

Australia's Diaspora Advantage: Realising the potential for building transnational business networks with Asia



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Australian Academy of Science

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Glossary

Key concepts in order of their conceptual importance:

Diaspora	<p>Diasporas are characterised by five ever present and interrelated features. Diasporas make a <i>claim</i> to a country of family origin, regardless of time away from that country. Individuals <i>identify</i> with this claim and develop an <i>emotional attachment</i> to what the country of family origin represents to them. The diasporas are <i>dispersed, yet remain highly connected</i> with each other and individuals can easily activate these connects as and when needed. Finally, individuals are <i>recognised and accepted within their communities</i> as being diaspora members.</p> <p>These characteristics allow for a broader interpretation of diasporas, providing for a richer socio-political understanding of transnational dynamics.</p> <p>This notion of diaspora includes new migrants, Australian-born descendants, those of mixed-parentage, and temporary residents in Australia for work or study.</p>
Business diasporas	<p>Those within the diasporas engaged in some form of business activity and in Australia for an extended period, with or without the intention of permanent residency.</p>
Transnational economic space	<p>A dynamic and flexible space, both virtual and physical, where transnational circulation of ideas, knowledge, people and capital occurs for the purpose of trade, investment and collaboration.</p>
Diaspora advantage	<p>The use of language skills, cultural understanding and global networks to accelerate the transnational circulation of ideas, opportunities, people and capital for business purposes. The business diaspora's enthusiasm, entrepreneurial energy and preparedness to take risks further drives this global engagement.</p>
Asia capability	<p>This report re-conceptualises Asia capability in context of the capabilities and attitudes encapsulated in the diaspora advantage. In this sense, Asia capability measures the effective management of transnational circulation of ideas, knowledge, resources and capital within Asia—the fluid engagement between people, policy and place that allows individuals and organisations to anticipate, and swiftly respond to, opportunities in Asia in a highly nuanced way.</p>
Brain circulation	<p>The ongoing fluid global movement of knowledge, ideas and people.</p>
Glocal	<p>Being simultaneously globally orientated and connected, while being locally engaged and situated.</p>



Project aims

This Securing Australia's Future project 11, *Australia's Diaspora Advantage: Realising the potential for building transnational business networks with Asia*, explores the phenomenon and potential of Australian Asian business diasporas.

The main aims of this report are to:

- map the Asian business diasporas in Australia
- explore how these diasporas participate and contribute to enterprise and innovation
- identify the challenges they confront
- discuss some ways in which governments, industries and associations might address these challenges.



In identifying opportunities for Australia's Asian business diasporas, the challenges and impediments they face also become more apparent. In turn, these issues highlight where improvements to Australia's policy settings and knowledge systems may maximise economic links with Asia.

The terms of reference for the project are to:

- define, classify and measure the patterns of engagement of Australia's Asian diasporas in trade and investment activity and economic contribution
- identify the opportunities and challenges the diasporas face in expanding economic and trade links with China and India in particular
- provide an account of how other countries work with their business diasporas to strengthen the local economy through trade and investment and their applicability for the Australian context
- discuss the role of industry, institutions and government in accelerating diaspora participation in the transnational space, and the practices, policy settings and knowledge systems that would underpin this.



Executive summary

A potent economic force

Australia's Asian business diasporas are a rich source of innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurialism. Yet they are under-utilised. They have significant potential to further enhance Australia's economic engagement with Asia and help the nation's economy to thrive, for the benefit of all Australians.

The Diversity Council Australia estimates that approximately 17 per cent of people living and working in Australia (four million people) identify as being of Asian origin. This report estimates that the Chinese diaspora in Australia to be around 1.2 million, and the Indian diaspora 610,000 (Liu 2016, p. 4). Australia's Asian diasporas are well-educated and are driving new developments in knowledge-intensive and technology-intensive industries. They are stimulating and influencing trade, investment, technological innovation and knowledge flows between Australia and Asia. They are a potent economic force for Australia.



Within the globalised economy, the flow of ideas, capital and people is accelerating. This is resulting in new modes of investment, production, distribution and consumption. These transformations are likely to produce new trade opportunities for Australia, especially as it transitions from a reliance on resources towards an economy shaped by the worldwide demand for less tangible, knowledge-based products and services.

With Asia becoming a major engine of the global economy, this report, *Australia's Diaspora Advantage: Realising the potential for building transnational business networks with Asia*, explores the potential of Australian Asian diasporas to deepen economic links with Asia. It maps the Asian business diasporas in Australia; illustrates how they participate and contribute to enterprise and innovation; identifies the challenges they confront; and discusses ways in which governments, industries and associations might address these challenges.

