



Australian Institute of International Affairs

AIIA 80th Anniversary National Conference *Foreign Policy Priorities for Australia*

Outcomes Report

The Australian Institute of International Affairs' 80th Anniversary National Conference on "Foreign Policy Priorities for Australia" was held in Canberra on 21 November 2013 at the Hyatt Hotel. The conference focused on the key issues for Australia's foreign policy priorities in light of the federal elections in September 2013 and the resulting change of government.

Highlights included:

- The expertise and insight of leading Australian government, diplomatic, academic and business figures.
- Involvement of more than 150 participants from key government departments and policy institutes, universities and academic centres, international organisations and the media.
- Eloquent and insightful speeches offering diverse perspectives on Australia's engagement within the international community, including contributions from prominent members of current and former government.
- Outreach to the Australian community through significant media coverage including local press and broadcast by Australia's Public Affairs Channel (A-PAC).



Allan Gyngell AO FAIIA, former Director-General of the Office of National Assessments, addresses the AIIA's National Conference.



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Objectives

The National Conference celebrated the AIIA's 80th Anniversary as an independent national institution. The theme of the conference, *Foreign Policy Priorities for Australia*, was designed to bring together leading diplomatic, government, academic and business figures to engage in a debate that covered the topics central to Australia's course in foreign policy.

Specific objectives of the Forum included:

- To bring together Australian experts in the fields of security, economics and global issues.
- To look at issues which will affect the foreign policy of the new Australian government following the September 2013 election.
- To identify realistic objectives and goals for Australia's foreign policy in the pursuit of both security and economic interests in the Indo-Pacific.
- To analyse the current structure, focus and funding of Australia's foreign affairs to assess how it can best be positioned in order to assist the government in achieving its foreign policy objectives.



From left to right: AIIA National President John McCarthy, the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, and Professor Nick Bisley, Editor of the *Australian Journal of International Affairs*.



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Speakers

Australian Foreign Policy

John McCarthy, National President, Australian Institute of International Affairs
The Hon Bob Carr, former Minister for Foreign Affairs
The Hon Alexander Downer AC, former Minister for Foreign Affairs
Professor Michael Wesley, Director Academic Outreach and Research, National Security College, ANU
The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister

Enhancing Australia's Prosperity

Martine Letts, CEO, Australia China Business Council
Tony Walker FAIIA, International Editor, *Australian Financial Review*
Innes Willox, Chief Executive, Australian Industry Group

Strengthening Australia's Security

Linda Jakobson, Director, East Asia Program, Lowy Institute for International Policy
Professor Michael L'Estrange, Head, National Security College, ANU and former Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Ric Smith AO PSM FAIIA, former Secretary, Department of Defence
Professor Hugh White FAIIA, Professor for Strategic Studies, ANU

Contribution to Global Issues

Dr Russell Trood, National President, United Nations Association of Australia and Adjunct Professor Defence and Security, US Studies Centre, University of Sydney
Professor Hilary Charlesworth FAIIA, Director, Centre for International Governance and Justice, ANU
Professor Robyn Eckersley, Professor for Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne
Erika Feller FAIIA, Former Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



From left to right: Professor Michael L'Estrange, Linda Jakobson, Emeritus Professor James Cotton FAIIA, Professor Hugh White FAIIA, and Ric Smith AO PSM FAIIA on "Strengthening Australia's Security"



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Participants

Speakers and participants came from a variety of organisations that included:

Embassies and High Commissions:

- High Commissioner of South Africa
- Ambassador of Afghanistan
- Ambassador of Portugal
- Ambassador of Poland
- Ambassador of Finland
- Ambassador of the Republic of Colombia
- Ambassador of the Republic of Argentina
- High Commissioner of Canada
- Head of the General Delegation of Palestine

Government

- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Department of Education
- Department of Defence
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet South Australia

