In its evidence to the committee, the department said that in 2005–06 it had a team of public diplomacy specialists and a staff of 229 dedicated to public

1 See paragraph 3.21

2 Summary of discussion, Conference on 'Challenges for Foreign Ministries: Managing Diplomatic Networks and Optimising Value', 31 May–1 June 2006, Geneva, p. 4.

3 Summary of discussion, Conference on 'Challenges for Foreign Ministries: Managing Diplomatic Networks and Optimising Value', 31 May–1 June 2006, Geneva, p. 5.

4 Administrative Circular P0521, 19 September 2003.

diplomacy work.⁵ They are distributed throughout the department as set out in the following table provided by DFAT.

Table 11.1: Public Diplomacy staff in 2005–06⁶

Division	Total
Americas Division	1.2
Australian Passport Office	6.5
Corporate Management Division	5.0
Consular Public Diplomacy and Parliamentary Affairs Division	23.7
Economic Analytical Unit	7.0
Europe Division	2.3
Executive Planning and Evaluation Branch	1.5
Global Issues Branch	2.0
International Organisations and Legal Division	3.9
International Security Division	5.8
North Asia Division	6.0
Office of Trade Negotiations	2.7
Pacific Division	3.4
South-East Asia Division	2.9
South and West Asia Middle East Africa Division	2.2
Trade Development Division	5.6
Free Trade Agreement Taskforces and Unit	1.0
Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation Taskforce	0.5
State offices	13.0
Posts – Europe	5.2
Posts - Middle East & Africa	4.4
Posts - New Zealand & South Pacific	4.0
Posts - North Asia	3.4
Posts - South & South East Asia	8.6
Posts - The Americas	5.2
Posts – Locally Engaged Staff (LES)	102.0
Total	229.0

⁵ *Submission 18*, p. 5.

⁶ DFAT, Answer to written question on notice, 1 May 2007, p. 2.

11.4 For the purposes of this report, the committee concentrates mainly on the IAB which manages the department's internationally focused public diplomacy programs and coordinates overall public diplomacy activities. The IAB is located within the Consular, Public Diplomacy and Parliamentary Affairs Division of DFAT.

11.5 According to Dr Strahan there are 'about 16 or 17 people' in IAB. The economic analytical unit, the trade outreach area and the secretariats servicing the bilateral councils also employ a number of officers involved in public diplomacy activities. He indicated that there may also be 'a couple of staff' working on the public diplomacy side of important issues such as counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation. He explained that the remainder of public diplomacy staff tend to be located at overseas posts.⁷

Public diplomacy a part of mainstream work

11.6 Dr Strahan informed the committee that in recent years DFAT had decided to 'much more closely integrate public diplomacy work with the work' of other sections in the department. In his view, the distribution of staff engaged in public diplomacy within the department demonstrates the extent to which mainstream public diplomacy activity is integrated into the department in general. He stated:

At some point public diplomacy can be seen as being a little bit to the side of mainstream work in a foreign ministry. That is not the case in our service. All of our officers are expected to take public diplomacy seriously and to see how it fits into their normal foreign policy and trade work.⁸

11.7 He gave the example of 11 newly recruited media specialists:

We do not want these specialists to feel like they are part of a separate stream, that they are a subspecies which is different from the rest of the department. They must feel very much that they are officers who can be deployed to other positions later in their careers which might be more traditional policy or diplomatic positions where they will continue to draw on their specialist skills. Sometimes they might have a more specialist position, but they are very much part of the general cohort of skilled people in the department.⁹

11.8 A number of witnesses before the committee commented on DFAT's approach to making public diplomacy an activity central to the department's work. Mr Jacob Townsend, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, was of the view that the 'mainstreaming of public diplomacy activities throughout DFAT placing emphasis on it in staff training and general staff awareness was a good idea'.¹⁰ He agreed that it was important for DFAT staff to appreciate that public diplomacy was an important part of

7 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 11.

8 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 7.

9 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, pp. 39–40.

10 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 26.

their work. Mr Freeman also defended strongly DFAT's policy of streaming and mainstreaming and getting public diplomacy 'to be very much an integral part of the way the department works'.¹¹

11.9 Although some witnesses approved of DFAT's approach to making public diplomacy a mainstream function of the department, they nonetheless were critical of, or could see scope for improving, DFAT's public diplomacy efforts. For example, Mr Townsend expressed concern about the professional value placed on public diplomacy in DFAT. He quoted from DFAT's submission that 'In 2006, IAB launched a new PD training course for staff proceeding on overseas postings. This course will become mandatory in 2007 for all staff appointed to positions with a significant PD content'. He interpreted this statement to mean that:

...there is a differentiation between staff who have a PD role and staff who have less of a PD role. That suggests also that therefore you are not mainstreaming in a comprehensive way; you are suggesting to people vaguely that public diplomacy is a responsibility but you are not reinforcing it.¹²

Committee view

11.10 The committee notes Dr Strahan's comments about the high value that DFAT places on integrating public diplomacy into the mainstream of its work. The committee agrees with this policy. The committee believes, however, that DFAT must ensure that its stated policy of public diplomacy as an integral part of mainstream diplomacy is supported by action that clearly demonstrates that public diplomacy is a highly valued activity in the department.

The role of IAB in training staff and coordinating public diplomacy activities

11.11 To ensure that the department's public diplomacy activities continue to reflect Australia's foreign and trade objectives, the IAB conducts regular reviews. It holds annual consultations with staff from the department's geographic and subject expert areas and six-monthly budget reviews. Furthermore, in June 2005 it produced its *Public Diplomacy Handbook* and in July 2006 its *Public Advocacy Techniques*.

11.12 DFAT also explained to the committee that new graduates, who provide the main source of recruitment and go on to do mainstream policy and corporate work, receive a briefing session about the department's general public diplomacy programs. Dr Strahan explained:

We then have a program where we take them around to a number of different stakeholders who contribute to the overall public diplomacy effort. For instance, they will meet with Australia Network and the Australia Council. That is our front-line moment where we first communicate with

11 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 20.

12 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 26.

our new staff and make sure that they understand the importance of public diplomacy. We then have a series of rolling training programs, which run throughout the year, including a relatively new pre-posting training course specialising in public diplomacy. We have a series of what we call advocacy workshops which run every year and have been doing so for some time. Those advocacy workshops will pick up on key issues of the moment, so we will judge, in consultation with other parts of the department, what issues would warrant a dedicated public diplomacy advocacy training session. We have just had a series of those in the last couple of weeks and we will have more across the year.¹³

11.13 The IAB also maintains close contact with overseas posts and works with them to ensure that their work is consistent with the government's public diplomacy goals.

Overseas posts

11.14 The department currently runs funded public diplomacy programs in 85 locations overseas. In 2005–06, Australian overseas posts held more than 3000 public diplomacy activities for a total annual budget of \$1.6 million. The activities ranged from public advocacy campaigns, including a joint Indonesia–Australia public information campaign on illegal fishing, to major cultural events to the mainstay of public diplomacy such as speeches, media releases, seminars, conferences, cultural promotions, exhibitions and displays.¹⁴

Staff working on public diplomacy at overseas posts

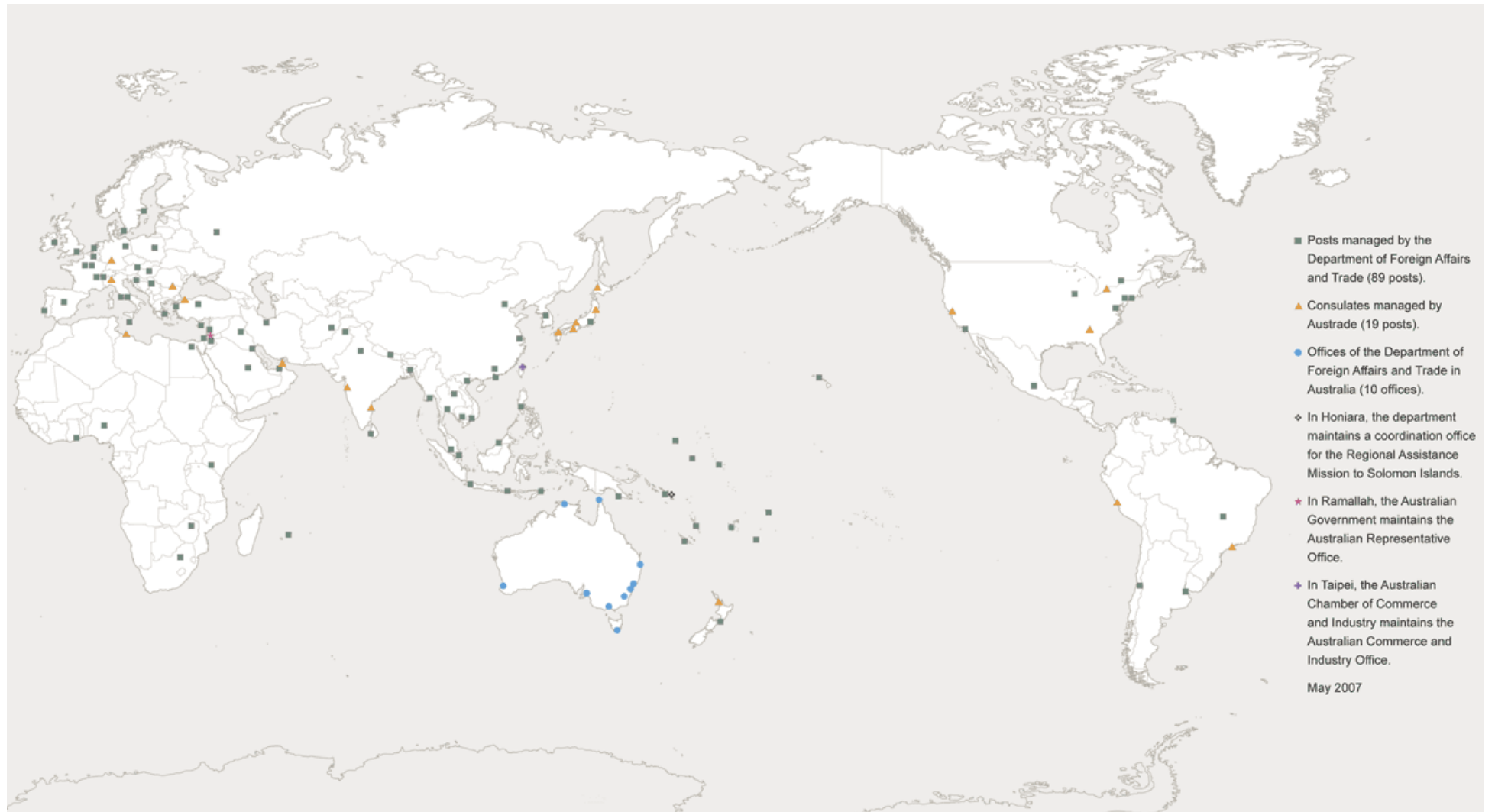
11.15 Clearly, Australia's overseas posts form an integral part of DFAT's public diplomacy network. Dr Strahan explained that there is a range of people at post doing public diplomacy work. He stated:

We have five full-time positions overseas which are PD dedicated and then there will always be an A-based officer in each mission who spends a varying proportion of their time on public diplomacy. In some cases that might be 10 or 20 per cent. This is where the fractions come in. That is why we have half people or people that work part-time.¹⁵

13 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, pp. 3–4.

14 *Submission 18*, pp. 13–14.

15 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 11.



Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade—Posts, Consulates and offices.

11.16 He informed the committee that the department has two A-based officers, who work full time on public diplomacy, in Jakarta, one in Beijing, one in Tokyo, and one in Washington and that these positions had been in place for 'many years'.¹⁶

11.17 Mr Kirk Coningham, former DFAT officer, accepted DFAT's argument that the maintenance of Australia's diplomacy demands an expensive and elaborate network of overseas missions. He also agreed with the view that 'to do diplomacy well it must be done on the ground'. He went on to state that:

But when you look at the public diplomacy resources on the ground, you come up with a pretty sorry picture. In its evidence to this committee DFAT admitted that in the vast majority of posts it is 10 to 20 per cent of the responsibility of a normally junior DFAT officer. That is a day or so a fortnight. The reality at post is that the function is performed by locally engaged staff.¹⁷

11.18 The committee notes that table 11.1 provided by DFAT to the committee records an equivalent of only 30.8 A-based staff working on public diplomacy at Australia's overseas posts and 102 locally engaged staff (LES).

Training for, and coordinating, public diplomacy activities at overseas posts

11.19 DFAT maintained that it has incorporated public diplomacy activities into the work of all its posts. Dr Strahan referred to the new pre-posting training courses that focus on public diplomacy. He noted further that:

A number of other agencies pointed out that they do not attend our pre-posting PD training courses. That has been a slip on our part. We will now invite all officers from all agencies who are going on posting to attend these courses so that they can understand the public diplomacy dimension of their work.¹⁸

11.20 Also, under an initiative announced in 2003, IAB conducts a more regular and systematic program of regional public diplomacy workshops for posts. DFAT advised the committee that these workshops are intended to 'provide an opportunity for face-to-face discussion, mentoring and revision to Post PD programs'.¹⁹ The department recently held regional public diplomacy workshops in Shanghai, Hanoi and Brisbane to help posts integrate their public diplomacy activities more closely with key foreign and trade policy objectives.²⁰ Dr Strahan explained:

We get our posts from one particular region and we pull them together for two days and systematically go through all of our different public

16 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 12.

17 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 39.

18 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 42.

19 DFAT, answer to written question on notice, 1 May 2007, p. 27.

20 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2005–06*, p. 193.

diplomacy and cultural diplomacy programs. That is the venue for our posts to communicate with us and let us know what is confronting them at the coalface of public diplomacy overseas and it is a chance for us to communicate with them new things that we are introducing back home.²¹

11.21 As noted previously, IAB publishes a public diplomacy handbook which is used as a guide for Heads of Mission to ensure that public diplomacy activities are closely linked with the government's key policy objectives. The handbook is intended to offer practical advice for posts 'to advance Australia's foreign and trade interests, highlight areas where Australia excels and dispel potentially damaging misconceptions'.²² To this end, it emphasises that before holding any event, posts should 'clearly identify the message, target audience and most effective means of delivery'. Moreover, these events should be part of a post's annual public diplomacy strategy.

11.22 Indeed, posts are required to prepare public diplomacy strategies and programs. According to DFAT, the strategies include 'a description of the post's operating context, identification of resources including opportunities for partnerships in public diplomacy projects, the post's key objectives, means to secure these objectives, major platforms available for activity and performance indicators'. Dr Strahan used the European posts as an example of the steps taken to ensure that posts are in touch with one another and aware of the broader public diplomacy objectives:

What we first do is set an overarching PD strategy which covers, in this case, the entire European region where we clearly have a number of core objectives. Under that umbrella, each post has to transform that general PD strategy into a country-specific strategy. Sometimes particular parts of the overall strategy might be more relevant to one country or another. They then have to have very tight, good and concrete objectives which are strategic in nature, which they then have to report against.²³

Locally engaged staff

11.23 Dr Strahan also noted that locally engaged staff employed at overseas posts have a significant role in Australia's public diplomacy programs. Mr Coningham, however, questioned their capacity to perform public diplomacy on behalf of Australia. Aside from professional qualifications, discussed later in this chapter, Mr Kirk Coningham raised another concern about the heavy reliance placed on locally engaged staff to prosecute a post's public diplomacy activities. He would effectively discount locally engaged staff as a vital component of public diplomacy conducted by overseas posts because:

...they cannot read the cables and they are not at the policy-making table. In fact, it would be unkind to them as foreign nationals to allow them to see

21 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 4.

22 *Public Diplomacy Handbook*, Images of Australia Branch, June 2005, p. vi.

23 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 47.

the skeletons that Australia may have or the negative issues with which we are trying to deal in that country. We are basically stripped of a professional capacity to do that in all but our top three posts.²⁴

11.24 He emphasised that, in his view, 'If you are not at the policy table—if you are not reading the cables—you really do not know what is going on'.²⁵ The International Public Affairs Network also commented on, what it regarded as, restrictions that limit the ability of locally engaged staff to contribute significantly to public diplomacy:

Non-nationals have little firsthand knowledge or experience of the country they are promoting, and little capacity to turn the Australian Government's objectives into effective public diplomacy strategies. Few locally engaged Australian expatriate staff, if any, can be expected to have the levels of security clearance needed to function effectively as members of a diplomatic mission's senior management team.²⁶

11.25 In response to these observations about locally engaged staff, Dr Strahan informed the committee that the locally engaged staff are not isolated or treated as separate from embassy staff: that they are 'very much part of an integrated team'.²⁷ He pointed out that locally engaged staff cannot attend some meetings because they do not have the appropriate security clearance. He underlined his previous point, however, about the department's endeavours to achieve 'the right balance and integration' between specialists and locally engaged staff'. He then noted that there is always an A-based officer responsible for public diplomacy who would lead the public diplomacy team. He explained that it would be incumbent upon such an officer to be a conduit between the locally engaged staff and those attending restricted meetings. He stated further that the 'vast majority of public diplomacy' work is unclassified.²⁸

11.26 Dr Strahan then commented on the training of locally engaged staff. He advised that, they attend DFAT's regional public diplomacy workshops on the same footing as A-based officers. He also mentioned that DFAT has an LES leadership program which is open to LES in general. Under this program, groups of LES visit Australia at regular intervals and that frequently public diplomacy staff attend. He referred again to their career status but also noted the advantage of having local knowledge:

There will be media officers, cultural officers or public relations officers. Some posts at various points have had events managers. It is a good way of building together good local knowledge, because the local staff should also understand the country that we are working in. They have the relevant

24 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, pp. 44–45

25 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 45.

26 *Submission 27*, p. 7.

27 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 43.

28 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, pp. 43–44.

qualifications and then they work with A-based officers who come armed with a firm understanding of what we do.²⁹

Committee view

11.27 The committee notes the concerns that locally engaged staff, who have a significant role in a post's public diplomacy, may not be privy to communications or discussions relevant to their area of responsibility and whose knowledge of Australia may limit their ability to carry out their duties effectively. The committee understands that DFAT has in place training programs designed to mitigate some of these problems. Even so, the committee believes that if public diplomacy is to be accepted as a mainstream activity, the department should review the staffing arrangements of their posts to ensure that public diplomacy is not relegated to junior officers or locally engaged staff but is a high priority for all staff who should have the appropriate training.

11.28 In turning to the role and functions of the IAB, the committee welcomes DFAT's endeavours to make public diplomacy a mainstream activity in the department. It notes the work that IAB undertakes to ensure that public diplomacy is integrated into the work of other sections in the department; that the rest of the department is aware of the importance of public diplomacy; that their activities are consistent with Australia's public diplomacy goals and where possible are complementary.

11.29 On a number of occasions in this report, the committee has highlighted the importance of public diplomacy especially as an exercise of soft power. An effective public diplomacy strategy is critical to the overall endeavours of the department to tackle effectively some of Australia's greatest foreign policy challenges, such as the threat of terrorism and developments in the South West Pacific. The committee believes that, if the IAB is to perform its important role in the formulation, coordination and implementation of Australia's public diplomacy, it must assume a prominent position in the department and be well supported with resources.

11.30 To ensure that the department is able to meet the growing challenges of conducting an effective public diplomacy policy, the committee believes it would be timely for DFAT to conduct or commission an independent survey of its overseas posts to ascertain their needs when it comes to public diplomacy. The survey would cover issues such as training and resources available for public diplomacy, access to specialists in public relations and the media and the effectiveness of IAB in meeting the needs of posts in carrying out their public diplomacy activities. As an example, the United States General Accounting Office administered a survey to the heads of public affairs sections at US embassies worldwide in 2003. It identified a number of

29 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 8.

problems including insufficient resources and time to conduct public diplomacy effectively as well as inadequate training in public diplomacy skills.³⁰

Recommendation 15

11.31 The committee recommends that DFAT conduct an independent survey of its overseas posts to assess their capacity to conduct effective public diplomacy programs. The survey would seek views on the effectiveness of the post's efforts in promoting Australia's interests, and how they could be improved, the adequacy of resources available to conduct public diplomacy activities, the training and skills of staff with public diplomacy responsibilities, the coordination between agencies in public diplomacy activities; and the level of support provided by IAB and how it could be improved.