A new way of viewing migration and multiculturalism

In this report, the concept of *diasporas* is used to capture the diversity, dynamism and mobility of Australia's Asian communities and their transnational connectivity in ways that traditional notions of migration and migrant settlement do not. Diaspora communities may be locally embedded within Australia, but often remain emotionally attached to their countries of family origin, and potentially to culturally aligned groups around the world. This broader definition of diasporas includes first generation immigrants as well as people who identify with a particular cultural origin, no matter how long they, or previous generations of their family, have lived in Australia. *Australia's Asian diasporas* describes communities of Asian backgrounds living and working in Australia, including people of mixed ethnic backgrounds and temporary residents in Australia for work or study, and those who remain connected to Australia even when residing elsewhere.

An opportunity to maximise Australia's economic future in Asia

With advances in transport and communication technologies, members of diasporas can easily connect with their countries of family origin. They can develop the transnational cultural, political and commercial links that have become a feature of the global economy—the importance of which is not yet widely understood.

This report, contributes to that understanding. It focuses on those within Australia's Asian diasporas who are engaged in business, trade and investment activities—the *business diasporas*. It presents evidence that these business diasporas are using their language capabilities, cultural understanding and global networks to accelerate the circulation of ideas, opportunities and people. Enthusiasm, entrepreneurial energy and preparedness to take risks often drives these business activities. This is their *diaspora advantage*. Australia can do much more to realise this advantage in enhancing and maximising its economic future in Asia.

This report builds on the insights of an earlier Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) report, *Smart Engagement with Asia: Leveraging language, research and culture* (Ang, Tambiah and Mar, 2015). That report describes the various ways in which Asian diasporas in Australia facilitate and strengthen science and research and cultural collaborations between Australia and Asia. It encourages Australia to develop mechanisms to better realise the considerable resources of its Asian diasporas, in long-term and mutually beneficial ways.

This idea echoes previous Securing Australia Future (SAF) studies, especially *Australia's Competitive Advantage*, which stresses the need to develop, enhance and use all of the nation's capabilities and resources. It suggests that Australia's competitive advantage is not static or sectoral, but is foundational and dynamic across politics, law, markets and culture (Withers, Gupta, Curtis and Larkins 2015). This dynamism is evident within Australia's Asian diasporas.

Australia's Diaspora Advantage uses the term Asia broadly to cover countries in East Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia. This is in line with the widely understood idea of Asia in both a policy and public context. However, this approach is taken with caution, acknowledging the multiple, complex and contested ways in which the idea of Asia is used.

This report uses case studies from two of the largest Asian-Australian communities, Chinese and Indian, to deepen understanding of the role of Australia's Asian business diasporas in maximising commercial links with Asia. These diasporas are two of the largest and fast growing business communities in Australia. China is Australia's largest trade partner and India has the potential to become a much more economically significant partner. China and India also present two distinct cases, both in relation to the nature of their economies but also their cultural and political traditions.

While this report centres on the Chinese and Indian business diasporas in Australia, the analysis points to broader inferences and possibilities of other Asian diaspora communities in Australia. As a result, this work is highly applicable to Australia's other Asian diaspora communities including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. This is especially relevant as the next emerging Asian economic powers are expected to be Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines.

The opportunities for diasporas in Australia reflect recent policies around diversity, multiculturalism, access, equity and smart engagement with Asia, as well as positive shifts in public attitudes towards Asia. This has created a supportive economic, cultural and political climate for Asian business diasporas, who now feel more confident about investing in new business ventures and pursuing innovation and transnational enterprise. This has led to an increase in Australia's business and investment presence in China and India by way of *people, policy and place*.

A need to better understand and tap the economic potential

The size and nature of the transnational activities of Asian diasporas and their direct contribution to the Australian economy has yet to be quantified. Attempts to do so have encountered significant practical and conceptual challenges. Existing demographic, trade and migration data do not capture the global circulation or fully reveal the extent to which intensified relations between Asia and Australia have impacted the economy. The experiences of the broader diaspora communities are only available through qualitative enquiry. This report is based on available data including statistics from a variety of sources, the relevant literature, and over 100 interviews conducted for this project, mostly with members of Australia's Chinese and Indian business diasporas.

Interviews with Asian business diasporas reveal that they face major impediments in realising their desire to make a greater contribution to the Australian economy. They consider that governments, institutions, industries and the broader Australian community need to more adequately recognise their contributions. This report finds that their cultural knowledge, skills and networks need to be better used in more systematic and strategic ways. For instance, to more fully recognise Australia's competitive advantage, it would be highly valuable to understand the extent to which Australia's Asian diasporas are mobilised in developing and facilitating trade policies and their engagement in international, regional and national standards frameworks and regulatory regimes.

