

Outcomes Report

This report summarises the main outcomes of the KF - Oceania Next Generation Policy Experts Study Tour held in Seoul between the 19th and 23rd of March 2018.

The tour was jointly organised by the Korea Foundation and the Australian Institute of International Affairs.

The study tour was a delegation of Australian academics, young professionals and business analysts with demonstrated interest and expertise in international affairs. The objective of the study tour was to provide participants with the opportunity to deepen their understanding of, and encourage policy-orientated research, on East Asia and the Indo-Pacific. A series of dialogues and networking events allowed participants to engage with subjects such as Korea's national defence policy, the upcoming inter-Korea summit as well as the potential U.S.-North Korea summit, unification in the Korean peninsula, trade and economic policies focusing on diversifying of Korea's regional relationships, and the similarities between Australia and Korea's foreign policies and strategic interests.

The delegation was made up of eleven participants (upon invitation), including academic and political analysts, university lecturers, young professionals and a former ambassador.



The Australian delegation on the 2018 Study Tour at the Korea Foundation



Schedule

The study tour was held over one week, between the 18th and 24th of March including participants' arrival to and departure from Seoul. The tour included seven dialogues and three networking events with senior representatives from Korea's government and civil society.

Highlights included:

- Networking with leading policy makers, academics, fellow analysts and international journalists
- Active participation and engagement in discussions with senior policy experts at Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Unification, and Ministry of National Defense
- Meeting with the Australian Ambassador to the Republic of Korea James Choi, at the Australian Embassy in Seoul
- Visits to cultural sites such as Namsan Hanok village
- Tour of the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ)

Monday
19 March The week started with a Welcome Orientation at the Korea Foundation, and a tour of the KF Gallery. The President of the Korea Foundation, Ambassador Lee Sihyung, hosted a welcome luncheon of traditional Korean temple cuisine. Following lunch, participants visited the Gyeongbok Palace and attended a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) with Director-General Dr. Ma Sang-Yoon, discussing the major foreign policy issues facing Korea.



Participants at the Gyeongbok Palace

Tuesday
20 March

Participants were invited to a round table with the Asan Institute for Policy Studies with President Dr. Hahm Chaibong, Vice President Dr. Choi Kang and Dr. Go Myong-Hyun. The conversation focused on the strategic environment of the Asia Pacific region and the future of liberal democracy. The afternoon started with a visit to the Namsan Hanok village, where participants were able to wear *hanbok* (traditional clothing) and enjoy a traditional tea ceremony. The delegation was invited to meet with Australian Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, James Choi, at the Australian Embassy. The day concluded with the War Memorial of Korea.



Wearing *hanbok* and attending traditional tea ceremony at Namsan Hanok

Wednesday
21 March

The delegation was invited to the Ministry of Unification, to learn about the Korean Unification Policy and discuss inter-Korea relations and unification initiatives. This was followed by a networking lunch, meeting with journalists from NK News, Seoul Newspaper, the Korea Herald and the Economist. Participants were then invited to a round table discussion with the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS), deliberating the Korea-U.S. Alliance, the upcoming summits between South Korea, North Korea and U.S., and rise of popular nationalism. The day ended with the non-verbal percussive performance "NANTA".

Thursday
22 March

The day commenced with a lecture on 'Korea's Political Issues' presented by Sungmin Park, President of MIN Consulting. Participants visited the Cheongwadae Sarangchae (Blue House) museum, learning about the former presidents of the Republic of Korea. This was followed with a visit to the National Assembly, learning about the significance of the layout, which has been constructed in the hopes of Korea being unified in the future. The delegation was invited to dine and reconnect with the Korean participants of the 2017 Oceania Next Generation Policy Experts Network Forum held in Canberra.



Participants at the DMZ



At dinner with the Korean participants

Friday
23 March

Participants started their final day in Seoul with a tour of the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), including a visit to the Third Tunnel and to the Observation Platform that looks on to North Korea. The delegation was then invited to Ministry of National Defense and meet Director-General of International Policy, Choe Hyung-Chan, to learn about Korea's defence policy and the Inter-Korean relationship. Participants then engaged in discussion about the security concerns the upcoming summits present for Korea, and how enhancing regional co-operation may help de-escalate tensions on the Korean peninsula.



Feedback

The study tour received exceptionally positive feedback. Participants expressed that they had developed an interest in Korean culture, politics, and potential areas of research. The study tour also allowed participants to deepen their understanding of Korea's strategic position in the region and Australia-Korea relations.

Some of the positive remarks from participants:

'The study tour provided invaluable access to South Korean foreign policy makers that would be extremely difficult to get as individual researchers. The tour included diverse voices in ministries, think tanks, academia and media, and provided an excellent mix of political and cultural (and culinary!) experiences. I came away with a much deeper knowledge of South Korea's foreign policy views, behaviours and orientation. I could not rate this tour highly enough.'

- Dr. Bec Strating

'Our delegation was fortunate enough to be in Seoul at such a critical juncture with the upcoming North-South and US-DPRK Dialogues. We were privileged to gain tremendous insight and knowledge from world leading authorities on the subject matter. I was also fascinated with how active the local citizenry were in peacefully protesting issues they were concerned about. Comparatively with Australia, citizens seemed far more politically active. During my short time in Seoul I observed numerous protests throughout the city, all for different issues.'

- Lachlan Wills

'I especially benefited from interacting with officials from the Ministry of National Defense and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as scholars from the Asan Institute and National Diplomatic Academy. The Korean Peninsula is one of the flashpoints in the Indo-Pacific region. If not handled properly, the relations between the two Koreas could endanger the peace and stability that has underpinned Northeast Asia's remarkable economic development. Developments in this part of the world provide us with insights that help illustrate key international relations concepts, and contribute to developing theories.'

- Dr. Pradeep Taneja



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