11.32 The survey would also seek a response from the overseas posts on observations made by the educational and cultural organisations, noted by the committee in this report, levelled at the delivery of Australia's public diplomacy programs. Such matters would include suggestions made to the committee that public diplomacy opportunities are being lost in the absence of effective mechanism for the coordination of activities. See paragraphs 7.24–7.34 (alumni associations); 9.22–9.30 (cultural organisations); 9.41–9.44 (educational institutions); 10.23–10.39 (Australia's diaspora).

Practitioners of public diplomacy—skills and training

11.33 There were a number of witnesses who argued that public diplomacy requires practitioners who are specially trained for this work. Mr Geoff Miller identified the 'need for specialised staff able to understand, manage and add value to the expanding international agenda and to deal with the increased number of actors, despite resource constraints'.³¹ The International Public Affairs Network also argued that there was the need for specialists in public diplomacy:

Australia's voice is merely one among many clamouring for attention in an increasingly noisy international public communication environment. Only specialists in the category of public relations and organisational communication known as public diplomacy can best achieve Australia's objectives in this highly competitive field.³²

11.34 It contended that 'the highest rates of success in public diplomacy are achieved by people with the necessary specialist skills and experience from the realm

30 GAO, *U.S. Public Diplomacy, State Department Expands Efforts but Faces Significant Challenges*, September 2003, pp. 1–2.

31 *Submission 16*, 'Current and emerging challenges to the practice of Australian diplomacy', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol 5, no. 2, 2002, p. 200.

32 *Submission 27*, p. 14.

of the mass media and public relations, as well as specialist team structures and resources managed by specialists with whole-of-government guidance'.³³ It stated:

In practice it requires the skills of communication analysis, planning, management, procurement, writing, design, multimedia production, marketing and dissemination. These skills do not belong to the profession of diplomacy, but to the profession of public relations and communication. Therefore, 'public diplomacy' in its full sense is public relations—or more precisely, a category under public relations, government international public affairs.³⁴

11.35 Developing this argument, Media Gurus also focused on the need for specialists in public diplomacy within the government:

...it needs to be recognised that while bureaucrats have many and varied skills in the Australian Public Service, the particular skills of public diplomacy do not automatically come with promotion to higher office.

Strategic thought related specifically to strategic communication can only come by way of intense training, in an environment where that training yields specific outcomes in partnership between organisation and officer: i.e. training needs to be looked at as a process with clearly negotiated outcomes: 'if I train in this and do well and meet milestones, I can [expect] to benefit in the following specific ways'. It should be viewed by the same criteria as performance related pay.

Additionally, serious consideration needs to be given to having more specialist communicators and PD practitioners attached to departments and agencies that have international promotional responsibilities.³⁵

11.36 Mr Kirk Coningham stated that the 'traditional diplomacy' exercised by DFAT officers 'does not include public diplomacy'.³⁶ He maintained that 'expertise encompassed in training, education and experience is an absolute prerequisite for doing public diplomacy correctly, and fulsomely'.³⁷

11.37 Mr Chris Freeman, a public affairs practitioner with extensive experience in Australia's public diplomacy policy programs, was of the view that DFAT no longer has the capacity to undertake 'sustained long-term multimedia communication strategies'. He noted further that at a time when the importance of public diplomacy is recognised, Australia no longer has 'the kinds of resources' it used to have.³⁸ He stated:

33 *Submission 27*, p. 15.

34 *Submission 27*, p. 15.

35 *Submission 2*, p. 6.

36 *Submission 1*, p. 1.

37 *Submission 1*, p. 1.

38 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 3.

I do believe that we need to boost the number of specialist communications staff dedicated to PD work. I do not think we can make a lot more progress without that. You need to use these specialists to develop and implement strategic, sustained, multimedia advocacy and information campaigns. You need then to integrate them into the policy-making elements of government as well and not let them languish in isolation.³⁹

11.38 Dr Strahan acknowledged that there has been a continuing debate about 'generalist' versus 'specialist'. He stated that DFAT monitors its mix of skills and 'regularly refreshes its skills base' to ensure that it has the mixture of skills necessary to deliver the required results. Indeed, he referred to the recruitment of 11 media specialists over the previous year.⁴⁰ He told the committee:

...we now have journalists working through the organisation who will be doing different kinds of jobs. They came to the organisation with that journalistic background. They might end up doing one of our jobs which is a more mainstream exact media position, but a lot of them end up doing other things. That is what we want. We want that two-way interchange between people who have more specialist skills and people like me who joined the department with a PhD in history—a very different kind of background—who can work together.⁴¹

11.39 Dr Strahan also explained that LES are appointed specifically for public diplomacy functions and that at least half of their duties involve public diplomacy activities.⁴² According to Dr Strahan, the preliminary findings of a recent stocktake involving 56 of Australia's 86 posts provided 'a fairly good snapshot of the staff' that DFAT have recruited as locally engaged public diplomacy people. It found a significant number of staff with journalism, communications, public relations, media studies or cultural studies qualifications; others held humanities degrees, while some had languages and linguistics qualifications or other qualifications which were relevant, such as marketing or commerce. He stated:

When we looked at where these people had previously worked, we found that 22 of them had previously worked in public relations, communications or event management; 20 had worked in the media; 13 had worked in marketing; and so forth.⁴³

11.40 In his view, the results of the survey were reassuring because it demonstrated that DFAT had recruited the 'right kind of people'. He noted that 'Sometimes they might be Australian citizens who live abroad, but they have the right qualifications, they have the right experience and then they work in tandem with the A-based officers

39 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, pp. 37–38.

40 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 39.

41 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 8.

42 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 12.

43 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 7.

at the post'.⁴⁴ In May 2007, he informed the committee that the survey of posts was almost complete and confirmed initial findings cited above. Of the 127 locally engaged staff currently working on some aspect of public diplomacy, '50 have qualifications in journalism, communications, public relations, marketing or other media qualifications; 26 have humanities degrees; 20 have degrees in law, politics and international relations; and 13 have degrees in commerce'.⁴⁵

Committee view

11.41 The committee recognises that DFAT faces a major challenge ensuring that it has the skills set necessary to deliver effective public diplomacy, including highly developed communication and public relations skills. Although all DFAT officers should be skilled in the art of public diplomacy, the committee accepts that not all can be trained specialists in the area of communications and public relations.

Call for a specialist public diplomacy unit

11.42 A number of witnesses not only highlighted the need to have skilled public diplomacy practitioners but supported proposals for the establishment of a public diplomacy unit staffed by specialists. They drew particular attention to the loss of expertise and specialists in public diplomacy when the International Public Affairs Branch within DFAT was abolished in 1996. The International Public Affairs Network argued that this organisation, which had responsibility for Australia's public affairs and information activities, had given Australia an edge in public diplomacy for 57 years.⁴⁶ It stated that Australia 'must rebuild and relaunch its international public affairs capacity within a specialist organisation focused on whole-of-government public diplomacy'.⁴⁷

11.43 Mr Kirk Coningham referred to the loss of the entire international public diplomacy specialists in 1996 which, in his words, 'stripped' DFAT of public diplomacy expertise and Australia of public diplomacy ideas.⁴⁸ He stated:

By removing the expertise from the Department of Foreign Affairs, we removed the font of ideas around public diplomacy and what it can really achieve. I think that was the terrible tragedy of the time. Where it has left us now is in a situation where we have a press release or a travelling exhibit or an Australia Day party—and, in great stock, that is our public diplomacy.⁴⁹

44 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 7.

45 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 40.

46 *Submission 27*, p. 42

47 *Submission 27*, covering letter.

48 *Submission 1*, p. 1.

49 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 39.

11.44 Mr Trevor Wilson also referred to the 'old days' when, in his view, DFAT had a number of specialist journalists and the Australian government had that 'institutional capacity'. He too suggested having an institutional unit of specialised people who could provide the specialist knowledge, particularly to overseas posts. He noted:

The corporate support that they [overseas posts] get is not necessarily going to be all that helpful unless there is some kind of...store of knowledge and expertise and information back in the department that can give you this...It seems to me that we are now in a situation where we have to respond much more on a short-term basis because some of the longer term messages do not seem to be getting out there. I agree that an institutional unit would be some kind of answer to that.⁵⁰

11.45 In responding to the proposal for a specialised coordinating unit, Mr Freeman noted that this organisational structure should be 'plugged in very closely with the major policy-making areas of government as well'.⁵¹

Committee view

11.46 The committee notes the benefits for public diplomacy in having specialist staff skilled in communications and public relations that are available to offer advice, guidance, to train and educate other staff in public diplomacy matters, or in some cases, to devise, manage or even deliver a public diplomacy program. The committee, however, does not believe that a specialist unit is required.

11.47 Although, the committee does not support the creation of a unit of specialists in public diplomacy, communications and public relations, it does see a very clear need for the department to ensure that it has the correct balance of specialists and generalists engaged in Australia's public diplomacy. It is important for public diplomacy to be seen as a mainstream activity and not the reserve of specialists located in a separate unit.

11.48 Developments in technology also have implications for staffing and the training requirements of DFAT officers with regard to public diplomacy. The following chapter considers the challenges that modern technology presents for Australia's public diplomacy.

50 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 20.

51 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 20.

Chapter 12

Technology and communications

12.1 International literature on public diplomacy highlights developments in communication systems as a major consideration for today's foreign ministries. Commentators refer to the vast array of communication channels now widely available including a host of new information technologies such as mobile phones, especially text messaging, video games, and the internet.¹ They recognise that over the past decade communications technology has evolved dramatically—some describe the rapid rate of advancement as 'a communication revolution'.² According to Joshua S. Fouts, Center on Public Diplomacy, University of Southern California:

This transformation of the global information culture has deep and fundamental implications for politics and public diplomacy—dampening (or reversing) the effectiveness of traditional public diplomacy campaigns while opening up new opportunities that are not on the radar of public affairs people doing 'business as usual'.³

12.2 To be effective, public diplomacy must keep pace with these changes. The U.S. Public Diplomacy Council stated:

Public diplomacy professionals must develop new programs to take advantage of new technologies. Broadcasting should be made more interactive, engaging audiences rather than simply talking at them. The ubiquity of cell phones and wireless technology in much of the world suggests that programs should increase use of that technology to provide information. The Internet is still largely an untapped resource for innovative public diplomacy.⁴

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- 1 Jay Wang, 'Public diplomacy and global business', *The Journal of Business Strategy*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2006. and Philip Fiske de Gouveia, Foreign Policy Centre, The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 4 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007); Jan Petersen, 'Norwegian public diplomacy, Speech, Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle, 2004.
 - 2 See for example, Joshua S. Fouts, Director, Center on Public Diplomacy, University of Southern California, 'Rethinking Public Diplomacy for the 21st Century: A Toolbox for Engaging the Hearts and Minds of the Open Source Generation', Prepared for presentation at the APSA Political Communication Conference on International Communication and Conflict, 31 August 2005, p. 3.
 - 3 Joshua S. Fouts, Director, Center on Public Diplomacy, University of Southern California, 'Rethinking Public Diplomacy for the 21st Century: A Toolbox for Engaging the Hearts and Minds of the Open Source Generation', Prepared for presentation at the APSA Political Communication Conference on International Communication and Conflict, 31 August 2005, p. 3.
 - 4 Public Diplomacy Council, *A Report of the Public Diplomacy Council: A Call for Action on Public Diplomacy*, January 2005, p. 7.

12.3 Philip Fiske de Gouveia noted the dramatic shift in the use of technology which presents the western world, in particular, with both enormous challenges and opportunities:

The fact is that al-Jazeera is emblematic of a hugely important phenomenon: the rise of developing world media. Communications and media are no longer dominated by the West in the way they were 10 or 15 years ago—and that is not just the case in the Arab world...In the late 1970s and early 1980s sociologists talked about the coming of a New World Information Order in which the Rich North would no longer dominate the poor South in media and communications terms: the end of so-called Cultural and Media Imperialism. It is happening today. We are seeing, for example, entrepreneurs all round the world launching functioning, good-quality, local television channels on shoestring budgets. Cities in the developing world can afford to have their own dedicated TV news channel. This trend is going to continue to influence and reshape the landscape in which Public Diplomacy is conducted.⁵

12.4 This chapter looks at the recent advances in information technology and the implications for Australia's public diplomacy.

Public diplomacy in Australia and new technologies

12.5 In 2005, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Alexander Downer MP, cited the spread of powerful and affordable communications technology as a major great force in world affairs. He noted how it has accelerated and broadened the dissemination of all kinds of information.

For countless millions around the world, it has been a liberating and hugely empowering development.

For all but the most autarchic and isolationist of governments, it is no longer possible to deny populations direct and instant access to knowledge of global developments.

The internet, in particular, has enabled broader and deeper links between people irrespective of distance and sovereignty.

It has opened up new and expanding avenues of non-governmental associations.

...new technologies have facilitated ways for groups of people to make their views heard nationally and globally, and to shape policy directly and quickly.⁶

5 Philip Fiske de Gouveia, Foreign Policy Centre, The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 6 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

6 The Hon Alexander Downer MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Speech, 'Biennial Sir Arthur Tange Lecture in Australian Diplomacy', 8 August 2005.

12.6 Although recognised as an important element of effective diplomacy, the use of modern telecommunications was not covered in depth during the inquiry. Some witnesses did mention the need 'to explore ways of using more effectively electronic web based media—blogs, satellite hook-ups, teleconferencing'. According to Mr Freeman, DFAT has not had the capacity to use such advances in technology for the last 10 years or so—'not very effectively, anyway'.⁷ Asialink also noted changing technology which in its view is 'revolutionising global connectivity and engagement, particularly between young generations'.⁸ It recognised the potential that advances in technology offer Australia's public diplomacy, especially how modern technology enables 'communities and colleagues to communicate faster, reducing obstacles of distance, language and time-zones, and engaging sections of the community more vigorously than mediums past'. Asialink stated:

Given Australia's geographic isolation, new technologies could provide an innovative way to leverage our public diplomacy efforts through new media and delivery systems such as blogs, interactive digital channels, wireless technologies which enable users to access web content via their mobile phones, podcasting etc.

For example, communication technology is now integrated into teaching and learning in all Australian schools and in many schools across Asia. This provides multiple opportunities to connect school students and their teachers in Australia and Asia using new technologies. Mutual knowledge and understanding can be substantially enhanced through Australian government investment in international electronic curriculum projects focused on shared interests including climate, identity, migration, youth culture, family etc. Priority countries could be identified—eg trade priorities including China, India and Japan and Islamic countries including Indonesia and Pakistan.⁹

12.7 The International Public Affairs Network also drew attention to new technology and the opportunities it presents for Australia's public diplomacy:

The advent of the Internet has been one of the most powerful changes in mass communication technology since the invention of movable type. It is an ongoing communication revolution arguably more significant than the introduction of radio or television. It has unprecedented low-cost global audience reach, capacity for two-way communication and enormous constantly growing traffic in virtually instantaneous information exchange.

The Internet is highly significant for the practice of public relations and therefore for public diplomacy. It has broken what used to be the mass media monopoly on cost-effective mass audience reach.¹⁰

7 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 38.

8 *Submission 8*, p. 2. See also *Submission 15*, p. 7.

9 *Submission 8*, p. 7.

10 *Submission 27*, p. 18.

12.8 It linked the importance of embracing these new technologies and incorporating them into the work of public diplomacy with the need for DFAT to have communications experts:

New media and communication technology are among the factors non-specialists are least capable of understanding and exploiting. The general public took years to understand computers were more than electric typewriters or heavy duty calculators. It took even longer to achieve wide understanding that amateurs never would use new tools, like computerised desktop publishing, presentations and digital photography and video, as well as professionals.¹¹

12.9 In response to a question about Australia's public diplomacy and the use of modern technology, Dr Strahan informed the committee that DFAT had implemented a lot of new technology features in its work. He advised the committee that:

Our website uses advanced technology for the delivery and presentation of a wide range of devices and browsers. We now use streamed audio and video. We have some web content which is selectively available as audio. We use RSS feeds for key material, which allows subscribers to get very quickly updated information such as our travel advisories. We use XML, which is a file format which allows the sharing of information across a lot of different formats. Of course, we now use videoconferencing. For the Shanghai Expo project I recently did a briefing for the Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai with a video link, which is of course a very good and effective way of reaching out to some stakeholders on the other side of the world. We also have an internet review, which we will carry out in coming months, whereby we will take another good look at how our internet site works and what sorts of tools we can use.¹²

12.10 The committee notes the views expressed by overseas commentators on public diplomacy and of witnesses to this inquiry that highlight the critical importance of keeping in touch with developments in technology and applying the latest advances to the work of public diplomacy.

Radio Australia and Australia Network

12.11 If Radio Australia and Australia Network are to continue to make a valuable contribution to Australia's public diplomacy, they must meet the challenges presented by rapidly changing technology. Radio Australia is developing interactive websites with new language series to attract new audiences in countries such as Vietnam 'where shortwave broadcasting has declined but 'access to the RA website has grown ten-fold in recent months'¹³ Mr Jean-Gabriel Manguy, Head, Radio Australia, informed the committee that 'online offers a distribution capacity that was not there 10 years ago'.

11 *Submission 27*, p. 18.

12 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 53.

13 *Submission 22*, p. 6 of 23.

He indicated that the total number of 'accesses' to Radio Australia's website in 2006 totalled 18 million and that half of these were from China.

12.12 The committee recognises the work being done by Radio Australia and Australia Network to present Australia to the rest of the world particularly in the Asia Pacific region. The ABC's submission did note, however, that 'unlike its competitors, Radio Australia does not have the resources to respond to a range of needs and expectations from its Asia partners'.¹⁴

12.13 The committee urges the government to continue to support Radio Australia and Australia Network especially in light of the increasing competition in the region and to ensure that Radio Australia remains well funded.

Conclusion

12.14 In the highly competitive field of public diplomacy, Australia needs to make sure that those responsible for managing and delivering public diplomacy programs are taking full advantage of advances in technology to reach the global audience. It is an area of rapid transformation. If Australia is to hold its own in competition with other countries, it must be at the forefront of developments in technology and have the experts able to exploit them. Australia's public diplomacy practitioners need to be constantly alert to developments in technology and to know how to use them to best effect in their work. This need emphasises the importance of having highly skilled and qualified communicators who monitor the latest advances in technology, are able to think creatively in how to apply them to public diplomacy and to educate others in their use.

Recommendation 16

12.15 The committee recommends that DFAT explore the application of innovative technologies to enhance the delivery of its public diplomacy programs.

12.16 The committee has considered a number of aspects of Australia's public diplomacy and looked at particular public diplomacy programs. The committee in the following chapter examines the mechanisms DFAT uses to measure the success or otherwise of its public diplomacy programs.

14 *Submission 22*, p. 6 of 23.

Chapter 13

The evaluation of Australia's public diplomacy programs

13.1 DFAT's submission states that it 'delivers quality PD programs which provide Australian taxpayers with value-for-money and compare well with the activities of countries with much larger PD budgets'.¹ The committee in this chapter examines the mechanisms DFAT uses to gauge the success or otherwise of its public diplomacy programs.

The department's public diplomacy objectives

13.2 The department's public diplomacy programs are intended to promote 'an accurate and contemporary view of Australia', manage or rebut negative or inaccurate perceptions and build goodwill'.² It is against these objectives that DFAT measures the effectiveness of its public diplomacy.

Tools for evaluating public diplomacy programs

13.3 DFAT's submission identified the various tools it uses to monitor its public diplomacy programs. They include:

- annual reporting of departmental public diplomacy programs (Senior Executive Service reviewed);
- exit interviews with participants in the International Media Visits and International Cultural Visits programs;
- monthly summaries of local press reportage, compiled by IAB; and
- 'modest' opinion surveys to judge the wider impact of public diplomacy activities.³

The Annual report

13.4 DFAT regards its annual report as a key accountability instrument that provides the information necessary to assess its performance in areas such as public diplomacy. Dr Strahan said:

I know you have said it is not going to be a best seller and that people will not read these documents closely, but it is a very important way that we

1 *Submission 18*, p. 5.

