



Australian Institute of International Affairs

National Conference 2015

'Australian Foreign Policy: Regional or Global?'

Monday 19 October, Hotel Realm, Canberra

Outcomes Report

The AIIA National Conference 2015 was an opportunity to engage and promote understanding of Australia foreign policy. Building on the success of previous years, the AIIA's 2015 National Conference brought together some of Australia's leading international affairs experts to discuss Australia's foreign policy objectives and priorities in world affairs.

Highlights included:

- Record participation with more than 350 attendees
- High levels of youth engagement, with more than 130 students attending
- Successful Masterclass program, which provided a chance for students to engage in intimate discussion with prominent experts across seven fields
- Attendance of representatives from 24 foreign missions in Canberra, including 15 heads of mission
- Dynamic and engaging discussion throughout all sessions
- Significant media coverage in TV, radio and print media
- Ongoing contribution to debate through online discussion





Objectives

The Australian Institute of International Affairs National Conference is designed to create informed debate and discussion on Australia's role in world affairs.

Specific objectives of the conference included:

- Providing a forum for expert discussion
- Producing policy recommendations
- Engaging the wider community through dissemination of results
- Encouraging media reporting
- Providing an opportunity for the AIIA to showcase itself
- Focus on Australia's role as an important actor in world affairs



View of the atrium at Realm during morning tea.



From Left: H.E. Pedro Raul Villagra Delgado (Ambassador of Argentina) speaking with H.E. Paulo Cunha-Alves (Ambassador of Portugal) and Mr Cedric Prieto (Deputy Ambassador of France).

From Left: LCDR Desmond Woods, Jacqueline Zwambila (former Ambassador of Zimbabwe), H.E. Paul Maddison (High Commissioner of Canada) and former Australian diplomat Mike Fogarty.





Australian Institute of International Affairs Speakers

Australian Foreign Policy

- The Hon Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs
- The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development
- John McCarthy FAIIA, National President, Australian Institute of International Affairs
- Senator Scott Ludlam, Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs, Australian Greens
- Chair: Zara Kimpton OAM, National Vice-President, Australian Institute of International Affairs



Enhancing Australia's Prosperity

- Justin Brown PSM, Acting Deputy Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Mukund Narayanamurti, Chief Executive Officer, Asialink Business
- Professor Mark Beeson, Professor of International Politics, University of Western Australia
- Chair: Jennifer Conley, Executive Director, Australian Advanced Manufacturing Council





Strengthening Australia's Security

- The Hon Gareth Evans AC QC FAIIA, former Minister for Foreign Affairs and Chancellor of the Australian National University
- Professor Linda Jakobson, Visiting Professor, United States Studies Centre and co-founder, China Matters
- Tom Switzer, journalist and Research Associate, United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney
- Professor Ramesh Thakur, Director, Centre for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU and former Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations
- Chair: Dr Sue Boyd, former diplomat and Immediate Past President of WA for AIIA



Contributing to Global Issues

- Professor Brian Schmidt AC, Nobel Prize in Physics and incoming Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University
- Tim Wilson, Australia's Human Rights Commissioner
- Dr Sara Davies, School of Government and International Relations at Griffith University and author of Global Politics of Health
- Michael Sheldrick, Senior Manager, Global Policy and Advocacy at the Global Poverty Project, New York, and Young Australian of the Year Finalist 2013
- Chair: Erika Feller FAIIA, Former Assistant High Commissioner of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees





Masterclass Program

Masterclasses were held the afternoon before the National Conference at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Civic Office and received very positive feedback from the 90 attendees and speakers. The classes were diverse, immersive and all run by leading figures in their field. Students and young professionals were given an opportunity to engage in an intimate discussion with leading figures in one of seven classes:

International Organisations

Erika Feller FAIIA, former Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Defence

Ric Smith AO PSM FAIIA, former Secretary of the Department of Defence

Diplomacy

Geoffrey Miller AO FAIIA, former Ambassador to Japan, South Korea and New Zealand

Intelligence

Allan Gyngell AO FAIIA, former Director-General of the Office of National Assessments and founding Executive Director of the Lowy Institute of International Policy

Media

Graeme Dobell FAIIA, former ABC and radio Australia Correspondent

Aid and Development

Dr Janet Hunt FAIIA, former Executive Director of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid

Academia

Professor James Cotton FAIIA, Emeritus Professor, UNSW Canberra

Taylor & Francis were also kind enough to host a 'Getting Published' workshop for Masterclass attendees. This was a great opportunity to add even more value to the experience and the feedback from this session was very positive. AIIA Director of Communications Niree Creed hosted a Communications Workshop for AIIA state office-holders and volunteers to help build their technical skills.