Academic Institutions and Think Tanks

- Australian National University
- University of Sydney
- University of New South Wales
- University of Melbourne
- University of Adelaide
- University of Tasmania
- Lowy Institute for International Policy
- Australian Strategic Policy Institute

Business

- Australia-China Business Council
- Australian Industry Group
- International Chamber of Commerce
- CMAX Communications



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Media Coverage

The AIIA 80th Anniversary National Conference was attended by multiple media representatives:

- Australia's Public Affairs Channel
- Australian Broadcasting Corporation
- Sky News
- Win
- Fairfax
- SBS
- Canberra Times



The Hon Alexander Downer AC being interviewed by the media

The Conference generated significant media coverage including:

Television and Radio

- Interview with the Hon Alexander Downer AC on *ABC Insiders*
<http://www.abc.net.au/insiders/content/2013/s3897783.htm>
- Conference mention on *Canberra Mornings Live: Thursday 21 November*
- Sky News broadcast
Interview with John McCarthy
Interview with Professor Hugh White FAIIA
Interview with the Hon Bob Carr
<http://video.news.com.au/v/145320/Flag-burned-as-spying-anger-grows?c=News&p=15>
- Footage provided to Australia's Public Affairs Channel (A-PAC) for broadcast on pay TV
- Footage on AIIA's You Tube Channel AIIAvision:
<http://www.youtube.com/user/aiiavision/>

Print and Online

- Sydney Morning Herald *Politics Live: November 21, 2013*
<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/the-pulse-live/politics-live-november-21-2013-20131121-2xwo6.html>



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Feedback

The AIIA received superb feedback on the conference:

'Superb. I got a lot out of it' (the Hon Bob Carr)

'Congratulations for running such a successful conference last week. I loved your story of Brett!'
(Robyn Eckersley, University of Melbourne)

'It was well run and most enjoyable facilitating many contacts' (Mike, ADFA)

'Congratulation for the impressive panel you managed to gather' (Eric Lerais, DCNS)

'It was an excellent event...the Security panel was particularly rich' (Michael Small, High Commissioner of Canada)

'Thank you for the excellent standard of the speakers and panels at the AIIA Conference' (Jacob Traeger, CMAX Communications)

'Australia needs more events like this.' (Zoe Dauth, University of Melbourne)

- 'Truly excellent'
- 'Overall a great day, thanks!'
- 'Good to have excellent political, academic and bureaucratic comments'
- 'The support staff and interns were great! Very friendly and helpful'
- 'Great selection of speakers all along the academic/practical spectrum with coverage of a variety of views'
- 'All most stimulating' 'Excellent'
- 'The speakers were excellent and highly thought provoking. You should be very proud!'



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Acknowledgements

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- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Routledge Taylor & Francis
- Odyssey Travel

The Australian Institute of International Affairs would like to thank all participants in the conference, particularly the speakers and moderators.

The organising Sub-Committee was comprised of:

- Mr John McCarthy AO FAIIA, National President, AIIA
- Ms Zara Kimpton OAM, National Vice-President, AIIA
- Ms Melissa Conley Tyler, National Executive Director, AIIA
- Mr John Robbins CSC, National Deputy Director, AIIA
- Mr Cameron Hawker, President, AIIA ACT
- Mr Colin Chapman, President, AIIA NSW
- Mr Geoffrey Ewing, President, AIIA QLD

The event would not have been possible without the dedication of the volunteer organising team:

- Ms Sophia Brook
- Mr Daniel Nichola
- Mr Will Lester
- Ms Rebeka Selmeczki
- Ms Aakriti Bhutoria
- Ms Almog Elijis
- Ms Polina Campbell
- Ms Gayathiri Ganeshan
- Mr Matt McDevitt
- Ms Katrina Senchuk



From left to right: Rebeka Selmeczki, Polina Campbell, Will Lester, Melissa Conley Tyler, Sophia Brook, Aakriti Bhutoria, Daniel Nichola, Almog Elijis