2 Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2005–2006*, p. 191.

3 *Submission 18*, p. 10.

communicate in a formal way with the parliament and the Australian people to set out what we are doing.⁴

13.5 The committee uses a few examples from the 2005–2006 Annual Report to illustrate the type of information it provides and how this assists in assessing DFAT's success in delivering its public diplomacy programs.

Bilateral Councils

13.6 The committee looks first at the section on the foundations, councils and institutes (FCIs) using the Council for Australian–Arab Relations as an example. In its Annual Report, DFAT recorded that the Council:

...continued its work to broaden awareness and understanding between Australia and the Arab world, to promote a greater understanding of mutual foreign policy interests, and to encourage activities that lead to mutual economic benefit and promote Australia's image in the Arab world.⁵

13.7 It then listed activities including the launch of a teachers' resource kit for use in schools in the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Kuwait; support provided to a visit to Australia by two Saudi Arabian health officials through the Young Professionals Exchange Program, and the provision of seed funding to assist in the development of Deakin University's *Arabic Online Learning* program.⁶

13.8 This style of reporting on the activities of the Council is a template used for the nine FCIs—there is a general mission statement about broadening and deepening people-to-people links followed by a list of activities which includes conferences, exhibitions, visits, exchange programs and scholarships designed to meet these objectives.⁷

Overseas posts

13.9 The annual reporting on public diplomacy activities by the overseas posts also relied heavily on listing public diplomacy activities such as briefings, the placement of articles in 'influential newspapers', seminars and conferences without providing an indication of the extent to which they achieved their objectives.⁸ For example, the report contained information on the joint Indonesia-Australia public information

4 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 6.

5 Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2005–2006*, p. 205.

6 Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2005–2006*, p. 205.

7 Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2005–2006*, pp. 202–206.

8 Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2005–2006*, p. 192.

campaign on illegal fishing. The report stated clearly that the exercise was designed to 'ensure wide understanding of the issues involved, as well as an outreach campaign to fishing villages explaining the risks associated with illegal fishing in Australian waters'.⁹ Although the intention of the project was clear, there was no information on the effectiveness of the campaign—did it reach members of the target audience, did they listen to and learn from the message and did it change their views or actions?

Special visits programs

13.10 The same tendency merely to describe and list activities is also evident in the section reporting on the visitors' programs. The annual report stated that the Special Visits Program is the department's 'premier visits program'. It maintains that the program is carefully targeted and brings to Australia influential or potentially influential people for meetings and engagements with Australian government, business and community interests. It lists some of the 26 visits. There is an assumption, but no indication, that these visits were effective in promoting an accurate and positive perception of Australia.¹⁰

13.11 It should be noted that there are a few exceptions in the annual report where the information goes beyond listing or describing an activity to demonstrating how the activity contributed to the department's public diplomacy objectives. For example, among the many visits held under the International Visits Program, DFAT's annual report notes that four senior defence journalists from Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia observed the 'Pacific Protector 06' counter-proliferation exercise managed by the Department of Defence. It records that subsequent reporting by these journalists provided 'informed coverage of Australia's contribution to regional security'.¹¹

13.12 On its reading of the annual report, the committee found that generally it provided a comprehensive overview of DFAT's public diplomacy activities. It did not, however, provide the type of information that would allow the committee to obtain an insight into the effectiveness of DFAT's public diplomacy programs.

Observations on the annual report

13.13 Witnesses to the inquiry expressed the same difficulties in trying to gain an understanding of the success or otherwise of DFAT's public diplomacy programs from the annual report. The International Public Affairs Network was of the view that

9 Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2005–2006*, p. 192.

10 Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2005–2006*, pp. 195–196.

11 Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2005–2006*, p. 197. Also see p. 197 which states that IMV-generated reporting in India in advance of the Australian Prime Minister's visit highlighted the expanding trade relationship and growth in education and investment ties.

neither DFAT's submission to the inquiry nor its annual reports 'contain data to validate the department's claims or fully analyse its performance under this reference'.¹² It stated:

DFAT reporting on its public diplomacy is dominated by lists of activities rather than outcomes. The emphasis is on activity with no evidence of evaluation or validation of the impact on target audiences. Many activities listed are merely attempts to project traditional diplomacy in public. For example, the DFAT Annual Report 2005-2006 highlights in its overview of public diplomacy 'the launch of the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate in Sydney in January 2006, the inaugural ministerial meeting of the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue in Sydney in March 2006, the launch of a Government paper on weapons of mass destruction counter-proliferation in October 2005 and ongoing negotiations for bilateral free trade agreements'.¹³

13.14 Mr Trevor Wilson stated that he had 'pored over all the DFAT annual reports that you can access on the website' and found 'very little, almost no, attempt to measure outcomes in public diplomacy, rather than outputs'.¹⁴ Jacob Townsend also referred to DFAT's method of reporting with its tendency to 'focus on outputs rather than outcomes in measuring the effectiveness of public diplomacy activities'.¹⁵ He used the number of visits to an Australian cultural exhibition overseas as an example:

...the real aim or objective of public diplomacy activities is to shift those visitors' opinions. The output of a visitor attending might actually be in direct opposition to the outcome of counter-terrorism. For example, that visitor could take a dislike to Australia on the basis of what is in the program...The point is that you need to measure the outcomes, not the outputs. As far as I have seen, for example, DFAT measurements of public diplomacy activities are very much on outputs and not outcomes, and that is something to definitely consider.¹⁶

13.15 Mr Prakash Mirchandani agreed that the main confusion arises from mixing up outputs and outcomes. He suggested:

There may be the most frenzied activity involved on Australia's behalf, with an impressive amount of funding attached to it...yet if all this does not lead to defined outcomes, it results in really just a 'feel good' relationship alone, which is not what we believe public diplomacy is all about.¹⁷

12 *Submission 27*, p. 14.

13 *Submission 27*, pp. 15-16.

14 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 16.

15 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 15.

16 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, pp. 15-16.

17 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 40.

13.16 Mr Peter White, Executive Director, ANAO, noted that portfolio budget statements and the annual report make assertions that DFAT has an effective public diplomacy program. He explained that ANAO's first question to them would be to 'demonstrate to us how you do that'.¹⁸

13.17 RMIT expressed similar concerns about the tendency of DFAT's Annual Report to describe activities which provide a 'snapshot with little discussion of overarching objectives, no review of progress over time'. It also drew attention to the limited scope of reporting on public diplomacy.¹⁹ RMIT stated:

DFAT's report on public diplomacy activity in 2005-2006 notes a number of successful initiatives, but confines itself almost entirely to the activities undertaken by DFAT and through Australian government posts abroad. This suggests a relatively narrow approach to public diplomacy, with little inter-agency activity or partnership. There is little discussion of what the goals of public diplomacy might be, outside reference to supporting the specific policy goals of government; thereby reducing it to a relatively minor subset of official diplomacy.²⁰

Committee view

13.18 Based on the committee's reading of DFAT's Annual Report and the comments by a number of witnesses, the committee finds that DFAT's Annual Report does not provide the information required to actually measure the effectiveness of its public diplomacy programs. In most cases, the report lists and describes activities without providing any indication of the direct outcomes from these activities. There appears to be an untested assumption that these activities produce positive outcomes. There is no indication in the Annual Report that DFAT measures the immediate effect of its public diplomacy programs or the long-term contribution they make to the department's foreign policy objectives.

13.19 The committee noted previously in chapter 8, that there are many government departments and agencies involved in public diplomacy activities, often in partnership with DFAT. DFAT's Annual Report, as observed by RMIT, does not encompass the broad range of Australia's public diplomacy activities. There appears to be no reporting or coordinating mechanism that captures all of these activities and definitely no overall monitoring of Australia's public diplomacy as a whole.

13.20 DFAT also informed the committee that it uses a range of other methods, including internal reviews of public diplomacy activities and surveys, to evaluate the effectiveness of its public diplomacy programs.

18 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 5.

19 *Submission 9*, p. 2.

20 *Submission 9*.

Continuing dialogue and self assessment on performance

13.21 In response to a direct question about how the department evaluates the effectiveness of its public diplomacy programs, Dr Strahan said that a lot of DFAT's evaluation takes place internally. In his view, it was important for an organisation to be self-critical. He placed great emphasis on the frequent exchanges between people engaged in public diplomacy activities within DFAT and across departments and agencies as a means of monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of programs. According to Dr Strahan, their external evaluation is 'integrated with the very nature of the work itself and it is incumbent upon us to always have that dynamic conversation with our partners'. Conversations take place with the posts and within the department in Canberra.²¹ He explained:

... the very nature of our work means that we are in constant dialogue with a whole range of other organisations. We run an IDC with other federal agencies twice per year. That is one communication channel. We are constantly talking to all of these people. We sit around an enormous table with 30 or so organisations talking to us about what we are doing and how we can connect with them. The councils and foundations are a very good example of how we reach out to external entities, because the boards of all of the foundations, councils and institutes involve people from outside the department. They are usually eminent people from a variety of business, academic and cultural fields, so there we are building in outside opinion, outside ideas and outside evaluation.²²

13.22 Dr Strahan gave the example of a brainstorming session in 2006 where 'we all stopped and tried again to get a handle on public diplomacy from a holistic point of view'. Another session is anticipated in 2007. According to Dr Strahan, the discussion at these sessions 'feeds directly into our senior executive and will come back into how we run our work when the senior executive communicates back with us'. He noted how this process ensures that there is a continuing conversation about public diplomacy and how resources should be allocated to it.²³ He then turned to overseas posts and the measures in place to evaluate their activities:

Our posts are required every year to comment on and report on the effectiveness of their programs. They have to give us quite concrete material about what kinds of public diplomacy activities they have implemented, why and what the results were. We use a variety of measures to try to judge the effectiveness of those programs, from monitoring local press coverage through to the direct responses of particular participants in our visit programs and other activities. One of the functions of my branch is to provide our senior executive with quarterly assessments of the effectiveness of our programs. We have an inbuilt cycle of doing this as a matter of our daily work.

21 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 9.

22 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 9.

23 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 8.

...each post has a public diplomacy plan and it has a post plan for the activities of the embassy in general that will contain a series of benchmarks and outcomes which should be achieved. Then at the end of each year there is reporting against those benchmarks and outcomes. Then there is critical assessment back here in Canberra of the extent to which embassies are meeting those outcomes. That is then also done at the divisional level here in Canberra. My area has a series of outcomes which we should be striving to meet and we have to report against those. And we have just gone through a mid-term phase of that general reporting process where we will inform the senior executive of the major issues on our agenda and the major achievements and identify the challenges which lie ahead.²⁴

13.23 It is clear that DFAT has a strong communication network which facilitates discussion on public diplomacy programs and allows close monitoring of these activities. However, it is not clear whether the reporting regime and subsequent discussions within the department also constitute 'critical assessment' as claimed by Dr Strahan.

Self assessment as an appropriate way to evaluate public diplomacy programs

13.24 Mr Kirk Coningham was of the view that 'a self-assessment is never a quality assessment'.²⁵ He asked:

Every post has a public diplomacy plan, so who critically evaluates them? Are they efficient? What do they achieve? Who establishes what the objectives are? What are the broad international objectives that we want to achieve?²⁶

13.25 Mr John Meert, Group Executive Director, ANAO, believed that DFAT has a responsibility to assess its public diplomacy programs and that it is appropriate for DFAT to conduct internal evaluations. He stated plainly that the normal accountability rests with the agency, adding that it is very important that it does so because 'that is how you are going to drive improvements'.²⁷ In his view, if an agency is asserting that their program is effective, there is an expectation that it has 'mechanisms in place to measure that effectiveness'.²⁸ Applying this approach to DFAT, Mr Peter White, ANAO, said that ANAO would expect DFAT to measure 'the immediate impact of somewhat specific programs'. ANAO would also want to be satisfied that DFAT:

...have a program in place that measures the long-term changes in attitude in particular countries; whether DFAT get independent feedback on their work; and whether they measure the attitudes of target countries. With the

24 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 25.

25 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 43.

26 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 42.

27 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 7.

28 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 7.

performance indicators we would be trying to see whether they were adequate, whether or not they set targets.²⁹

13.26 Mr Trevor Wilson also had no concerns about the appropriateness of DFAT conducting in-house evaluation of their activities. He did, however, question the usefulness of their measurements. As mentioned previously, he could find no evidence that they focus on outcomes.³⁰ Jacob Townsend also noted DFAT's self-assessment, but was concerned that it was 'monitoring mostly outputs, not necessarily matching the strategy to the outcome of an activity'.³¹

13.27 Indeed, many witnesses disagreed with DFAT's view that its public diplomacy programs are evaluated.³² RMIT was not aware of any systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of current public diplomacy programs and activities in achieving the objectives of government.³³ Media Gurus referred to an absence of quantitative and qualitative surveys.³⁴ Asialink also noted that it:

...had difficulty sourcing credible qualitative or quantitative research on the impact of public diplomacy initiatives. Whilst public opinion surveys are increasingly becoming available from Australian and international sources, there is insufficient investment in studying the effectiveness of alternative public diplomacy strategies and interventions. Such investment would assist both government and partner agencies in decision making and resource allocation.³⁵

13.28 Ms Jennifer McGregor, Asialink, informed the committee that the absence of evaluation of public diplomacy activities had 'long been a frustration' for them. In her view although public diplomacy was a soft science, hard data in this area was needed.³⁶

Difficulties evaluating public diplomacy

13.29 Most witnesses agreed with the view that there were difficulties in accurately and systematically evaluating the success or otherwise of a public diplomacy program.³⁷ Mr Greg Nance from the Sports Commission told the committee, 'it is still early days with sport for development to be able to monitor in hard numbers what it is

29 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 5.

30 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 16.

31 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 26.

32 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 16.

33 *Submission 9*, p. 2.

34 *Submission 2*, p. 2.

35 *Submission 8*, p. 6.

36 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 5.

37 See for example, Mr Trevor Wilson, *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 7.

that you are doing, because the outcomes are, by definition, longer term and a little bit different'.³⁸ Ms Sara Cowan, DEST, highlighted the same difficulty. She noted that public diplomacy is not the primary objective for the department but occurs as a consequence of their work.³⁹

13.30 Mr Freeman noted that public relations practitioners had been grappling for years with ways to measure the effectiveness of public diplomacy activities. He accepted that there were no easy formulas; that there was a lot of theory behind the evaluation of public diplomacy and there were many options. He was not aware of any one foolproof, effective accounting mechanism that could determine whether a particular result had managed to achieve value for money. He added, however:

That does not mean that there are not plenty of signposts and plenty of ways that we can make various assessments...you could certainly use size of audience, the kind of media coverage you might have been able to influence, the number of third-party influences you might have brought onboard and convinced to support your point of view in the host country, and so on. A lot of this tends to be statistical and anecdotal.

The real dilemma comes when you try to measure the extent to which you have changed behaviour or thoughts or attitudes. Frankly, even when you can demonstrate that an attitude has been changed, it is not always easy to make a direct causal link between what you have been doing and the actual change. There are often lots of factors at play.⁴⁰

13.31 Even though he believed that it was difficult and sometimes impossible to draw a causal link between a public diplomacy activity and changes in perception, he suggested that efforts to measure the effectiveness of public diplomacy were worth while and that there were some good and sensible ways to measure effects.⁴¹

13.32 Mr John Meert, ANAO, agreed that from an audit perspective, public diplomacy is a difficult subject because it deals with 'something which is not necessarily tangible'.⁴² In his view, however, there was the danger that because evaluation of public diplomacy was thought to be too difficult it would be deferred.⁴³ He argued that 'you have to try to come up with a range of measures that at least assist you'.⁴⁴ He went on to say that the ANAO would expect agencies to measure performance in this area given the amount of money spent on public diplomacy.

38 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 79.

39 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 54.

40 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 3.

41 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 13.

42 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 2.

43 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 7.

44 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 7.

13.33 Mr Trevor Wilson agreed with the view that evaluation was not easy but that it could be done.⁴⁵ Dr Yusaku Horiuchi, a political scientist and applied statistician teaching research methodology at the ANU, endorsed this view. He challenged what he termed the 'dominant view' that it is difficult if not impossible 'to measure the impact of public diplomacy'.⁴⁶ He outlined to the committee three ways to measure the effects of public diplomacy.

13.34 The first, borrowed from a method used in market research and social and political psychology, is called a 'randomised experiment'. When using this method, a large group of people randomly divided into at least two groups participate in a traditional paper-and-pencil survey or in computer-based polling. One group is exposed to information intended to influence their opinions on Australia and the other is not. According to Dr Horiuchi, after this information stimulus is given, the groups can be asked a set of questions about perceptions, attitudes and images and, if there is a significant difference between the groups, then conclusions can be drawn about the influence of the information on the recipient group.⁴⁷

13.35 The second method is called propensity score matching and is similar to the randomised experiment. The third method identified by Dr Horiuchi involved measuring the effects of high-level visits. It is based on a statistical comparison of attitudes, one with a visit and one without a visit. Any discernable difference can then be attributed to the visit.⁴⁸

Surveys and polls

13.36 Market research methods are an important tool that can be used to measure changes in behaviour or attitudes. The committee discussed surveys and opinion polls in chapter 6 as part of its consideration of how well Australia understands its target audiences. In that regard, the committee observed that surveys undertaken by DFAT over the past decade were few in number, conducted on an *ad hoc* basis and without any long-term objective. An absence of this type of research means that DFAT does not have benchmarks against which to measure shifts or changes in attitudes or behaviour toward Australia.

13.37 While overall Australia's public diplomacy programs lack independent and systematic evaluation, there were some agencies engaged in Australia's public diplomacy that do conduct tighter evaluation of their programs using methods such as surveys. It is interesting to note that the agencies that took a serious approach to evaluating their programs have a clear focus and strong economic interest.

45 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 7.

46 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 9.

47 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 10.

48 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, pp. 10–11.

Tourism Australia

13.38 Tourism Australia relies heavily on market and public relations type of evaluation to formulate its marketing strategies. Mr Cameron-Smith, Manager, International Operations, Tourism Australia, explained:

We actually run brand tracking surveys...We have an independent survey that goes to those markets and surveys a sample group of people. There is campaign recall which asks: 'What did you do? After seeing that campaign did you call a travel agent, did you get some literature or did you go online and are you intending to visit?' Those measures are then compiled into a summary to assess the effectiveness of the campaign. That then helps us to be more effective in terms of our media buy and working with our agency on adapting creative [campaigns].⁴⁹

13.39 Tourism Australia also uses technology to identify behaviour related to their internet website in order to determine 'what has been looked for and what has not been looked for, and adapt the content accordingly'.⁵⁰

Invest Australia

13.40 Invest Australia informed the committee that it has engaged public relations firms in key markets—France, Germany, the UK and the US. They are engaged 'to generate positive media coverage about Australia as an investment destination in targeted markets and to improve knowledge and awareness of its strengths and advantages in these regions'.⁵¹ It asserted that each public relations team is performing well and cited as an example 56 recorded instances of positive media coverage globally in a 7-month period. Invest Australia was able to report that 'based on previous performance evaluations, the Return on Investment of PR activity is expected to be a minimum of 150% of the contract value'.⁵²

13.41 When asked how Invest Australia measures the effectiveness of its public diplomacy expenditure of \$1.95 million last year and \$2.5 million for financial year 2006–07, the CEO of Invest Australia, Mr Barry Jones, replied it was one of the more difficult areas to measure in terms of direct impact. He explained:

Invest Australia's primary measure in terms of our impact—our outcomes—is the number of investment projects that we assist to bring to fruition every year. The ultimate aim, clearly, is to increase investment into Australia and the ultimate measure is the number of investment projects that are announced as going ahead in Australia because we contributed in some way. The public diplomacy efforts and the kinds of awareness raising contributes to investors becoming aware of Australia in the first place and

49 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, pp. 5–6.

50 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 10.

51 *Submission 24*, p. 3.