After a fantastic afternoon of classes the attendees then moved to a local Canberra venue to continue networking before continuing their immersive learning and networking experience at the National Conference the next day.



Participants

Participants came from a variety of organisations:

Diplomatic:

- Jakub Kulhánek, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Security and Multilateral Issues, Czech Republic
- HE Pedro Raul Villagra Delgado, Ambassador of the Argentine Republic and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps
- HE Paul Maddison, High Commissioner of Canada
- HE Clemencia Forero-Ucros, Ambassador of the Republic of Colombia
- HE Martin Pohl, Ambassador of the Czech Republic
- HE Borge Petersen, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark
- HE Noel White, Ambassador of the Republic of Ireland
- HE Rima Ahmad Alaadeen, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- HE Chris Seed, High Commissioner of New Zealand
- HE Charles W. Lepani, High Commissioner of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea
- HE Paulo Cunha-Alves, Ambassador of the Portuguese Republic
- HE Nabil Mohammed A. Al Saleh, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- HE Ms Helena Drnovsek Zorko, Ambassador Designate, Republic of Slovenia
- HE Dr Igor Bartho, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic
- HE Abel Guterres, Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
- HE Dr Obaid Al Ketbi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates
- Mr Mohammed Al-Jabir, Chargé D’Affaires, Embassy of the State of Qatar
- Mr Izzat Adbulhadi, Head of the General Delegation of Palestine
- Mr Alvaro Ayala-Melendez, Deputy Head of Mission of the Republic of Colombia
- Mr Antii Niemela, Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Finland
- Mr Cédric Prieto, First Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission of the French Republic
- Mr Sakius Tameo, Deputy High Commissioner of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea
- Diplomatic officers from the Embassies of Indonesia, Japan, Kuwait and South Africa
- Representative of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Australia.



Government:

- Australian Army
- Australian Parliamentary Library
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Defence
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Department of Immigration and Border Protection
- Royal Australian Navy
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Organisations

- Asialink Business
- Australia-Africa Business Council
- Australia China Youth Association (ACYA)
- Australian Strategic Policy Institute
- China Matters
- China Policy
- Confederation Of Indian Industry
- Executive Council of Australian Jewry
- Museum of Australian Democracy

Business

- AC Medical Technology (Suzhou) Co., Ltd.
- AMSAT International
- Checkmate Analytics
- Collection Law Partners
- Counter Proliferation Consulting
- KPMG
- Minter Ellison
- Northrop Grumman
- Woodside Energy

Universities:

- Australian Defence Force Academy
- Australian National University
- ANU Strategic and Defence Studies Centre
- Bond University
- Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies, ANU
- Chulalongkorn University



Australian Institute of International Affairs

- Deakin University
- Flinders University
- Griffith University
- Macquarie University
- Monash University
- Murdoch University
- National Security College
- RMIT University
- The University of Melbourne
- University of New South Wales
- University of Queensland
- University of Sydney
- United States Studies Centre
- University of Technology Sydney
- University of Western Australia
- University of Western Sydney
- University of Wollongong

Media

The Conference was attended by multiple media representatives, including:

- ABC
- Sky News
- SBS
- Win News
- Fairfax Media
- Australian Associated Press (AAP)

In the weeks following the conference generated significant media coverage including print and online articles published in *The Australian*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Business Spectator*.