52 *Submission 24*, p. 3.

leading on through the process of bringing an investment project to fruition, but it is sometimes very difficult to measure a direct connection, if you like, between that initial awareness raising [and the eventual investments].⁵³

13.42 Invest Australia benchmarks its achievements mainly through the traditional media sense by measuring exposure in international media and looking at things such as the number of hits to their website which 'are partly as a result of people becoming aware of our website through our advertising'.⁵⁴

The Council on Australia Latin America Relations

13.43 Mr Wheelahan, the Council on Australia Latin America Relations, informed the committee that the Council has a business focus. He explained that it evaluates its performance against the strategic plan and the business plan, which are specifically designed to align with the objectives of Austrade. It sets benchmarks which, according to Mr Wheelahan are 'fairly arbitrary targets for the increase in Latin American students studying in Australia, simply as a why-not'. He explained further:

We have established a group of key performance indicators of our own, as businesses do, and certainly they have been far exceeded. The universities, TAFEs and ELICOS centres have been far more successful in selling Australia to Latin American students than we had anticipated. We set ourselves an objective when we kicked off to get six flights a week through Auckland to Santiago. We have got there. I will concede it has more to do with Geoff Dixon [CEO of Qantas] than it has to do with us, but we have kept pressure on them every inch of the way. We have set objectives of making student, tourist and business visas from all of the Latin countries much easier to obtain.⁵⁵

13.44 In short, he stated that the Council's measures are 'business measures'. The key performance indicators include matters such as the numbers of tourists, numbers of students, numbers of businesses setting up offices in Latin America and numbers of Australian exporters dealing with Latin America.⁵⁶

13.45 In commenting on the value of audits, Mr Wheelahan noted that they are expensive and time consuming and care has to be taken to ensure that the auditor does not simply give you the information you want.⁵⁷ Even so, he acknowledged that business does it 'all the time'.⁵⁸

53 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 57.

54 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 57.

55 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 41.

56 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 41.

57 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 50.

58 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 51.

Radio Australia and Australia network

13.46 Radio Australia and Australia Network also use surveys and tracking trends in behaviour to gauge their success in attracting audiences and in some cases gaining an insight into attitudes toward Australia. Mr Jean-Gabriel Manguy, Radio Australia, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, explained they use audience surveys, which they purchase from the bigger players such as the BBC and the Americans. He explained:

We buy the figures off them and that gives us a sense of how effective we are in some countries. It is not possible in all countries. In some countries like China and Vietnam, where that information is controlled, it is not easy to get figures. In such countries we have other ways of measuring whether we are successful or not. The internet is a new platform that is a very good indicator for us. Our accesses last year totalled 18 million to Radio Australia's website and half of these come from China. You can see that the Chinese may not be writing much anymore but they are accessing the website, and that is a new indicator for us.⁵⁹

13.47 He also cited measures they use in Indonesia where 30 local stations rebroadcast Radio Australia daily. He noted that there are, during such sessions, about 100 to 150 calls from listeners and SMSs from listeners to those stations. He stated:

Clearly there is an interest from the audience to get in touch and link up with us. For me, it is a new way of broadcasting and I would argue that it is a very effective way to reach broader audiences in places such as Indonesia. That is a useful indicator for us. The fact that some of the stations want to relay us indicates that for them it makes good sense to carry our content because it is good and credible with their audience.⁶⁰

13.48 As noted previously, DFAT does not appear to use these types of research tools—surveys, focus groups, questionnaires—in any systematic way that has long-term objectives. The survey conducted in the Philippines in 1998, mentioned in chapter 6, shows the potential to measure performance but the failure to follow up on this activity suggests that DFAT does not employ these evaluation tools as part of a rigorous and critical self-assessment of its performance in public diplomacy.⁶¹

Proposals to improve evaluation

13.49 A number of witnesses put forward proposals for improving the evaluation process of Australia's public diplomacy programs. Mr Meert noted that 'a lot of the agencies are stuck at the activity measure' and 'struggling with how to determine effectiveness'.⁶² He said:

59 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 92.

60 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 92.

61 Paragraph 6.23.

62 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, pp. 2 and 3.

It is easy to measure activity because you can say that X amount of money was spent on an advertising campaign. It is the next step that, it seems to me, most countries are struggling with.⁶³

13.50 He suggested that a range of indicators are needed to ascertain whether the activities being undertaken are 'having the desired effect'. He noted that there are methods available to measure changes in attitudes or perceptions. He suggested, however, that one indicator 'on its own may not give you the result but a range of indicators may give you that indication'.⁶⁴ As an example, he cited 'surveys, direct testing of consumer groups or direct questionnaires as people come through an immigration checkpoint'.⁶⁵ From his position as an auditor, he would be looking at how agencies are developing these indicators over time.⁶⁶ He also suggested that 'you learn to walk before you run' and proposed that he would 'stick to the public diplomacy programs and try to build up a capability in monitoring there before you run off into spin-off public diplomacy impacts'.⁶⁷

13.51 Mr Prakash Mirchandani was of the view that public diplomacy 'which does not result in measurable public advocacy outcomes on Australia's behalf is work only half done'. He suggested that if public diplomacy is successful, one simple and measurable yardstick of this success would be the active engagement of influential stakeholders in target countries on Australia's behalf.⁶⁸ He also proposed a mandatory 'public diplomacy outline (and outcome) attached to key activities and issues'. In his view, 'this would make subsequent evaluations much more effective, allow for better coordination of scarce resources' and 'ultimately place considerable onus on the Heads of Mission to take a personal and direct interest in PD, in addition to their focus on bilateral relationships'. He stated further:

While we understand that DFAT does have such mandated activities in place for its missions, we believe that these are of necessity constrained by resource limitations, and could well merit a second look. We suggest a qualitative evaluation of Whole of Government messages in target countries to specifically measure whether the outcomes initiated by missions, have actually changed perception about Australian policies in those countries.⁶⁹

13.52 Mr Trevor Wilson suggested that an independent outside evaluation was another means of gauging the success of a public diplomacy program.⁷⁰ Jacob

63 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 3.

64 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 2.

65 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 2.

66 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 2.

67 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 7.

68 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 40.

69 *Submission 2*, p. 4.

70 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 7.

Townsend also thought that 'some sort of not grand but insulated unit might be needed to enforce or monitor' the outcome of activities.⁷¹ Dr Alison Broinowski proposed that an international survey of comparable countries be undertaken, 'just to see which way world's best practice goes in our evaluation'.⁷² Mr Kirk Coningham believed that an arm of government—a different form of machinery—was needed to establish Australia's public diplomacy objectives and to evaluate critically the post's public diplomacy plans.⁷³ Dr Alan Hawke, Chancellor of the Australian National University, and former high commissioner in New Zealand, cited the work of ASPI and the Lowy Institute which, he suggested, do valuable work in measuring the degree of success of public diplomacy efforts to improve attitudes toward Australia.⁷⁴

Committee view

13.53 The committee acknowledges that evaluating public diplomacy is not easy. It notes the advice from a number of witnesses that, although difficult, the evaluation of Australia's public diplomacy programs can and should be done. The committee agrees with this view. The committee notes the advice from ANAO that if it were to undertake an audit of DFAT's public diplomacy programs, it would likely concentrate on the performance indicators the department uses to evaluate the effectiveness of its programs and how it sets targets.⁷⁵ ANAO would be looking to see whether DFAT has the mechanisms in place to evaluate its own programs.

Important role for ANAO

13.54 The committee can see a valuable role for the ANAO in undertaking a performance audit of DFAT's public diplomacy evaluation activities. Accordingly, the committee requests that the ANAO conduct a performance audit of DFAT's public diplomacy programs.

Need for performance indicators

13.55 As previously stated, the committee has recommended that tracking opinions in key target countries toward Australia should be an essential part of DFAT's public diplomacy. It suggests that this type of data gathering would also serve as an important performance indicator. It notes the advice, however, from the ANAO that one indicator 'on its own may not give you the result but a range of indicators may give you that indication'.⁷⁶

71 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 26.

72 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 27.

73 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 42.

74 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 13.

75 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 5.

76 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 2.

13.56 The committee is of the view that the evidence before it on the importance of measuring the effects of public diplomacy programs over time or progress toward public diplomacy objectives is compelling. As already noted, DFAT does not employ such indicators and as a matter of urgency, the committee recommends that DFAT put in place performance indicators that would allow it to monitor and assess the effectiveness of its public diplomacy programs.

Recommendation 17

13.57 The committee recommends that as a matter of priority, DFAT put in place specific performance indicators that would allow it to both monitor and assess the effectiveness of its public diplomacy programs.

An independent, comprehensive review of Australia's public diplomacy

13.58 The International Public Affairs Network suggested that 'a global review and audit of Australia's public diplomacy is required to fill information gaps, remove inconsistencies, and assess the outcomes, if any, of DFAT's activities'. It was of the view that the ANAO was the proper Commonwealth authority to lead a review and audit.⁷⁷ ANAO has suggested that it is not in fact the appropriate authority to carry out this type of broad review but that it could conduct an audit. As mentioned previously, ANAO would be concerned with how DFAT is developing its performance indicators over time.⁷⁸ Mr Meert told the committee that if he were conducting an audit he would concentrate on the public diplomacy specific programs first. Mr White added:

If you look at the Foreign Affairs submission, they talk about quality and quantity indicators, and the relevance of culture and media activities. That is the sort of measure you want to get to...That is where we are going to: how do you measure public perceptions if you have got a program which aims to change public perceptions?⁷⁹

13.59 The committee notes, however, that in recent years, the governments of the UK and Canada have commissioned comprehensive reviews of their public diplomacy programs. In 2005, Foreign Affairs Canada engaged Universalia, a consulting firm, to evaluate the group of programs that 'projects Canadian values and culture'. The review was to assess the extent to which the current set of Canadian programs contributed to the attainment of Canada's foreign policy objectives as a whole. Universalia was also asked to review the program mix of other allies and partners.⁸⁰

77 *Submission 27*, paragraph 44, p. 16.

78 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 3.

79 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 5.

80 Foreign Affairs Canada, Office of the Inspector General, Evaluation Division (ZIE), *Cross Cutting Issues—A Horizontal Review of the Range of Canadian Public and Cultural Diplomacy Programming, Final Report*, August 2005, p. 1.

13.60 In 2005, a review team headed by Lord Carter of Coles conducted a review of the UK's public diplomacy. The review team examined the effectiveness of the current public diplomacy activities in delivering outcomes that contributed to the achievement of the UK government's objectives.

13.61 The United States Government Accountability Office has conducted numerous comprehensive audits of various aspects of US public diplomacy.⁸¹

Committee view

13.62 At this stage, the committee is reluctant to recommend an independent, comprehensive review of Australia's public diplomacy along the lines of Canada or the UK. It believes that this Senate inquiry has increased the focus on Australia's public diplomacy and started a debate that was long overdue. Indeed, DFAT has already responded positively to evidence taken by the committee and is making changes, for example through the IDC to reach agreement on a definition of public diplomacy.⁸²

13.63 If the ANAO agrees to undertake an audit, the results from this audit will provide clearer guidance on the measures DFAT needs to have in place to be able to determine the effectiveness of its programs.

13.64 The committee believes that having opened up the debate on Australia's public diplomacy, it should monitor developments in this area and, allowing time for the implementation of initiatives, review these developments. To assist the committee in this regard, the committee makes the following recommendation.

81 The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is the audit, evaluation and investigative arm of the United States Congress. It exists 'to support Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the American people. GAO examines the use of public funds; evaluates federal programs and policies; and provides analyses, recommendations, and other assistance to help Congress make informed oversight, policy, and funding decisions. GAO's commitment to good government is reflected in its core values of accountability, integrity, and reliability'. See for example, United States Government Accountability Office, *United States. Public Diplomacy State Department Expands Efforts but Faces Significant Challenges*, September 2003; United States Government Accountability Office, *United States. Public Diplomacy: Interagency Coordination Efforts Hampered by the Lack of a National Communication Strategy*, April 2005.

82 Paragraph 8.29.

Recommendation 18

13.65 The committee recommends that, two years after the tabling of this report, DFAT provide the committee with a report on developments in, and reforms to, Australia's public diplomacy programs giving particular attention to the role and functions of the IDC and the way DFAT evaluates the effectiveness of its public diplomacy activities.

Chapter 14

Funding Australia's public diplomacy

14.1 Australia's capacity to deliver effective, well-coordinated public and cultural diplomacy programs, both in-country and overseas, depends crucially on adequate levels of public funding. This chapter examines the level of funding for Australia's public diplomacy programs and considers whether it is adequate and well targeted. It is also interested in recent trends in expenditure and how the funding for Australia's public diplomacy compares with other countries.

Resources for Public diplomacy

14.2 It is clear that significant effort is required to project and establish a positive image of Australia in a fiercely contested international space. It is an expensive undertaking for a medium-sized country to secure and maintain international recognition as an 'identity' in its own right. Considerable resources are needed for research and analysis before messages are crafted and promoted in a way that will convey a positive image of Australia and leave a lasting favourable impression.

Funding for Australia's public diplomacy

14.3 DFAT informed the committee that it has a two-tiered approach to funding its public diplomacy activities. It allocates funds to enable general public diplomacy work to be undertaken throughout the department as well as funds allocated explicitly for front-line public diplomacy programs.¹ In 2005–06, the actual expenditure on public diplomacy identified by DFAT was \$93.5 million which comprised:

- \$32.4 million on grants and contributions;
- \$8 million on Australia's participation at the 2005 World Expo in Aichi; and
- \$53 million on general departmental public diplomacy outputs.²

14.4 The \$53 million for general departmental public diplomacy is 'a real allocation'. It captures 'all of the work that is done on public diplomacy by the department in totality'.³ The figure was calculated from the department's activity based costing model. DFAT explained:

The model was developed through a survey completed by a large sample of officers in Canberra and at post, who together represented the operations of the department as a whole. The survey collected data on time spent on

1 *Submission 18*, paragraph 5.1, p. 58.

2 *Submission 18*, p. 58.

3 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 29.

various activities, including public diplomacy. This information was used to determine an allocation of the department's resources across its Outcomes.⁴

14.5 It should be noted that the allocation from this activity-based model encompasses the full range of costs incurred by the department which contributes directly to public diplomacy and includes salary, travel, communications and property costs. It also includes 'a calculated share of overhead functions such as human resources management, financial management and other corporate services'. The following table indicates that over the last five years the general departmental public diplomacy expenditure has moved between approximately \$63 and \$51 million and now stands at \$54.8 million.

Table 14.1: Expenditure for the last 5 years (excluding administered items and revenue from other sources)⁵

2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07
\$62.618	\$56.499	\$50.842	\$52.999	\$54.791

14.6 Dr Strahan, Assistant Secretary of the Images of Australia Branch (IAB), noted that the percentage of 'spending devoted to public diplomacy over the last six or seven years...has remained broadly stable. It has fluctuated between about 9.4 per cent of the total DFAT budget in 1999–2000 to about 8.7 per cent of the budget in the last financial year, with little bumps up and down'.⁶ He pointed out, however, that:

...the budget...which in current dollar terms is \$15 million higher than it was in 1999, is only part of the much more general federal public diplomacy spend and once you include the expenditure of related agencies, such as the Australia Council and Tourism Australia, you get a much larger number, of course, which gives a good picture of the total public diplomacy effort...On the general question of the figure of \$53 million, that relates to, as I said, a certain percentage of the total budget which is allocated to each outcome under the budget.⁷

DFAT's public diplomacy programs—IAB

14.7 The IAB has the primary responsibility for implementing the department's public diplomacy programs and accordingly administers the largest public diplomacy budget that was \$23.5 million in 2005–06.⁸

4 DFAT answer to written question on notice, received 1 May 2007, p. 8.

5 DFAT answer to written question on notice, received 1 May 2007, p. 7.

6 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 20.

7 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 29.

8 *Submission 18*, p. 58.

14.8 The table below shows a breakdown of IAB's expenditures on public diplomacy activities from 2002–2003 to 2005–2006.⁹

Table 14.2: Breakdown of IAB's expenditure on public diplomacy programs and activities it manages from 2002–03 to 2005–06

Expenditure by IAB	2002–2003	2003–2004	2004–2005	2005–2006
Public Diplomacy (Posts)	\$1,936,434	\$1,473,647	\$1,607,605	\$1,585,557
Australian International Cultural Council	\$1,080,276	\$1,027,473	\$1,076,790	\$1,067,540
International Media and Cultural Visits	\$484,082	\$468,235	\$447,393	\$537,206
Media Strategies and Publications	\$315,952	\$272,335	\$367,966	\$306,819
Public Diplomacy Contingency Fund	\$0	\$56,234	\$21,101	\$25,000
Cultural Relations Discretionary Grants—Administered	\$302,000	\$339,892	\$386,657	\$378,337
Australian Institute of International Affairs—Administered	\$60,000	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$71,000
ABC AsiaPacific (now Australia Network)—Administered	\$17,370,000	\$17,770,000	\$18,180,000	\$18,600,000
Musica Viva			\$130,000	\$130,000
Indigenous programs			\$135,471	\$120,830
Asia Link	\$445,465	\$353,478	\$130,000	\$130,000
Administration and Tender Costs	\$87,231	\$83,144	\$146,001	\$383,545
Internet	\$251,049	\$221,820	\$285,978	\$223,985
Public Communications	\$178,771	\$120,927	\$91,163	\$0
Asia Pacific Sports Program (AusAID)	-\$4,503	-\$13,949	\$0	\$0
Expos	-\$27,573	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$22,506,184	\$22,238,236	\$23,068,125	\$23,559,819

* In 2005–06, the Public Communications Section was merged into other parts of IAB.

** The Asia Pacific Sports program is funded by AusAID and cost neutral to IAB.

*** Expo expenditure was not managed by IAB between 20003–04 and 2005–06.

14.9 Table 14.2 shows that the major items of expenditure were on the Australia Network (\$18.6 million), public diplomacy activities for posts (\$1.59 million) and the Australian International Cultural Council (\$1.07 million). These three items accounted for over 90 per cent of the Branch's total expenditure on public diplomacy programs for the financial year. Administered funding on Australia Network alone accounted for 79 per cent of total expenditures.

14.10 DFAT's submission mentioned that IAB is currently conducting a review of the public diplomacy funding for all posts 'to ensure that the current spread of allocations serves Australia's key foreign and trade policy objectives as effectively as possible'.¹⁰

General views on funding available for Australia's public diplomacy

14.11 A number of witnesses were of the view that Australia's public diplomacy is not a high priority for the government. Mr Kirk Coningham argued that:

The reality is that Australian public diplomacy has been relegated to a level of importance equivalent to that of Embassy gardens. It's now almost exclusively managed around the world by locally engaged staff. DFAT will argue that dedicating 30 percent of the duties of the 3rd Secretary Political as a 'supervisor' is sufficient for the task. It is not. Under DFAT this incredibly important function will remain the domain of the garden shed while the increasingly redundant work of the traditional diplomat will maintain its place in the ivory tower.¹¹

14.12 Mr Trevor Wilson suggested that the resources devoted to public diplomacy in Australia are 'pretty miniscule': that Australia is running its public diplomacy program 'on a shoestring'.¹² He explained:

I am actually quoting somebody in the department who is running it when I say that. If it is the high priority that the government says it is, it probably should be getting quite a lot more money. Most of the submissions that you have received from the individual councils say that. But on the other hand, I think it is very difficult to justify giving public diplomacy a lot more money without some more rigorous evaluation.¹³

14.13 He noted that a number of activities or programs listed by DFAT as public diplomacy would not fall within the definition of public diplomacy. He noted:

...a lot of their publications, which are actually targeted at the Australian public and not overseas. Of course, they are useful overseas as well, but

10 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Submission 18*, p. 54.

11 *Submission 1*, p. [3].

12 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 7.

13 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 7.

they are primarily for the Australian public. The trade advocacy program I would not particularly call public diplomacy.

The Economic Analytical Unit's work I also would not call public diplomacy. Their trade advocacy is mainly aimed at convincing people about good trade practice. You can put that into good governance if you like but I think it is a bit dubious. The Economic Analytical Unit is primarily aimed at informing Australian people about the economic situation in other countries. It is not aimed at the overseas public at all.¹⁴

14.14 Mr Freeman agreed that the funding available for public diplomacy was 'pretty modest by national standards'. He took the example of the IAB with their staff of around 12 or 14:

Their operational budget, once you take out the Australia Network and some of the discretionary cultural funding and so on, comes down to probably about \$4½ million.¹⁵

14.15 Aside from these general observations about the funding of public diplomacy by some witnesses, two areas attracted particular comment for their funding—the bilateral foundations, councils and institutes (FCIs) and cultural diplomacy.

Funding for the bilateral foundations, councils and institutes

14.16 There are nine bilateral foundations, councils and institutes. Although they have their own mission statements, in general their overarching objective is to develop and strengthen people-to-people links and to foster greater mutual understanding. The objectives of the Council on Australia Latin American Relations place an emphasis on economic ties (see appendix 4 for information on the FCIs).

14.17 DFAT explained that the funding arrangements for FCIs are determined by the instrument under which they were established—an Executive Order in Council or an Administrative Circular. It provided the following details:

FCIs established under Executive Orders in Council are funded from the administered Outcome 3 measure 'International Relations Grants Programme (IRGP)'. Applications for IRGP funding are assessed on an annual basis by DFAT's Senior Executive, usually in June, following which a recommendation is made to the Minister for the forthcoming financial year only.

FCIs established under Administrative Circular are funded via the department's own internal budgetary process. The initial funding for these FCIs was determined by the Minister upon establishment and set the basis for their permanent (or base) budget. In addition to their permanent budget, these FCIs are able to access the biannual Budget Allocation Review (BAR) mechanism in a similar manner to other work areas within the

14 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 34.

15 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 33.

department. It should also be noted, that while these FCIs are currently funded via the departmental appropriation, there is also scope for them to make a supplementary application for funding through the IRGP, as described above.¹⁶

14.18 The following table lists government funded expenditures by the nine FCIs from 2002–2003 to 2005–2006.¹⁷ The Australia–Japan Foundation spent \$2.5 million in government funds for the financial year; the next highest was the Australia–China Council with \$745,731.

Table 14.3: Expenditure by the nine foundations, councils and institutes

FCI Expenditure	2002–2003	2003–2004	2004–2005	2005–2006
Australia China Council	\$732,851	\$752,596	\$752,132	\$745,731
Australia India Council	\$738,172	\$749,900	\$749,390	\$739,419
Australia Indonesia Institute	\$848,583	\$785,104	\$784,390	\$729,275
Australia Malaysia Institute*				\$288,216
Australia Thailand Institute**				\$297,668
Australia Korea Foundation	\$719,731	\$743,229	\$746,190	\$737,854
Australia Japan Foundation***	\$3,413,093	\$3,322,763	\$3,159,338	\$2,500,000
Council for Australian–Arab Relations	\$149,583	\$399,899	\$492,030	\$470,528
Council on Australia Latin America Relations				\$414,493
Total	\$5,869,162	\$6,000,895	\$5,931,338	\$6,177,453

* The AMI was established in April 2005. Its first budget was for 2005–06.

** The ATI was established in June 2005. Its first budget was for 2005–06.

*** The AJF was an independent statutory authority until 2006. AJF expenditure includes staffing and administrative costs

16 DFAT, answer to written question on notice, received 1 May 2007, p. 16. *Bills Digest no. 7, 2006–07, Australia–Japan Foundation (Repeal and Transition Provisions) Bill 2006*. *Parliament of Australia, Parliamentary Library*, notes that the Australia–China Council, the Australia–Indonesia Institute, the Australia–Korea Foundation and the Australia–India Council were established by an Order-in-Council.

17 DFAT answer to written question on notice, received 1 May 2007, p. 8.

14.19 Only three FCIs were directly represented at the committee's public hearings. They indicated that they could certainly do more work with increased funding. Ms Dinah Dysart, Deputy Chair of the Australia–China Council, informed the committee that the Council's 'modest budget and the necessity to do more with fewer people' was their greatest challenge. She explained:

When I was appointed to the council in 1998 there were 12 members on the council. Now there are nine members, including an ex-officio member, and that is likely to reduce further to eight later this year. This reduction has occurred over time to reduce costs and maximise program funding. This has meant that the councils have had to work smarter, as there has been no reduction in the programs that we deliver. At the same time, China's profile in Australia continues to grow, as we all know, and with it interest in and expectations of what the council is able to fund have also grown.¹⁸

14.20 The Chair of the Council on Australia Latin American Relations (COALAR), Mr Bernard Wheelahan, told the committee he had recently written to the Secretary of DFAT asking for funding parity with other councils. He told the committee: '...what I am expecting is to get \$750 000...Representing 500 million people in 22 countries, I reckon that is value for money'.¹⁹ A member of the Australia–India Council, Professor Bruce Bennett, told the committee:

It is my view that a budget of \$1.5 million would be more appropriate to the sorts of activities that the Australia-India Council projects into the future, particularly in education, the arts and public policy, including media links. We are continually saying, 'No, we can't fund this.' We get excellent applications, many of which we have to turn back.²⁰

14.21 Professor Bennett told the committee that the Council was awaiting DFAT's inquiry into FCI funding before deciding whether to approach the department. Taking a broader perspective, he also commented on the funding for all councils:

I think also there is a sense amongst the bilateral councils, who meet informally once a month and discuss issues—secretariats and members—that together they add up to something very significant in public diplomacy and that none of them would want to make the kind of bold claim that I made a moment ago [the appropriateness of a budget of \$1.5 million] and thereby dislodge another council or councils.²¹

14.22 Ms Alison Carroll, Asialink, who is on the board of the Australia-Indonesia Institute, agreed that the FCIs are 'poorly funded'.²² Ms McGregor, Asialink, referred to a recent a proposal before a FCI for \$30,000.

18 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 33.

19 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 44.

20 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, pp. 44–45.

21 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 46.

22 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 12.

We are not only non-profit, we use other money to support any of the work that we do. We ended up getting \$10,000 from them for it. You just cannot make programs work like that, and it wastes everybody's time. A lot of time goes into a submission and there has got to be a more efficient way of delivering than this.²³

14.23 In 2004, JSCFADT recommended that funding to the Australia–Indonesia Institute should be substantially increased to enable it to maintain the breadth of programs it supports, to provide for continuity of successful core programs and to enable it to extend its reach significantly. It further recommended that the Australia–Indonesia Institute receive additional funding to expand its efforts in promoting culture and the arts and a portion of the increase in funding be dedicated to the furthering of the sports relationship between Australia and Indonesia.²⁴ Table 14.3 indicates that government funding to this institute has fallen since then.

14.24 Accountability is an important aspect of government funding. The committee notes that DFAT's Annual Report contains a section on the FCIs but conveys very little information especially on expenditure. Some FCIs produce an annual report that is presented to Parliament and some do not. The annual reports of the Australia–China Council, the Australia–Indonesia Institute and the Australia–Japan Foundation are tabled. Some FCIs, such as the Australia–Korea Foundation, have in the past had their annual report tabled in Parliament but now do not. The most recent annual report for the Australia–India Council available on DFAT's website is for financial year 2001–2002 and for the Australia–Korea Foundation is financial year 2003–2004.²⁵ Dr Alison Broinowski suggested that 'it was time to review the operations of the bilateral councils and consider whether their operations should be unified to make them 'more coherent, more recognisable, more brandable'.²⁶

Committee view

14.25 The committee agrees with the view that the funding for the FCIs is 'modest'. It accepts advice from the representatives of the councils that appeared before it that their activities are constrained by limited funding. The committee also notes that the nine FCIs have come into existence over a period of time and under different instruments. It suggests that it would be timely for DFAT to review the bodies as distinct entities and then as a group with a view to identifying any anomalies that may have arisen since the Australia–Japan Foundation was established in 1978 and which create unnecessary duplication in functions or in administration. The committee is in no doubt that increased funding to the FCIs would boost Australia's public diplomacy

23 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 12.

24 Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade, Foreign Affairs Sub Committee, *Near Neighbours—Good Neighbours, An Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with Indonesia*, May 2004, pp. 143, 174, 176.

25 As at 10 August 2007.

26 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 5.

efforts. It is the committee's view, however, that it would be unwise to consider such increases before such a review which would also provide the opportunity to identify areas where greater efficiencies may be gained.

14.26 In summary, the committee regards FCIs as very effective vehicles in contributing to the conduct of public diplomacy. Evidence suggested they could do with further funding. The committee urges the government to undertake a review with a view to increasing their budgets.

Recommendation 19

14.27 The committee recommends that DFAT undertake a review of the nine FCIs with a view to assessing their effectiveness in contributing to the conduct of Australia's public diplomacy. The review should consider, among other matters, whether the FCIs should receive an increase in funding.

14.28 The committee suggests that for increased accountability, the FCIs be required to produce an annual report and for the Minister to table the report in Parliament. This requirement would not alter the current arrangement of DFAT's annual report containing a summary of the FCI reports.

Recommendation 20

14.29 The committee recommends that each FCI produce an annual report to be tabled in Parliament.

Funding public diplomacy activities

14.30 This report has considered a number of public diplomacy programs that are making a valuable contribution to Australia's public diplomacy. They include visitors' programs, student exchanges, educational programs, sports development, promotional campaigns run by Tourism Australia or Invest Australia, and many different and varied cultural events and exhibitions.

14.31 Most organisations would welcome additional funding. For example, Tourism Australia stated that it looks for a whole-of-government approach wherever possible given that its funds 'are meagre when compared to other national tourist offices working in our source markets'.²⁷ Funding for public diplomacy, however, is finite and budgeting priorities must be established. Mr Matthew Cameron-Smith, Tourism Australia, stated:

There are markets that we do not target because we do not have the funds to target those markets. We have to decide which of the 23 markets, for example, are most appropriate to this country and where we can actually

27 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 2.

derive the most economic benefit for Australia. They are the markets that we are active in.²⁸

14.32 Mr Greg Nance, Australian Sports Commission, contended that sport for development has a great public diplomacy effect and indicated that the ASC 'could go a lot further with this if resourced adequately. It is a good story'.²⁹ According to Mr Nance, if funding were provided on top of the \$2 million that ASC already receives from AusAID, ASC could 'reach farther for longer with the programs that we are undertaking now'. He gave the example as noted previously:

Last year I was at the Pacific Islands Forum education ministers' meeting in Fiji, where I spoke, representing our programs. After our presentation, which went for half an hour, every one of the countries represented at the forum approached us to bring the programs into their country.³⁰

14.33 When asked to provide a ballpark figure on the additional costs required to take the program into all of those countries, he replied:

There are 13 countries and we concentrate on four at the moment. If you multiply by a factor of 3½ or something like that on top of the \$2 million, you are there. With \$6 million to \$8 million we could reach all of the Pacific nations with programs that we believe are very successful and built on a lot of experience from our own system here in Australia.³¹

Funding cultural diplomacy

14.34 The committee also received strong representations on government funding for cultural diplomacy. Ms Jane Cruickshank, Australian Film Commission (AFC), informed the committee that increased funding in 2004 enabled the AFC 'to expand the breadth of the Embassy Roadshow program to establish Australian film festivals in key countries where there are identified diplomatic and cultural outcomes'. She noted that continued support of this funding would enable the AFC 'to expand Australia's international presence and develop Australian screen culture, and assist the strategic and diplomatic interests of Australia'.³² She maintained that the AFC cannot meet demand:

I have a list of requests for assistance to bring Australian films into other territories. Because our funding is targeted at AICC targets, they are the ones that we have to prioritise. For anything else we say, 'Unfortunately, we wish you well with this festival but we cannot assist you at this stage'.³³

28 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 8.

29 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 83.

30 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 83.

31 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 83.

32 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 16.

33 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 19.

14.35 Dr Gerard Vaughan, National Gallery of Victoria, observed correctly that the cultural organisations who came before the committee would say that more money would help. Speaking on behalf of his own institution, he said:

We would like to send more exhibitions overseas, particularly of Australian art. They are not easy to get up and running because, as I have said, overseas directors usually see them as a financial risk. If there were another source of money to underwrite them, or at least to underwrite some of the costs, I think that would be very helpful.³⁴

14.36 He suggested that the idea of some federal money expanding the national exhibitions touring support program 'to overseas would be a good one.'³⁵ Other organisations such as the Major Performing Arts Group also recommended substantial new funding.³⁶

14.37 The committee is in no doubt that the organisations cited above, as well as many others, could increase and improve their contribution to public diplomacy with more government support. But there are limits to government funds and the question then arises whether, within the overall budget, the funding made available to cultural diplomacy is adequate and appropriate.

14.38 Many of those engaged in cultural diplomacy suggested that Australia does not adequately fund its cultural diplomacy. It is a case of weighing up the overall benefits of supporting cultural activities, which involves economic and public diplomacy benefits, against the initial investment. Dr Vaughan said:

...it is coming back to whether or not government in Australia sees it as a good thing to have contemporary Australian art [promoted overseas], for government and national reasons—not just from the perspective of the individual galleries. If that is to be the case, I would suggest that some subsidies would have to be provided.³⁷

14.39 By way of illustration, he noted:

I want to emphasise that, with the great and notable exception of European Masterpieces that went to America, we send very few complete exhibitions overseas. The ones that we have sent, because of the funding issues, have tended to be fairly small and modest. I can see possibilities for the future.³⁸

14.40 Dr Vaughan cited Museums Australia, a peak body that represents the interests of all museums and art galleries of Australia, as 'chronically underfunded'.³⁹

34 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, pp. 38–39.

35 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 39.

36 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 49

37 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 44.

38 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 44.

39 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 44.

14.41 Ms Carroll, Asialink, stated that comparatively Australia's public diplomacy is 'poorly resourced'.⁴⁰ In its submission, Asialink acknowledged competing priorities for Australia's public diplomacy but noted that no region is more geographically, politically and economically important to Australia than Asia.

Therefore, this region must be the top focus of Australia's public diplomacy efforts going forward, and this vision needs to be communicated clearly to all agencies, partners and stakeholders.⁴¹

14.42 Asialink noted in its submission that Australia Council funding for Asia 'was 35% of their international spend in 1993 and was down to 23% in 2006' (currently available figures).⁴² It observed further the increasing investment in public diplomacy by Asian governments and other institutions. Asialink cited countries such as Singapore and Korea which are dramatically increasing their spending in line with their European counterparts. As noted previously, China in particular is actively pursuing its public diplomacy in the region which includes promoting its culture. Asialink noted:

The investment by the Chinese Government in the establishment of over 120 Confucius Institutes in almost 50 countries and regions is also an example of the increased focus of China on their reputation and image in the world. The Chinese Government ambitiously intends to establish 1000 Confucius Institutes by 2020.⁴³

14.43 Asialink drew attention to what it believed was 'a disturbing trend'—the increasing under-representation of Australia in significant regional events. It provided the following example:

- Singapore Biennale 2006 had 46 Asian artists, 25 EuroAmerican, 22 others and 1 Australian;
- Shanghai Biennale 2006 had 49 Asian artists, 39 EuroAmerican, 4 others and 1 Australian;
- Taipei Biennale 2006 had 25 Asian artists, 14 EuroAmerican, and no Australians.⁴⁴

14.44 Ms Carroll gave the example of Indonesia. Citing from information contained in a 2004 report, she said:

The British, the French, the Germans, the Dutch, the Japanese, the Russians, the Indians are all investing in cultural centres in Indonesia and we do not...The Dutch spent \$300,000 on their cultural programs in Indonesia...The British spent \$3.9 million in Indonesia, promoting Britain

40 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 5.

41 *Submission 8*, p. 5.

42 *Submission 8*, p. 5.

43 *Submission 8*, p. 1.

44 Also mentioned in paragraph 9.23. *Submission 8*, p. 1.

culturally in Indonesia. I know what we spend. It would be less than half a million dollars, and Indonesia is our next-door neighbour...[The French spent] 1.6 million. The Indians spent \$400,000; the Russians spent \$150,000 promoting Russian culture in Indonesia. The Australia–Indonesia Institute spends \$200,000, the Australia Council spends less than \$50,000.⁴⁵

14.45 Ms Carroll noted that Australia is also geographically isolated and concluded:

In light of the fact that we have these negative realities, we should be spending more than these other people that we are seeing in the same boat as ourselves, because people keep saying to me and to Jenny, and to all of us who are travelling in the region, 'You're missing the boat here. You're not taking advantage of your advance, which you had.'⁴⁶

14.46 In its submission to the inquiry, Asialink noted that Australia's budget for cultural diplomacy activities is well below that of other developed nations. It stated:

Australia spends just 17 cents per capita on cultural diplomacy, compared to Germany which spends approximately \$3, and the UK, which spends an impressive \$19 per capita.⁴⁷

14.47 Ms Carroll explained that the figures came from 'a mixture of public documents, like annual reports, and we got the Australian figure from DFAT'. She was prepared to accept that the problem in comparing statistics 'is one of definition and what you include'. She explained:

DFAT saw those figures and their response was, 'But we didn't include Radio Australia,' which was true, but neither did we include BBC World. We had a discussion in the office about including language training in this, and the decision was to do so, on the basis that language training—which does make a lot of money for the British because they have cornered that market pretty well—is a part of cultural or public diplomacy.⁴⁸

14.48 Dr Strahan informed the committee that he found the figures produced by Asialink misleading. To his mind, Asialink derived its figure of 17 cents by taking one aspect of DFAT's general budget—the International Relations Grants Program of \$3.5 million. He noted that many of DFAT's general public diplomacy programs have 'a cultural component, and trying to separate them out at that level is just not productive'. He then explained:

From the British figures, according to the FCO's own figures, total public diplomacy spending in the United Kingdom is around £600 million a year.

45 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 5. According to Ms Carroll, the report was to the Australia-Indonesia Institute on the feasibility of setting up an Australian cultural centre. *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 6.

46 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 7.

47 *Submission 8*, p. 1.

48 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 6.

That is the equivalent of \$A1.4 billion or \$24 per person, which is a little bit higher than the figure that Asialink had, but fairly close.

The FCO figures are derived by adding up what they expend on the general FCO programs, what the British Council expends, what they expend on websites and what the BBC World Service expends. Out of that total you get around £600 million, according to their figures. By contrast, if you were to add up our comparable programs, Australia spends about \$455 million per year. That includes our scholarships program, which is now very large. That gives us a figure of about \$22.50 per capita, which is actually pretty close to the British figure; it is a little lower but not significantly so.⁴⁹

14.49 As noted previously, Ms Carroll conceded that it is very difficult to make international comparisons on public diplomacy spending 'because people define these things differently'. She added, however: 'I can give you a thousand figures, and it all shows the main point which is that...Australia spends so little'.⁵⁰

14.50 Mr Chris Freeman believed that there was considerable scope for increasing Australia's cultural activities. He suggested, as one alternative, 'to simply boost the Australia Council', which, in his view, is already an expert body. He said, 'give them the money but give them instruction to actually get out there and promote Australian culture in a more effective way than perhaps they have been doing already'.⁵¹

Additional funding

14.51 In the May 2007 Budget, the Australian Government provided \$20.4 million over four years to enhance Australia's cultural diplomacy and improve market access for Australia's cultural exports. This budget allocation, for a program 'Australia on the World Stage' will be implemented through the AICC. Its budget over the next four years will increase from \$1 million this financial year to \$3.6 million next year, then rise to \$5 million, to \$7.8 million and in the fourth year to \$7.9 million.⁵²

14.52 The minister announced that this injection of funds represents 'a six-fold increase in the AICC's budget and will take Australia's cultural diplomacy and cultural export promotion to a new level'. He regarded the additional allocation as a 'very substantial increase in funding for international multi-cultural promotion' which is going to be 'an important enhancement to our diplomacy'.⁵³

14.53 This budget allocation is intended to 'help create a better understanding of Australia in our region and further abroad'. The initiative includes increased funding

49 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 39.

50 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 7.

51 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 37.

52 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 38.