- <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/kim-beazleys-parting-shot-stop-doing-diplomacy-on-the-cheap/story-fn59nm2j-1227573566822?sv>
- <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/dont-write-off-the-us-says-julie-bishop-20151019-gkcuc5.html>
- <http://www.businessspectator.com.au/article/2015/11/13/international-news/two-allies-different-agendas>



Exhibitors

The success of the event was facilitated by the contributions of sponsors and exhibitors. Exhibitors were able to engage conference guests with stands and promotional items. Stands were set up on the landings at the entrances to the ballroom, which were available to guests during session breaks.

The exhibitors were as follows:

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

DFAT has supported the AIIA for more than 40 years via its International Relations Grant Program and generously supported the 2015 National Conference and hosted Masterclasses the day prior to the event.

Northrop Grumman

Northrop Grumman is a global security, aerospace and defence technology company. As the fifth-largest defence contractor in the world, Northrop Grumman offers cutting edge security technology to governments around the world including Australia and its allies.

Campaign for Australian Aid

The Campaign for Australian Aid is a joint aid and development outreach initiative of the Make Poverty History and Micah Challenge coalitions, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Routledge Taylor & Francis

Routledge Taylor & Francis publishes the *Australian Journal of International Affairs* for the AIIA and kindly offered a workshop to Masterclass participants.

Oxford University Press

The AIIA publishes the *Australia in World Affairs* series with Oxford University Press along with the last two recipients of the AIIA's publication support grant.





Feedback

Very positive feedback was received for both the Conference and Masterclass program. Participants rated the speakers 4.7 out of 5 and organisation 4.5 out of 5, with overall satisfaction with the conference at 4.5 out of 5. Attendees were very enthusiastic about participating in future events and excitement for the next conference is already mounting. The following feedback was received:

'We congratulate you also on the perfect organisation and workflow of the conference and for its excellent outcome.'

– Miroslav Pisa, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Czech Republic in Canberra

'Thanks so much for inviting me to your terrific national conference. A thoroughly enjoyable experience. More power to you and all your colleagues on a job well done. I'll be sure to promote the AIA in my next episode on Radio National'

– Tom Switzer, Journalist and Research Associate, United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney

Congrats on an excellent conference. Fantastic turnout and good healthy discussion on important topics. Thank you for inviting me. I enjoyed the experience.

- Mukund Narayanamurti, Chief Executive Office, Asialink Business

Congratulations on a very successful, engaging and insightful conference. Great to see that the panellists and audience responded well to the 'safe space' the AIA is so good at providing which facilitated genuine, deep debate. So refreshing to see people expressing real and challenging views on some of our country's and world's most critical issues. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to attend and look forward to applying to the Masterclasses ahead of the conference next year.

– Gaya R. Byrne, Manager, Research, Asialink Business

It was fabulous to see such a big turnout -- with a large young/er demographic!

– Lisa Wright, Assistant Secretary, Public Diplomacy Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

A wonderful conference. It was a great mix of speakers that all seemed to blend in well in the various panels.

– Associate Professor Shirley Scott, University of New South Wales

Congratulations on a very successful and engaging Masterclass and conference. You did such an amazing job!

– Stephanie Jacobs



Acknowledgements

The 2015 AIIA National Conference was made possible through the generous support of the following sponsors and supporters:

- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Northrop Grumman
- Campaign for Australian Aid
- Routledge Taylor and Francis
- Oxford University Press

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:

- Melissa Conley Tyler, National Executive Director, AIIA
- Zara Kimpton OAM, National Vice-President, AIIA
- Madge Thomas, AIIA for WA
- Miles Kupa, ACT Branch
- Zoe Hawkins, AIIA NSW
- Sean Jesudason, AIIA VIC
- Greg Wills, AIIA VIC
- Chris Farnham, National Operations Manager, AIIA
- Niree Creed – National Director of Communications

The AIIA gratefully acknowledges the work of the following volunteers in organising this event:

- Rory MacNeil
- Alexander Dudley
- Jayde Kominiarski
- Rohma Akmal
- Krithika Gururaj
- Xunchao Zhang
- Yang Jie
- Michelle Parker
- Kevin Kelly
- Ashley Rogge
- Catherine Garlick
- Adelaide Soltysik
- Macgregor Brown
- James Downie