53 Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Alexander Downer MP, Media Release, no. 053, 17 May 2007 and Transcript of doorstep, 17 May 2007: 'AICC meeting'.

for: major programmes in key countries including China, Indonesia and the United States; an expanded promotion of Australia's world-class film industry, using the reach of Australia's network of diplomatic missions; a new programme of grants to enable artists and performers to tour internationally; visits to Australia by international cultural decision-makers; and marketing material, website development and the promotion of Australian culture through international television broadcasting.

Committee view

14.54 The committee acknowledges the valuable contribution made to Australia's public diplomacy by the many various government agencies and government supported or sponsored organisations as well as NGOs. The committee welcomes the increased funding allocated to cultural diplomacy, especially the initiative 'Australia on the World Stage' announced in the 2007–08 Budget. Undoubtedly it will allow Australia's cultural institutions to make an even larger contribution to Australia's image abroad. In light of the proven capability of these institutions to contribute to Australia's public diplomacy and their willingness and enthusiasm to do more, the committee believes that the government should consider either a significant expansion of the program or strengthen its commitment to supporting their public diplomacy activities more widely.

Conclusion

14.55 Throughout this report, the committee has drawn attention to a range of government activities that portray a positive image of Australia. Whether it is in the area of development aid or humanitarian assistance, education, trade, investment, tourism or art and culture, these activities reach beyond overseas governments to wider audiences and help to enrich and strengthen Australia's international reputation. Clearly, increased funding to those engaged in Australia's public diplomacy would improve their capacity to do more to promote Australia's interests abroad. The committee, however, believes that, at the present time, the government's top priority should be determining the effectiveness of its public diplomacy programs. With this in mind, the committee has recommended that the government take steps to ensure that its public diplomacy programs are evaluated.

Chapter 15

Australia's public diplomacy—committee's findings and recommendations

15.1 The committee found that Australia's public diplomacy is spread across a large canvas with many contributors. A significant number of government departments and agencies are engaged in work overseas that either directly or indirectly conveys to the world a positive image of Australia. The committee referred to just a few of these activities including Defence's Pacific Boat Program which is helping a number of countries in the Pacific better manage their maritime resources. AusAID and the Australian Sports Commission are forging strong friendly ties with other countries through the Australian Sports Outreach Program that is designed to develop leadership, promote social cohesion and improve the health of people in the Pacific region.

15.2 The committee also drew attention to the Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development Program which is strengthening mutual understanding between the people of Australia and the countries of the Asia Pacific region. Similarly the Australian Leadership Awards Program is not only providing opportunities for overseas students and gifted scholars to study in Australia and to learn more about the country but to form lasting bonds with their Australian colleagues. Although on a different scale, the various visitors' programs are also highly effective in promoting shared understanding and strong links between people in Australia and people overseas.

15.3 The City of Melbourne highlighted its work with overseas cities and organisations that goes beyond a 'civic ceremonial basis into productive connections of broad social, economic and cultural benefit to Melbourne'.¹

15.4 Organisations complement the work of government departments. ABC International is a 'major player' in representing Australia offshore. Through its radio and television broadcasting and online services, it encourages 'awareness of Australia and an international understanding of Australian attitudes on world affairs'.² The Australian Centre for Democratic Institutions conducts high-level courses for political leaders and officials. Asialink runs 'conversations' that bring together key leaders from ASEAN and Australia to discuss critical questions facing the region. These were primarily established to counter perceptions that Australia had 'turned its back on Southeast Asia'.³ Australian universities through a diversity of programs are actively

1 *Submission 11*, p. 2, *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 15.

2 *Submission 22*, p. 3.

3 *Asialink, 2004 Asialink Conversations, Report of Proceedings*, Jim Leibold, rapporteur and editor, p. 3.

cultivating a network of relations between Australian students and scholars and their counterparts overseas. These activities not only lead to better mutual understanding of cultures and different ways of life but they strengthen international collaboration and build a reservoir of goodwill toward Australia.

15.5 Australian cultural institutions are also aware of, and actively engaged in, building Australia's international reputation and encouraging a better understanding of Australia and its people. One important aspect of cultural institutions is their ability to maintain their people-to-people associations with an overseas country despite circumstances where formal diplomatic links may be strained. Educational institutions have this same ability.

15.6 There are many other private organisations with overseas connections that exert considerable influence on Australia's public diplomacy or have the potential to contribute to it. They include NGOs, especially those engaged in humanitarian work, sporting associations, businesses and Australia's diaspora.

15.7 The committee commends the work of Australia's government departments and agencies, the cultural and educational institutions and the many private organisations that are actively engaged in promoting Australia's reputation overseas. Many of these organisations are working quietly behind the scenes and, through word and deed, are helping to secure a presence for Australia on the international stage: to build a reputation that helps to advance Australia's interests internationally.

15.8 The committee notes, however, that Australia is in fierce competition with other countries also seeking to be heard on matters of importance to them. Some are devoting considerable resources to public diplomacy and even smaller countries such as Norway have developed public diplomacy strategies to gain a comparative advantage in international affairs. Canada is re-investing in its public diplomacy and making it 'central to its work'; Germany recognises that a modern strategic and coordinated public diplomacy can enrich and strengthen its reputation abroad. China has embarked on a 'charm offensive' in its public diplomacy to win international support for its peaceful rise. The UK has had two major reviews of its public diplomacy in just over five years and, as noted by the Director of the Public Diplomacy Institute, The George Washington University, the US has reached the point of 'report fatigue' with regard to its public diplomacy.⁴

15.9 To ensure that Australia's public diplomacy efforts are not overshadowed in the highly contested international space, Australia must ensure that it takes advantage of opportunities to capitalise on the positive outcomes from its many public diplomacy activities. The following section looks at some areas where it believes Australia could improve its public diplomacy achievements.

4 Noted previously in the report at paragraph 3.3. Bruce Gregory, Public Diplomacy Institute, The George Washington University, 'Not Your Grandparents' Public Diplomacy', Public Diplomacy Retreat, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ottawa November 30, 2005, p. 3.

Tracking opinions in key target countries

15.10 The committee notes that to be effective, Australia's public diplomacy must succeed in projecting messages that give greater breadth and substance to its image. They must reach their target audiences and influence in a positive way attitudes toward Australia. The committee believes that informed understanding provides the basis for identifying and formulating core messages and for delivering public diplomacy programs in the most appropriate way. Solid research and continuous assessment such as country surveys on attitudes toward Australia provide information for obtaining an understanding of people and organisations Australia seeks to inform and ultimately influence.

15.11 Although overseas posts monitor local media to obtain some insight into attitudes toward Australia and use other means such as immigration forms to ascertain the impressions individuals have of Australia, DFAT does not use any systematic or robust method of gathering and analysing data on overseas attitudes toward Australia. The committee acknowledges that research tools such as surveys are expensive but believes that for countries of vital importance to Australia, such as Indonesia and the island states of the Southwest Pacific, DFAT should consider using the necessary research tools to collect the data essential for informed understanding. The omnibus survey conducted in Japan between 1980 and 2002 serves as a model and could be conducted in countries of most significance to Australia.

Recommendation 1 (paragraph 6.36)

15.12 The committee recommends that DFAT give a higher priority to tracking opinions on Australia in countries of greatest significance to Australia as a means of obtaining better insights into the attitudes of others toward Australia. To this end, DFAT should devote appropriate resources to develop a capacity to conduct and evaluate regular assessments of attitudes towards Australia and its foreign policy.

Domestic diplomacy

15.13 The Australian Government has acknowledged the importance of broad community understanding of Australia's global environment and support for the policies it pursues to advance Australia's national interests.⁵ It has stated its commitment to wide-ranging consultation within Australia to build broad community understanding of, and support for, Australia's foreign and trade policies.⁶ The

5 Commonwealth of Australia, *Advancing the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, 2003, p. 127.

6 Commonwealth of Australia, *Advancing the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, 2003, p. xx.

government maintains that it consults widely with interested groups through standing bodies and informal means.⁷

15.14 Even so, the committee found that generally Australians are not well-informed about Australia's public diplomacy or the programs that help to promote Australia's international reputation. It notes the recommendation by RMIT University that a public communication strategy targeting selected publics in Australia and overseas should be considered.⁸

Recommendation 2 (paragraph 6.49)

15.15 The committee recommends that the government's public diplomacy policy attach greater importance to creating an awareness of public diplomacy domestically. It recommends that the government formulate a public communication strategy and put in place explicit programs designed:

- **to inform more Australians about Australia's public diplomacy; and**
- **to encourage and facilitate the many and varied organisations and groups involved in international activities to take a constructive role in actively supporting Australia's public diplomacy objectives.**

People-to-people links

Exchange programs

15.16 The committee not only supports programs such as the Australian Leadership Awards Program but also endorses measures that would increase the opportunities for international students to study in Australia and for Australian students to study overseas. These education programs are important building blocks for Australia's public diplomacy.

15.17 The committee believes that the Australian Government could offer stronger support for the various alumni organisations for foreign students who have studied in Australia. The scope to build on their contribution to Australia's public diplomacy warrants much closer government consideration. This observation is supported by previous parliamentary committees that have noted or recommended that the government 'take a more active role in working with Australian educational institutions to develop effective alumni programs'.⁹

7 Commonwealth of Australia, *Advancing the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, 2003, p. 127. The White Paper mentioned the Foreign Affairs Council, the Trade Minister's World Trade Organization Advisory Group, DFAT's formal consultations twice a year with non-government organisations interested in human rights and the National Consultative Committee on Peace and Disarmament.

8 *Submission 9*, p. 3.

9 See Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, *Opportunities and challenges: Australia's relationship with China*, November 2005, p. 291.

Recommendation 3 (paragraph 7.39)

15.18 The committee recommends that the government take a more active role in working with Australian educational institutions to develop stronger and more effective alumni programs for overseas students who have studied in Australia.

15.19 The committee welcomes the development of a database of overseas students who have studied under the Australian Leadership Awards Program. It believes that this database should have the highest priority but the committee sees it as only the first step in the right direction toward greater and continuing engagement with overseas students who have studied in Australia.

Visitors programs

15.20 The committee also recognises the benefits to Australia's public diplomacy that derive from the many visitors' programs conducted by DFAT and other agencies. It notes the comments by Asialink about providing opportunities to build on the relationships formed during visits or meetings.

15.21 The committee believes that the organisers or sponsors of visitors' programs should be required, when planning an activity, to take account of the possible longer term benefits that could accrue from a visit. It suggests that any plan for a visitors' or training program identify the measures that are to be taken to maintain and strengthen engagement with those involved in the program.

15.22 The committee is also of the view that the organisers or sponsors of visitors' programs should be required to report on the results of these relationship building measures and how they have contributed to Australia's public diplomacy. Such reports should be made available to the IDC, published on the organiser's website and referred to in an annual report.

Recommendation 4 (paragraph 7.52)

15.23 The committee recommends that:

- **all visitors' or training programs sponsored or funded by the government have clearly identified public diplomacy objectives;**
- **DFAT ensure that all government sponsored or funded visitors' or training programs adopt a longer-term perspective and include measures or plans that are intended to consolidate and build on the immediate public diplomacy benefits that accrue from such activities; and**
- **as an accountability measure, the organisers or sponsors of a visitors' or training program report on how the program has contributed to Australia's public diplomacy.**

15.24 A number of previous parliamentary committees have recognised the importance of developing literacy in Asian languages and encouraging a better

understanding of the different cultures in the region.¹⁰ The committee takes this opportunity to underline the need to support the learning of languages, particularly Asian languages, as part of Australia's overall strategy to strengthen bilateral ties.

Recommendation 5 (paragraph 7.61)

15.25 Consistent with the findings of previous parliamentary reports, the committee recommends that the government consider introducing additional incentives for Australian students not only to study an Asian language but to combine their studies with cultural studies.

Coordination

15.26 The committee supports the general view that Australia needs a whole-of-government approach to its public diplomacy. The committee, however, found that, to date, the achievements of the IDC, the main body responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of the whole-of-government's public diplomacy programs, were very modest. It also notes that a number of witnesses identified a need to improve the coordination of government public diplomacy activities with some suggesting that the current approach was 'fragmented'.

15.27 Australia needs a coherent public diplomacy plan if it is to meet today's challenges. It needs to identify core problems, devise effective solutions, define clear objectives and formulate an overall public diplomacy strategy. To do so, the IDC needs to assume a more decisive role in Australia's public diplomacy.

15.28 The committee believes that the government should consider measures that would make the IDC a more effective coordinating body. It is clear to the committee that there is a need for a central body to have stronger oversight of Australia's public diplomacy and to instil throughout government departments and agencies a sense of common purpose. As a first step, the committee believes that the IDC should be allowed the opportunity to prove itself capable of leadership, of providing direction and setting clear objectives for DFAT and all its public diplomacy partners. The committee believes that the IDC should be an advisory body to all government departments and agencies on how best to coordinate and, where possible, complement each others activities. It should also take an active role in ensuring that there is a solid core of public diplomacy specialists available to advise, guide and assist agencies in their public diplomacy activities. Its first task would be to map out a long-term strategic public diplomacy plan. To do so, it needs to be in close contact with Australia's key foreign policy makers and fully informed about relevant foreign policies.

10 Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Opportunities and challenges: Australia's relationship with China*, March 2006, pp. 274–5. Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade, Foreign Affairs Sub Committee, *Near Neighbours—Good Neighbours*, May 2004, Canberra, p. 147.

Recommendation 6 (paragraph 8.43)

15.29 The committee recommends that the government restructure the interdepartmental committee on public diplomacy (IDC) so that its functions extend beyond sharing information between departments and agencies to include coordinating and monitoring Australia's public diplomacy activities. It recommends:

- (a) more senior representation on the IDC than is currently the case—Departments should be represented at the Deputy Secretary level;
- (b) expanding the functions of the IDC to ensure that it has a central role in planning and overseeing a whole-of-government long-term strategic plan for Australia's public diplomacy;
- (c) the IDC have responsibility for ensuring that the synergies among government departments and agencies are identified and exploited in pursuit of the government's foreign policy objectives;
- (d) the IDC produce a coherent public diplomacy strategy that outlines priority objectives for public diplomacy along the lines of the UK Public Diplomacy Board;
- (e) the government's public diplomacy strategic framework acknowledge the potential of local governments, particularly the major city councils, to engage in Australia's public diplomacy;
- (f) the government's strategic framework take account of non-state stakeholders and adopt as one of its key operating principles in its public diplomacy strategy 'work with others, including business, NGOs and Australian expatriates';
- (g) some cross membership on the IDC and the Australia International Cultural Council;
- (h) the IDC produce a report on discussions and decisions taken at its meetings to be published on its website;
- (i) establishing a sub-committee of the IDC with responsibility for ensuring that non-state organisations involved in international activities, including diaspora communities, are incorporated into an overarching public diplomacy framework;
- (j) establishing a sub-committee of the IDC that would be responsible for ensuring that Australia's public diplomacy stays at the forefront of developments in technology.

15.30 The committee does not intend the IDC to encroach on the independence of statutory bodies such as the ABC or of NGOs bound by their own charters. The IDC would recognise and respect their independence. Its objective would be to work in partnership with them, advising and offering guidance and assistance where appropriate to maximise their contribution to Australia's public diplomacy.

Recommendation 7 (paragraph 8.45)

15.31 The committee recommends that if, after considering the above recommendation, the government is of the view that the IDC cannot or should not be the body to take on this leadership and whole-of-government coordinating and advisory function, the government establish an appropriate separate and permanent body that would do so.

Local councils and public diplomacy

15.32 The committee acknowledges the commitment by the City of Melbourne to public diplomacy and notes that its active involvement in this area places it in a good position to offer constructive advice on how the Australian Government could work with councils to improve Australia's overall public diplomacy. It also draws attention to the recommendations of the Centre for Local Government which endorsed those of the City of Melbourne. The committee supports these recommendations but notes in particular the call for greater recognition by the Australian Government of the role of capital city governments in Australia's public diplomacy and for it to engage more effectively with local governments' international activities. It also draws attention to the suggestion that the Australian Government explore opportunities for collaborative public diplomacy activity between Australian capital city councils involved in promoting their cities internationally.¹¹

Recommendation 8 (paragraph 8.58)

15.33 The committee recommends that the Australian Government explore opportunities for greater and more effective collaboration and coordination with Australian capital city councils in promoting Australia's public diplomacy.

Cultural institutions

15.34 The committee notes the observations made by a number of representatives from cultural institutions that there is scope for better and more effective coordination between the institutions and government agencies involved in the overseas promotion of Australian culture. It is also aware of the criticism that, at the moment, there is a lack of long-term strategic planning which means that cultural institutions are not able to take full advantage of opportunities to showcase Australian art and culture and to contribute more effectively to Australia's public diplomacy.

Recommendation 9 (paragraph 9.35)

15.35 The committee recommends that the AICC take note of the evidence relating to the coordination and planning of international cultural activities with a view to addressing the concerns raised in evidence. Close consultation with the relevant sections in the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, DFAT and Australia's cultural institutions would be central to

11 *Submission 11*, p. 2.

AICC's consideration. The committee suggests that a report of the Council's deliberations and decisions be made available to the committee and also made public by publishing them on DFAT's and the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts' websites (also see recommendation 6).

Recommendation 10 (paragraph 9.36)

15.36 The committee recommends further that the government consider that the AICC be co-chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Arts and Sports. The committee suggests that this would contribute significantly to greater coordination and cooperation in the area of cultural diplomacy.

15.37 Recommendation 9 would alert the AICC and relevant departments to the absence of long term strategic planning that continues to frustrate and disappoint cultural institutions endeavouring to take Australian art and culture to the world. The recommendation would not, however, tackle the practical problems of ensuring that the activities of government agencies, particularly the overseas posts, and cultural institutions complement one another. The committee believes that there is a need for a formal institutional structure to provide the necessary framework for the long term planning and coordination of cultural activities overseas.

Recommendation 11 (paragraph 9.40)

15.38 The committee recommends that the government establish a small but specifically tasked cultural and public diplomacy unit in the Department for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts. In liaison with DFAT, the unit would provide the necessary institutional framework to ensure that Australia's cultural institutions are well placed and encouraged to take full advantage of opportunities to contribute to Australia's public diplomacy.

Educational institutions

15.39 The comments made by Australian educators appearing before the committee follow closely those made by the cultural institutions. Both cultural and educational activities involve the exchange of ideas and information. They help to bring people together to develop a greater understanding and mutual appreciation of different cultures and ways of life. Witnesses spoke in broad terms about the contribution that cultural and educational activities make to portray a positive image of Australia and gave specific examples drawn from personal experience of where an activity had made a difference. Some were concerned, however, that 'the role and significance of universities in the conduct of Australia's public diplomacy is poorly articulated and relatively unexplored'.¹² They saw scope for greater 'public-private partnerships in public diplomacy'.¹³

12 *Submission 9*, p. 2.

13 *Submission 8*, p. 5

15.40 The committee makes a similar suggestion to DFAT and DEST as it did to the AICC. It suggests that DFAT take note of the evidence presented to this committee, especially the comments and recommendations by RMIT with regard to the establishment of a better framework for industry engagement that would allow opportunities to be explored. The committee suggests that DFAT initiate and sponsor an open and public debate on proposals designed to allow both government departments and educational institutions to work better in partnership to promote Australia's interests abroad. It should also work with DEST and the universities to find ways that will achieve more productive engagement by universities in Australia's public diplomacy.

Recommendation 12 (paragraph 9.52)

15.41 The committee recommends that DFAT ensure that its public diplomacy framework accommodates the concerns of the educational institutions especially with regard to industry engagement by formulating with DEST and the Vice Chancellors of Australian Universities appropriate strategies to facilitate a more productive engagement by these institutions in Australia's public diplomacy.

Recommendation 13 (paragraph 9.53)

15.42 The committee also recommends that DFAT initiate and sponsor a public debate on measures that could be taken to promote a more productive partnership between government departments and educational institutions in promoting Australia's public diplomacy.

15.43 There are many government agencies, private sector entities and individuals who have made, or could make, a contribution to the effectiveness of Australia's public diplomacy. Australia is not alone in grappling with this problem of successfully integrating the activities of many NGOs and individuals into the one framework. A dominant theme in overseas literature on public diplomacy concentrates on the importance of coordination and strategic planning. Many refer to the need 'to foster synergies between activities of governments and societal actors'.¹⁴

15.44 Australia's diaspora was one area in particular that attracted the committee's attention. It believes that the opportunities to engage Australian expatriates more actively and constructively in promoting Australia overseas are not fully explored. Evidence to the committee reinforced previous calls for measures to be taken to ensure that the network of Australians living abroad is regarded as a vital part of the Australian community with significant potential to make a valuable contribution to Australia's public diplomacy. These earlier findings and recommendations called for diaspora engagement to be an explicit aim of DFAT.

14 See for example, Bátorá J., *Multistakeholder Public Diplomacy of Small and Medium-Sized States: Norway and Canada Compared*, Paper presented to the International Conference on Multistakeholder Diplomacy, Mediterranean Diplomatic Academy, Malta, February 11–13 November 2005, p. 4.

Recommendation 14 (paragraph 10.42)

15.45 The committee recommends that DFAT review the findings of the Lowy report, *Diaspora*, reconsider the relevant recommendations made in March 2005 by the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee on Australian Expatriates and consider the evidence set out in this report with regard to Australian expatriates and Australia's public diplomacy. The committee urges DFAT to formulate and implement strategies that would enable DFAT to take advantage of the significant resource of the diaspora and encourage Australian expatriates to engage more constructively in Australia's public diplomacy.

Training for public diplomacy

15.46 The committee recognises that DFAT faces a major challenge ensuring that it has the skills set necessary to deliver effective public diplomacy, including highly developed communication and public relations skills. Although all DFAT officers should be skilled in the art of public diplomacy, the committee accepts that not all can be trained specialists in the area of communications and public relations. Although, the committee does not support the creation of a unit of public diplomacy specialists, it does see a very clear need for the department to ensure that it has the correct balance of specialists and generalists engaged in Australia's public diplomacy. It is important for public diplomacy to be seen as a mainstream activity and not the reserve of specialists located in a separate unit.

15.47 The committee notes the concerns that locally engaged staff, who have a significant role in a post's public diplomacy, may not be privy to communications or discussions relevant to their area of responsibility and whose knowledge of Australia may limit their ability to carry out their duties effectively. The committee understands that DFAT has in place training programs designed to mitigate some of these problems. Even so, the committee believes that if public diplomacy is to be accepted as a mainstream activity, the department should review the staffing arrangements of their posts to ensure that public diplomacy is not relegated to junior officers or locally engaged staff and that all staff have appropriate training.

Diplomacy as a mainstream activity

15.48 The committee notes the measures DFAT has in place to ensure that its officers involved in public diplomacy are integrated into the department's public diplomacy network and well briefed on the government's broader public diplomacy objectives. The committee believes that DFAT must ensure that its stated policy of public diplomacy as an integral part of mainstream diplomacy is supported by action that clearly demonstrates that public diplomacy is a highly valued activity in the department.

15.49 To ensure that the department is able to meet the growing challenges of conducting an effective public diplomacy policy, the committee believes it would be timely for DFAT to commission an independent survey of its overseas posts to ascertain their needs when it comes to public diplomacy. The survey would cover

issues such as training and resources available for public diplomacy, access to specialists in public relations and the media and the effectiveness of IAB in meeting the needs of posts in carrying out their public diplomacy activities.

Recommendation 15 (paragraphs 11.31 and 11.32)

15.50 The committee recommends that DFAT conduct an independent survey of its overseas posts to assess their capacity to conduct effective public diplomacy programs. The survey would seek views on the effectiveness of the post's efforts in promoting Australia's interests, and how they could be improved, the adequacy of resources available to conduct public diplomacy activities, the training and skills of staff with public diplomacy responsibilities, the coordination between agencies in public diplomacy activities; and the level of support provided by IAB and how it could be improved.

15.51 The survey would also seek a response from the overseas posts on observations made by the educational and cultural organisations, noted by the committee in this report, levelled at the delivery of Australia's public diplomacy programs. Such matters would include suggestions made to the committee that public diplomacy opportunities are being lost in the absence of effective mechanism for the coordination of activities. See paragraphs 7.24–7.34 (alumni associations); 9.22–9.30 (cultural organisations); 9.41–9.44 (educational institutions); 10.23–10.39 (Australia's diaspora).

Modern technology

15.52 In the highly competitive field of public diplomacy, Australia needs to make sure that those responsible for managing and delivering public diplomacy programs are taking full advantage of advances in technology to reach the global audience. It is an area of rapid transformation. If Australia is to hold its own in competition with other countries, it must be at the forefront of developments in technology and have the experts able to exploit them. Australia's public diplomacy practitioners need to be constantly alert to developments in technology and be able to use them to best effect in their work. This need emphasises the importance of having highly skilled and qualified communicators who monitor the latest advances in technology, are able to think creatively in how to apply them to public diplomacy and to educate others in their use.

Recommendation 16 (paragraph 12.15)

15.53 The committee recommends that DFAT explore the application of innovative technologies to enhance the delivery of its public diplomacy programs.

Evaluation

15.54 The committee acknowledges that evaluating public diplomacy is not easy. It notes the advice from a number of witnesses that, although difficult, the evaluation of Australia's public diplomacy programs can and should be done. According to ANAO, if an agency is asserting that their program is effective, there is an expectation that it

has 'mechanisms in place to measure that effectiveness'.¹⁵ The committee agrees with this assessment and is strongly of the view that DFAT should improve its methods for measuring the effects of its public diplomacy programs over time. At the moment there is no concrete evidence that DFAT is systematically measuring progress in achieving its public diplomacy objectives.

15.55 Evidence to this committee on the need for DFAT to evaluate its public diplomacy programs was compelling. It draws attention especially to observations made by the ANAO on the importance of measuring the effects of public diplomacy programs over time or progress toward public diplomacy objectives. As already noted, DFAT does not have such indicators in place and as a matter of urgency, the committee recommends that DFAT put in place performance indicators that will allow it to monitor and assess the effectiveness of its public diplomacy programs.

Recommendation 17 (paragraph 13.56)

15.56 The committee recommends that, as a matter of priority, DFAT put in place specific performance indicators that would allow it to both monitor and assess the effectiveness of its public diplomacy programs.

15.57 The committee can also see a valuable role for the ANAO in assisting DFAT improve its evaluation processes. Accordingly, the committee requests that the ANAO conduct a performance audit of DFAT's public diplomacy programs.

15.58 The committee requests that the Australian National Audit Office consider undertaking a performance audit of DFAT's public diplomacy programs giving particular attention to the evaluation of the effectiveness of such programs.

Funding

Foundations, councils and institutes (FCIs)

15.59 The committee agrees with the view that the funding for the FCIs is 'modest'. It accepts advice from the representatives of the councils that appeared before it that their activities are constrained by limited funding. The committee also notes that the nine FCIs have come into existence over a period of time and under different instruments. It suggests that it would be timely for DFAT to review the bodies as distinct entities and then as a group with a view to identifying any anomalies that may have arisen since the Australia–Japan Foundation was established in 1978 and which create unnecessary duplication in functions or in administration. The committee is in no doubt that increased funding to the FCIs would boost Australia's public diplomacy efforts.

15 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 7.

Recommendation 19 (paragraph 14.27)

15.60 The committee recommends that DFAT undertake a review of the FCIs with a view to assessing their effectiveness in contributing to the conduct of Australia's public diplomacy. The review should consider, among other matters, whether the FCIs should receive an increase in funding.

15.61 The committee suggests that for increased accountability, the FCIs be required to produce an annual report and for the Minister to table the report in Parliament. This requirement would not alter the current arrangement of DFAT's annual report containing a summary of the FCI reports.

Recommendation 20 (paragraph 14.29)

15.62 The committee recommends that each FCI produce an annual report to be tabled in Parliament.

15.63 The committee welcomes the increased funding of \$20.4 million over four years to enhance Australia's cultural exports. It will allow Australia's cultural institutions to continue their valuable work in promoting Australia's reputation overseas.

Conclusion

15.64 DFAT has already undertaken to introduce a number of changes to improve the effectiveness of its public diplomacy—using the IDC to arrive at a clear and agreed definition of public diplomacy and including personnel from other agencies in DFAT's pre-posting workshops. If the ANAO agrees to undertake an audit, the results from this audit would provide further guidance on the measures DFAT needs to have in place to determine the effectiveness of its programs. The committee has also made a number of recommendations designed to make Australia's public diplomacy more effective. In light of anticipated changes and the increased funding to Australia's public diplomacy, the committee believes that it should, in time, have the opportunity to review progress.

Recommendation 18 (paragraph 13.65)

15.65 The committee recommends that, two years after the tabling of this report, DFAT provide the committee with a report on developments in, and reforms to, Australia's public diplomacy programs giving particular attention to the role and functions of the IDC and the way DFAT evaluates the effectiveness of its public diplomacy activities.

Senator Marise Payne

CHAIR

Appendix 1

Public submissions

- 1 Mr Kirk Coningham
- 2 Media Gurus
- 3 Art Gallery of Western Australia
- 4 Craft Victoria
- 5 Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania
- 6 National Gallery of Victoria
- 7 Australia–China Council
- 8 Asialink
- 9 RMIT University
- 10 Institute of Public Affairs
- 11 City of Melbourne
- 11A City of Melbourne
- 12 Museums Australia
- 13 Australia Council for the Arts
- 14 Australian Institute of International Affairs
- 15 Professor Naren Chitty
- 16 Mr Geoff Miller
- 17 Australian Film Commission
- 18 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- 19 Department of Defence
- 20 Australian Major Performing Arts Group
- 21 Australian Sports Commission
- 22 Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Public submissions (cont.)

- 23 Mr John Gage
- 24 Invest Australia
- 25 AusAID
- 26 Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- 27 International Public Affairs Network
- 28 Department of Education, Science and Training
- 29 Foreign Correspondents' Association
- 30 The University of New South Wales
- 31 Advance Global Australian Professionals Inc.

Appendix 2

Additional information, tabled documents and answers to questions on notice

Additional information

- Kirk Coningham, correspondence received on 15 June 2007.
- Asialink, *Per Capita Costs for Public/Cultural Diplomacy in Australia, Germany & UK 2004/6*.
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Feasibility Study into the establishment of Australian Cultural Centre in Yogyakarta*, March 2004.

Tabled documents

Hearing date

11 April 2007 Mr Trevor Wilson, Australian National University, *Foundation Funding - Constant prices*.

Answers to questions on notice

Hearing date

14 March 2007 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade—Answers to questions taken on notice, dated 1 May 2007.

11 April 2007 Department of Defence—Answers to questions taken on notice relating to public diplomacy training and Defence representational staff—dated 19 June 2007.

11 April 2007 Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry—Answers to questions taken on notice concerning training and qualifications of the department's overseas staff and the cost of funding the department's overseas counsellor in Jakarta—dated 26 April and 18 May 2007

12 April 2007 Australia Council—Answers to questions taken on notice—dated 14 May 2007.

12 April 2007 Australian Film Commission—Answers to questions taken on notice.

15 May 2007 International Public Affairs Network—Supplementary evidence on audit recommendations: International public Affairs network.
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade—Answers to questions taken on notice, dated 18 May 2007.

15 May 2007 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade—Answers to questions taken on notice, dated 17 July 2007

Appendix 3

Public hearings and witnesses

WEDNESDAY, 14 MARCH 2007 – CANBERRA

Bennett, Professor Bruce Harry, Member, Australia-India Council

Carroll, Mr Ian, Acting Director, New Media and Digital Services and Director, designate Innovation, Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Connor, Mr Thomas, Assistant Secretary, North East Asia Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Da Rin, Ms Jenny, Director, Media and Parliamentary Services, Australian Agency for International Development

Dysart, Ms Dinah Mary, Deputy Chair, Australia-China Council

Gage, Mr John Edward Stephen, Director, Australian National Centre for Latin American Studies

Green, Mr Murray Raymond, Director, ABC International, Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Griffin, Mr John, Assistant Secretary, South and West Asia Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Jones, Mr Barry Philip, Chief Executive Officer, Invest Australia

Lin, Ms Katy, Desk Officer, Images of Australia Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Manguy, Mr Jean-Gabriel, Head, Radio Australia, Australian Broadcasting Corporation

March, Mr Alan, Assistant Director General, Humanitarian Coordination and Public Affairs, Australian Agency for International Development

Nance, Mr Greg, Director, National Sports Programs, Australian Sports Commission

Strahan, Dr Lachlan, Assistant Secretary, Images of Australia Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Volk, Ms Felicity, Director, Projects, Images of Australia Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Wheelahan, Mr Bernard, Chair, Council on Australia Latin America Relations

THURSDAY, 15 MARCH 2007 – MELBOURNE

Carroll, Ms Alison Miranda, Director, Asialink Arts, Asialink

Chapman, Mr Scott, Director, Commerce and Marketing, City of Melbourne

McGregor, Ms Jennifer Margaret, Chief Executive Officer, Asialink

Murray, Dr Kevin, Director, Craft Victoria

Pitchford, Mr David, Chief Executive, City of Melbourne

Sanders, Ms Erica Billington, Executive Director, Museums Australia, Victoria Branch

Sharwood, Ms Jane, Manager, Melbourne International, City of Melbourne

Siracusa, Professor Joseph M., Professor of Global Studies, RMIT University

Snedden, Ms Fiona, Chair, Business and International Relations Committee, City of Melbourne

Vaughan, Dr Gerard, Director, National Gallery of Victoria

Wells, Dr Julie, Director, Policy and Planning, RMIT University

Zirnsak, Dr Mark, Director Justice and International Mission Unit, Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

WEDNESDAY, 11 APRIL 2007 – CANBERRA - Roundtable

Broinowski, Dr Alison Elizabeth, Private capacity

Chitty, Professor Narendranath Jayantha, Private capacity

Freeman, Mr Chris, Private capacity

Hawke, Dr Allan Douglas, Private capacity

Horiuchi, Dr Yusaku, Private capacity

Kerr, Dr Pauline, Private capacity

Townsend, Mr Jacob, Private capacity

Wilson, Mr Trevor, Private capacity

WEDNESDAY, 11 APRIL 2007 – CANBERRA

Biddle, Dr Bob, Acting Chief Veterinary Officer, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Buffinton, Ms Fiona, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Education International, Department of Education, Science and Training

Burns, Mr Craig, Executive Manager, International Division, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Cowan, Ms Sara, Branch Manager, International Science Branch, Department of Education, Science and Training

Durant, Professor Graham, Director, Questacon, the National Science and Technology Centre, Department of Education, Science and Training

Hunter, Mr Stephen, Deputy Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and Executive Director, Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service

Mirchandani, Mr Prakash, Managing Director, Media Gurus

Pezzullo, Mr Michael, Deputy Secretary, Strategy, Department of Defence

Schipp, Mr Mark, General Manager, Technical Standards, Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

THURSDAY, 12 APRIL 2007 – SYDNEY

Brown, Ms Karilyn, Executive Director, Community Partnerships and Market Development, Australia Council for the Arts

Cameron-Smith, Mr Matthew, Manager, International Operations, Tourism Australia

Coningham, Mr Kirk, Private capacity

Cruickshank, Ms Jane, Programs Manager, Industry and Cultural Development, Australian Film Commission

Keele, Ms Kathy, Chief Executive Officer, Australia Council for the Arts

O'Neil, Ms Helen Janet, Executive Director, Australian Major Performing Arts Group

Pressler, Ms April, Executive Secretary, Foreign Correspondents Association Australia and South Pacific

Walterlin, Mr Urs, President, Foreign Correspondents Association Australia and South Pacific

TUESDAY, 15 MAY 2007 – CANBERRA

Bandharangshi, Ms Marissa, Executive Officer, Images of Australia Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Hocking, Professor Brian, Private Capacity

Meert, Mr John, Group Executive Director, Australian National Audit Office

Payne, Mr James Roy, Member, International Public Affairs Network

Reilly, Dr Benjamin, Director, Centre for Democratic Institutions

Stewart, Mr Christopher Robert, Member, International Public Affairs Network

Strahan, Dr Lachlan, Assistant Secretary, Images of Australia Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Thompson, Mr Grant Alexander, Convenor, International Public Affairs Network.

White, Mr Peter, Executive Director, Australian National Audit Office

Appendix 4

Roundtable participants

Dr Alison Broinowski is a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Asian Societies and Histories at the Australian National University. She received her doctorate for a study of representations of Australia in ten Asian countries. Formerly an Australian diplomat, Dr Broinowski's assignments included cultural attache in Tokyo and director of the Australia–Japan Foundation. She has worked for over twenty years on mutual images of Australia and Asian countries. Her monographs include *The Yellow Lady: Australian Impressions of Asia* (OUP 1992, 1996) and *About Face: Asian Accounts of Australia* (Scribe 2003). Dr Broinowski is the editor of *Understanding ASEAN* (Macmillan 1982), *Australia, Asia, and the Media* (Griffith University 1982), *ASEAN into the 1990s* (Macmillan 1990), and *Double Vision: Asian Accounts of Australia* (Pandanus 2004). She co-authored with James Wilkinson *The Third Try: Can the UN Work?* (Scribe 2005), and her latest book is *Allied and Addicted* (Scribe 2007).

Professor Naren Chitty is Head of the Department of International Communication and Foundation Chair in International Communication at Macquarie University in Sydney. He is the Deputy Dean of the Division of Society, Culture, Media and Philosophy. Professor Chitty has a Master's degree in International Communications (1988) and a PhD in International Relations (1992), both from American University. Professor Chitty introduced an MA in International Communication at Macquarie University in 1991 and founded the *Journal of International Communication* in 1994. He has taught for Macquarie University in Sydney, Singapore and Hong Kong and for the University of South Australia in Singapore and Malaysia. Professor Chitty has also been a Visiting Professor at Sorbonne Nouvelle University, Paris (2004), Michigan State University and American University (1995).

Mr Chris Freeman was directly involved in Australia's international public diplomacy and advocacy programs for a period of 35 years (1970–2005). He joined the Department of Immigration's overseas information network in 1970 and in January 1974 was transferred to the Australian Information Service (renamed Promotion Australia in the mid-1980s). In 1987, when responsibility for international public diplomacy was transferred to the then Department of Foreign Affairs, Mr Freeman was 'integrated' into DFA, together with Promotion Australia's other 140 staff. In 1996, when DFAT abolished its specialist public diplomacy unit, he was one of only 11 public affairs specialists out of more than 50 who remained in the department. In 1997, Mr Freeman served as director of DFAT's International Media Centre in advance of the Sydney Olympic Games. In 2000, he established a Commonwealth issues/crisis management unit in the lead-up to and during the Games. From 1999 to 2005, he was responsible for overseeing the department's website, its media visitor program and production of public affairs material. Mr Freeman was also responsible for overseeing public diplomacy programs in all DFAT posts. This involved setting of policy guidelines and providing advice and guidance to Australian

and locally-engaged staff on how to conduct effective public diplomacy and advocacy campaigns.

He was editor of the two major departmental Public Diplomacy Handbooks in 2003 and 2005. In 2001, Mr Freeman was closely involved in tender and selection process for the establishment of an Asia Pacific regional broadcasting service.

Dr Alan Hawke is the Chancellor of the Australian National University. He had a distinguished 22 year career with the Commonwealth Public Service which included senior posts in the Department of Community Services and Health and as Secretary of the Department of Defence, the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Department of Transport and Regional Services. He completed his public service to Australia as High Commissioner to New Zealand with accreditation to the Cook Islands and responsibilities for Niue, the Pitcairn Islands and the Tokelau Islands. The Australian Financial Review's 'Boss' Magazine, named Dr Hawke one of Australia's top 30 true leaders in its inaugural list in 2001. He is currently a member of the Foreign Affairs Council and the National Security Advisory Council.

Dr Pauline Kerr is Fellow and Director of Studies at the Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy (APCD). She teaches two courses in the APCD's Master of Diplomacy degree: Contemporary Challenges in Diplomacy and Negotiation and Conflict Management. Dr Kerr's research interests include diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific, peace making negotiations in internal conflicts in Southeast Asia and the Pacific and traditional and human security developments in the Asia-Pacific. Her recent publications include 'The Contemporary Asia-Pacific Security Situation: Challenges for Diplomacy in the Push for Peace', in Peter Greener (ed.) Push for Peace and 'Trends and Options in Transnational Policy: A Conference Report', Australian Journal of International Affairs, vol. 59, no.1, March 2005. Before joining the College, Dr Kerr served as academic coordinator for the Diploma of Foreign Affairs and Trade, organised through DFAT.

Mr Trevor Wilson graduated in Asian Studies from the Australian National University and was an Australian diplomat from 1967–2003. He was posted to the Australian Embassy in Tokyo three times, the last as Deputy Head of Mission from 1996–2000. He served as Australian Ambassador to Myanmar from 2000–2003, before retirement. He holds positions at the ANU as a Visiting Fellow on Myanmar in the Department of Political and Social Change and Project Manager at the Australia-Japan Research Centre. He comments and writes on Myanmar and has been convener of the Myanmar/Burma Update Conference for the ANU in 2004 and 2006. He edited the proceedings of the 2004 Update Conference as Myanmar's Long Road to National Reconciliation (2006).

Dr Yusaku Horiuchi is a Senior Lecturer in the Crawford School of Economics and Government at the Australian National University. He gained an MA in international and development economics from Yale University in 1995 and a PhD in political science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2001. Dr Horiuchi recently organised a conference on public diplomacy in Japan and the Asia Pacific. Dr

Horiuchi is the recipient of the 2006 J. G. Crawford Award for the best paper on Japan or Australia–Japan relations.

Dr Horiuchi and Mr Wilson are currently working on a book on public diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region. The book will examine why the state makes public diplomacy efforts and how their efforts changed over time. The aim is to formulate a better theoretical framework to understand public diplomacy in the context of today's global and dynamic international relations and to pave the way for further development of studies on public diplomacy.

Appendix 5

Bilateral foundations, councils and institutes promoting people-to-people links and accurate, contemporary images of Australia in support of the Government's foreign and trade policy goals

The following summaries are based on information obtained from Annual Reports, relevant legislation and from respective websites. The committee quotes extensively from these sources.

Australia–Japan Foundation

The Australia–Japan Foundation was established as a statutory body under the *Australia–Japan Foundation Act 1976*. As part of the Government’s response to the Review of Corporate Governance of Statutory Authorities and Office Holders conducted by Mr John Uhrig, the Government considered that the statutory status of the Australia–Japan Foundation should be revoked. It determined and the Foundation be re-formed as a non-statutory bilateral foundation within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on the same footing as other bilateral bodies established in the department to undertake similar functions. In introducing the bill to abolish the statutory status of the Foundation, the Minister for Foreign Affairs said:

It is anticipated that revoking the foundation’s statutory status and bringing it into the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will better align the foundation’s activities with the government’s foreign and trade policy objectives in Japan, one of our most important and productive bilateral relationships. It is also expected to improve the foundation’s administrative efficiency. The foundation will continue its important work in delivering programs in support of those objectives while promoting contemporary Australia as a culturally diverse and technologically sophisticated society.¹

The Act was repealed in December 2006 which effectively abolished the Foundation as a statutory body. The Foundation now operates under the aegis of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Functions of Foundation

The functions of the Foundation are to encourage a closer relationship between the peoples of Australia and Japan and to further the mutual knowledge and understanding of those peoples and, in particular, but without limiting the foregoing:

- to promote the study by the people of each of those countries of the language, culture and traditions, the social and political institutions, and the economic and industrial organization, of the people of the other country;
- to promote the study by the people of each of those countries of the physical features, climate and ecology of the other country; and
- to encourage people of each of those countries to visit the other country.²

The annual report notes that this involves: broadening perceptions of contemporary Australia as a dynamic, sophisticated and internationally competitive country through the creation and maintenance of a broad range of allies and stakeholders; and strengthening bilateral relations to advance Australia’s national interests.³

1 The Hon. Alexander Downer, House Hansard, 10 May 2006, p. 1.

2 Section 5, the *Australia-Japan Foundation Act 1976* (the Act was repealed by Act No. 95 of 2006).

3 Australia–Japan Foundation, *Annual Report 2005–06*, p. 6.

Outcome 1—Enhanced Japanese perceptions of Australia and strengthened bilateral relationship to advance Australia’s national interests.

Output 1—Provision of education programs and projects about contemporary Australia to targeted Japanese groups.

Output 2—Increased development and distribution of information about Australia and the bilateral relationship

Output 3—Increased interaction between Australian and Japanese individuals and organisations that showcase or demonstrate Australian expertise in select areas.⁴

4 Australia–Japan Foundation, *Annual Report 2005–06*, p. 10.

The Australia–China Council

The Australia-China Council (ACC) was established by an Executive Council Order in 1978 and reports to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Order-In-Council outlines the ACC's purpose and functions. The ACC is funded through the Australian Government's International Relations Grants Programme (formerly Discretionary Grants Programme). The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade administers the Council's funds and reports on the administration of these funds in its annual report.⁵

Australia–China Council Mission Statement and key objectives

The ACC mission statement is to broaden and deepen relations between Australia and China by:

- fostering in Australia and China greater awareness and understanding of each other's countries;
- developing and expanding the areas of contact and exchange between Australia and China and their people.⁶

The ACC's key objectives are to:

- Initiate, develop and support activities consistent with the stated objectives, strategies and priorities within the Council's programme areas (Appendix B).
- Stress ACC-initiated programmes and activities, rather than requests for one-off funding, giving priority to promoting Australia in China.
- Promote complementarities between the Council's different programme areas.
- Maintain some flexibility so as to support new initiatives brought to the Council by other bodies.
- Provide seed funding to projects most likely to produce continuous benefits.
- Monitor, review and modify programmes as necessary to ensure the best match between outcomes and Council objectives.
- Complement, rather than duplicate, the activities of other institutions active in Australia-China relations.
- Comply with all Australian Government financial requirements.⁷

The Council's achievements are measured against the one outcome and three outputs.⁸

5 Australia–China Council, *Annual Report 2004–05*, pp. 3 and 8.

6 Australia–China Council, *Annual Report 2004–05*, p. 3

7 Australia–China Council, *Annual Report 2004–05*, p. 3.

8 Australia–China Council, *Annual Report 2004–05*, p. 3.

Outcome 1—Advancement of Australia’s national interests through the promotion of mutual understanding between Australia and China, and broadening and deepening areas of contact and exchange.

Output—promote in china an understanding about Australia and its value.

Output 2—Foster China knowledge and skills in Australia.

Output 3—Broaden and deepen areas of bilateral contact and exchange, particularly in areas demonstrating Australian expertise.⁹

9 Australia–China Council, *Annual Report 2004–05*, p. 9.

Australia–Indonesia Institute

The Australia-Indonesia Institute (AII) was established on 27 April 1989 under an Order-in-Council. It reports to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.¹⁰

Mission statement and goals

To develop relations between Australia and Indonesia by promoting greater mutual understanding and by contributing to the enlargement over the longer term of the areas of contact and exchange between the people of Australia and Indonesia.¹¹

Goals

- To promote in each country increased exposure to the other through media, educational, cultural, sporting and professional activities.
- To create in Indonesia a nucleus of people with expertise in Australian affairs, especially current and future opinion leaders.
- To create within Australia a wider range of people with knowledge about Indonesia, especially current and future opinion makers.
- To portray Australia as culturally diverse, educationally, scientifically and technologically advanced and economically enterprising.
- To increase understanding of and to improve access for Australians to the cultural diversity of Indonesian society.¹²
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10 Australia–Indonesia Institute, *Annual Report 2004–05*, p. 8.

11 Australia–Indonesia Institute, *Annual Report 2004–05*, p. 10.

12 Australia–Indonesia Institute, *Annual Report 2004–05*, p. 10.

The Australia-Korea Foundation

The Australia–Korea Foundation (AKF) was established in May 1992 by the Commonwealth Government to develop and deepen relations between Australia and the Republic of Korea. The Foundation supports and promotes people-to-people exchanges and sustainable institutional links covering the spectrum of Australia’s relations with Korea, particularly in the areas of commerce, industry and tourism; science and technology; education; and arts and the media.¹³

The order constituting the Australia–Korea Foundation, recognises that:

- the Australian Government is desirous of further developing relations between Australia and Korea:
- such relations should be developed by the promotion in Korea of a greater awareness of Australia, and by the promotion in Australia of a greater awareness of Korea and the enlargement over the longer term of the areas of contact and exchange between Australia and Korea and their respective peoples:
- it is desirable that there be established a body for the purpose of providing a focus for the collection, exchange and dissemination of information, and a source of advice and strategic guidance, in relation to the ways in which such relations may be encouraged, strengthened and developed.¹⁴

The Foundation consists of:

- a Board comprising
- a Chairperson; and
- the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) or a DFAT representative appointed by the Secretary as an ex-officio member; and
- not less than 4 and not more than 13 other members; and
- a secretariat provided by DFAT.¹⁵

The Chairperson is appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs for a period not exceeding five years, and on a part-time basis.

Members of the Board, other than the Chairperson and the ex-officio DFAT member, are appointed by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs for a period not exceeding three years and on a part-time basis.¹⁶

13 Australia–Korea Foundation, *Annual Report 2003–04*, p. 1.

14 Appendix 1, Australia–Korea Foundation, *Annual Report 2003–04*, p. 28.

15 Appendix 1, Australia–Korea Foundation, *Annual Report 2003–04*, p. 28.

16 Appendix 1, Australia–Korea Foundation, *Annual Report 2003–04*, p. 29.

The Chairperson and members may be reappointed.

The function of the Board is to make recommendations to the Australian Government through the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs for the broadening of the relationship between Australia and Korea, with particular emphasis on:

- raising awareness of Australia in Korea, and of Korea in Australia;
- the promotion of visits and exchanges between the two countries of individuals and groups for the purpose of broadening relations in a number of areas including, in particular, commerce, education, science and technology, industrial relations, culture, sports, and the news media;
- encouraging the development of institutional links amongst universities, museums, libraries, technical colleges, research institutes, professional organisations and appropriate non-government organisations;
- maintaining liaison with the Korea–Australia Foundation and co-operating, where appropriate, with its programs; and the support of Australian studies in Korea and of Korean studies in Australia.¹⁷

In developing its function the Board should consult as widely as possible with individuals, organisations, enterprises and government departments and agencies associated or concerned with the broadening of relations between Australia and Korea.

17 Appendix 1, Australia–Korea Foundation, *Annual Report 2003–04*, pp. 28–9.

Australia–India Council

The Australian Government established the Australia–India Council in 1992 to broaden the relationship between Australia and India by encouraging and supporting contacts and increasing levels of knowledge and understanding between the people of both countries.¹⁸

The Council comprises a board of members with interests in the Australia–India relationship, drawn from a wide cross-section of the Australian community. Mr Michael Abbott QC was appointed as Chairman of the Council in March 1999 for a period of three years.

The Council is supported by a secretariat located in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Canberra. The Australian High Commission in New Delhi promotes the Council's activities in India.

The Council has the following mission statement:

The Australia–India Council promotes Australia's interests in India by initiating and supporting activities designed to enhance awareness and understanding between the peoples and institutions of both countries.

In carrying out its mission, the Council aims:

- to broaden awareness and understanding in Australia and India of each country's culture, society and areas of excellence
- to encourage activities that promote economic relations between Australia and India
- to establish new areas of contact between Australia and India
- to develop lasting links involving a wide range of people in both countries.

To achieve these aims, the Council has the following objectives:

- to initiate and support, among influential persons and groups in Australia and India, activities that encourage the development of relations between the two countries, including economic and commercial relations
- to initiate and support exchanges that demonstrate to Indians Australian excellence in the arts, science and technology, sport and other fields and which promote knowledge in India of Australian cultural and social attributes
- to encourage Australians to take a greater interest in developments in India through Council supported activities that increase the level and quality of

18 The Australia–India Council, p. 1 of 4, http://www.dfat.gov.au/aic/aic_intro.html (accessed 29 January 2007).

public awareness, and broaden community knowledge and understanding, of India in Australia

- to initiate, monitor and publicise important developments in the various areas of the relationship between Australia and India
- to seek maximum publicity for the Council's activities as a means of encouraging wider public appreciation of, and support for, the Council's objectives
- to seek community involvement in, and private sector support for, the Council's activities.¹⁹

19 The Australia–India Council, p. 2 of 4, http://www.dfat.gov.au/aic/aic_intro.html (accessed 29 January 2007).

Council on Australia Latin America Relations (COALAR)

The Council on Australia Latin America Relations (COALAR) was formed in response to a report by the Trade Sub Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade ('Building Australia's Trade and Investment Relationship with South America', September 2000).²⁰

One of the report's recommendations was to 'establish a mechanism with funding to promote initiatives, provide leadership and display commitment to developing the relationship through tangible achievements'. As a result, Mr Downer and Mr Vaile announced the formation of COALAR in March 2001, to coincide with a visit to the region by Mr Downer.²¹

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade agreed in March 2004 to extend COALAR for a further period of three years, until 30 June 2007.²²

The objectives of COALAR are to

- influence corporate Australia and assist in developing government policies so as to enhance Australia's economic, political and social relations with Latin America
- support Australia's broader diplomatic and economic objectives in the Latin American region
- foster a greater awareness of Australia in Latin America, and of Latin America in Australia.²³

20 Council on Australia Latin America Relations, *Annual Report 2005–06*, p. 4.

21 Council on Australia Latin America Relations, *Annual Report 2005–06*, p. 4.

22 Council on Australia Latin America Relations, *Annual Report 2005–06*, p. 4.

23 Council on Australia Latin America Relations, *Annual Report 2005–06*, p. 4.

The Council for Australian–Arab Relations

The following information is taken directly from the 2004–05 Annual Report.

The Council for Australian–Arab Relations was established by the Australian Government in December 2002 to strengthen ties between Australia and Arab countries.²⁴

Mission Statement

To promote between the peoples of Australia and the Arab world mutual interests and a greater understanding and acceptance of each other’s cultures, values, beliefs and diversity.²⁵

Objectives

In carrying out its mission, the Council aims to:

- broaden awareness and understanding of each other’s history, culture, society and areas of excellence
- promote greater understanding of mutual foreign policy interests
- encourage activities that generate economic benefits for Australia and Arab countries
- promote Australia’s image in the Arab world as a culturally diverse nation of creative and innovative achievement in technology, industry, agriculture, education, the arts and sport
- identify opportunities for enhanced collaboration between Australia and Arab countries
- establish a strategic framework and long-term plan to foster and promote relations between Australia and Arab countries
- complement the work of existing organisations through strategic partnerships.²⁶

Publicity, Promotion and Media

- To promote Australian achievements, joint ventures and success stories of Australia in Arab countries, and of Arab countries in Australia.
- To raise awareness in Arab countries of contemporary Australian society, traditions and capabilities.

24 Council for Australian–Arab Relations, *Annual Report 2004–05*, p. 1.

25 Council for Australian–Arab Relations, *Annual Report 2004–05*, p. 1.

26 Council for Australian–Arab Relations, *Annual Report 2004–05*, p. 3.

- To promote to Australians the importance of the relationship between Australia and Arab countries.
- To promote the work of CAAR in Australia and Arab countries.²⁷

Business and Commercial

- To promote awareness of the potential of Arab markets among Australian business people.
- To promote in Arab countries an awareness of trade and investment, and tourism opportunities in Australia.
- To promote bilateral trade opportunities between Australia and Arab countries.
- To identify opportunities for employment and support the placement of Australians with Arabic language and business skills.
- To enhance awareness of Australian capabilities as a supplier of sophisticated services including, but not limited to, education, information technology and tourism, in addition to traditional commodities.²⁸

Education

- To promote within Australia an informed understanding of Arab society and politics.
- To promote and facilitate collaboration between universities and research organisations in Australia and Arab countries.
- To promote Arabic language in Australia.
- To promote Australian studies in Arab countries.
- To develop a cadre of Australian graduates with Arabic language skills and a practical understanding of business practice and culture in Arab countries.
- To encourage Australian students to develop a long-term interest in Australian–Arab relations.²⁹

Cultural

- To foster greater awareness in Arab countries of contemporary life in Australia and in Australia of contemporary life in Arab countries by supporting and promoting cultural, heritage and sporting activities.
- To deepen understanding of the traditions, values and beliefs of contemporary Australian and Arab societies.

27 Council for Australian–Arab Relations, *Annual Report 2004–05*, p. 6.

28 Council for Australian–Arab Relations, *Annual Report 2004–05*, p. 6.

29 Council for Australian–Arab Relations, *Annual Report 2004–05*, pp. 6–7.

- To complement the marketing activities of Australian companies and organisations.
- To promote cross-cultural relations³⁰

30 Council for Australian–Arab Relations, *Annual Report 2004–05*, p. 7.

Australia–Malaysia Institute (AMI)

The following information is an extract from DFAT website.

The establishment of the Australia-Malaysia Institute (AMI) was announced by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, The Hon Alexander Downer MP, on 7 April 2005. The announcement took place during the visit to Australia by the Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, an event which underscored the long-standing links between Australia and Malaysia in defence, security, business, education and culture. The establishment of the AMI will assist the Government in its efforts to enhance these links further and to build a strong platform for the future.

The key objective of the Institute is to strengthen Australia's people-to-people and institutional links with Malaysia. By supporting existing links and promoting new ones, the Institute aims to deepen mutual understanding and cooperation between Australia and Malaysia for the mutual benefit of the people of both nations.

The AMI is a wholly Australian initiative. The funding for the Institute comes from the existing resources of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The Institute's mission is to promote and further enhance the existing bilateral relationship by increasing linkages between people and institutions of Australia and Malaysia, and by the promotion of Australia in Malaysia.³¹

Key Objectives

The Institute's main objective is to develop strategies to further promote and enhance the bilateral relationship. In developing strategies, the Institute will aim to:

- Increase knowledge and promote understanding between the people and institutions of Australia and Malaysia
- Further enhance people-to-people links
- Support Australia's broader diplomatic objectives in Malaysia.³²

31 Councils—Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: Australia–Malaysia Institute, http://www.dfat.gov.au/ami/about_ami.html (accessed 30 January 2007)

32 Councils—Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: Australia–Malaysia Institute, http://www.dfat.gov.au/ami/about_ami.html (accessed 30 January 2007).

Australia–Thailand Institute

The establishment of the Australia–Thailand Institute (ATI) was announced by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Alexander Downer MP, on 29 June 2005. The purpose of the ATI is to further promote bilateral relations with Thailand and to expand institutional, cultural and people-to-people links.³³

ATI Objectives

The Institute's function is to enhance and promote bilateral relations between the two countries. In carrying out its mission, the Institute will aim to:

- broaden awareness and understanding in Australia and Thailand of each other's culture, traditions, social and political institutions and areas of excellence;
- contribute to the development of Australia's economic and political relations with Thailand;
- promote increased social, cultural, business and other people-to-people contacts between the two countries;
- support Australia's broader diplomatic objectives in Thailand.³⁴

The ATI's activities will be directed towards achieving the Institute's purposes and may include (but not be limited to) the following:

- funding projects to implement the treaty-level Australia-Thailand Agreement on Bilateral Cooperation, particularly with respect to cooperation in science and technology, public sector reform, education, environment; tourism, energy, information, technology and telecommunications;
- activities to promote the Thailand-Australia Free Trade Agreement (TAFTA) and economic relations more broadly;
- professional networking and institutional links particularly in the areas of health, architecture and design cultural, educational and sporting exchanges visits by high profile persons in both directions;
- activities aimed at encouraging Australian community and media interest in Thailand and vice versa;
- activities in consultation with Images of Australia Branch (IAB) to promote increased knowledge of multiculturalism and Australia's educational, scientific and technological capabilities; consultation with individuals and groups,

33 Councils—Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia–Thailand Institute, <http://www.dfat.gov.au/ati/> (accessed 6 June 2007).

34 Australia–Thailand Institute, *Annual Report 2005/06*.

including business organisations, involved in broadening relations between Australia and Thailand.³⁵