Members of the Asian business diasporas continue to be under-represented in public life, industry councils, business associations, science and research collaborations, and trade delegations. Governments, business councils and industry associations can greatly benefit from their increased representation, because business diasporas are often closely linked to innovative transnational business practices and better

understand the shifting nature of Asian markets and consumer preferences.

This signals a leadership role for the Asian business diasporas in further enhancing *Asia capability* throughout the entire Australian community. Australia can better employ Asian business diaspora's linguistic skills, networks and cultural knowledge in anticipating and responding to emerging opportunities in Asia, in culturally informed and strategic ways.

A strategic national approach and leading international role

The question of how to realise Australia's diaspora advantage in the global circulation of ideas, knowledge, people and capital is of critical importance. Isolated, piecemeal and ad hoc efforts are no longer sufficient. Australia needs to develop a strategic national approach to recognise the resources of the Asia business diasporas and develop mechanisms that enable them to contribute simultaneously to the economic interests of Australia and their country of family origin.

This report informs possibilities by outlining some of the ways in which the Chinese and Indian governments are seeking to take advantage of the skills and networks of their diasporas abroad. It also considers how economies similar to Australia's—the United States, Canada, Germany and Singapore—work with their own business diasporas to forge transnational commercial links, using the knowledge, skills and networks these diasporas possess. It finds that these countries' efforts still occur within a migration framework, designed to attract skilled immigrants. Australia has an opportunity to take a leading international role in understanding how the diasporas' transnational experiences and networks can contribute in establishing economic relations and enhancing business and innovation productivity, and in developing innovative strategies which best utilise this comparative advantage to drive future engagement in the region.



Key findings

Rich potential

Finding 1: Australia's Asian business diasporas are a rich source of innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurialism. Their growing size and contribution to the Australian economy, as well as their potential, is an under-utilised resource for further enhancing Australia's engagement with Asia.

A demographic analysis of contemporary Chinese and Indian business diasporas in Australia shows that they are, in general, highly motivated and globally networked, with a larger proportion possessing a university degree than the general Australian population. They engage in high-skills industries that often require a predisposition towards enterprise, innovation and commercialisation of knowledge. Their business activities include employment in the corporate sector, networked business activity (such as franchising and licensing business models), representing overseas business interests, and business ownership and investment.

In this way, Australia's Asian business diasporas represent a substantial resource with immense potential for greater trade, investment and innovation links with Asia. In an increasingly transnational economic space, they are uniquely placed to forge and sustain closer commercial ties with Asia.



New conceptual thinking

Finding 2: Beyond the traditional concepts of migration and migrant settlement, the broader notion of *diaspora* more adequately describes how people of Asian origins living and working in Australia maintain emotional and cultural links with their country of origin and use their transnational networks to extend business activities and opportunities.

This project used diaspora as a more apt concept than immigrants to describe how many people of Asian origins who live and work in Australia simultaneously participate in the social, cultural and economic life of Australia and their homeland, as well as the world more broadly.

The idea of diaspora implies five ever present and interrelated features. They make a *claim* to a country of family origin, regardless of time away from that country. Members of the diaspora *identify* with this claim and have an *emotional attachment* to what their country of family origin represents to them. Diasporas are *dispersed, yet remain highly connected*—individuals within the diaspora communities can easily activate these connections as and when needed.

Finally, individuals are *recognised and accepted within their communities* as being diaspora members.

These characteristics allow for a broader interpretation of people of Asian backgrounds living and working in Australia, enabling a richer social-political-economic account of their transnational links and experiences.

To more adequately capture the size and dynamism of Australia's business diasporas and their networks and contribution to Australia, policy and programs require new conceptual thinking that extends beyond the traditional notions of migration and ethnicity.

The idea of diaspora includes immigrants and their subsequent generations, those of culturally mixed backgrounds, temporary work-visa holders and long-stay international students, and permanent and temporary residents who maintain connections and an affinity with Australia while living abroad. On the basis of this broad definition, the Chinese diaspora in Australia is estimated to be around 1.2 million people and the Indian diaspora just over 610,000 people.

The diaspora advantage

Finding 3: The idea of *diaspora advantage* suggests how the linguistic skills, cultural knowledge and global networks constitute an advantage that not only benefits the members of the Asian diasporas but also helps Australia extend its economic links with Asia, and promotes a culture of innovation within the transnational economic space.

Australia's Asian business diasporas have access to extensive global networks. When they activate these networks for the purpose of trade and investment, their business activities take place in the *transnational economic space*, which reflects the increasingly global and interactive nature of business activity and moves beyond the notion of linear, bi-lateral trade relations. This space is characterised by enterprise and innovation, and the ability to work across national and cultural borders.

It is a dynamic and flexible, virtual and physical space that greatly facilitates the effective and timely global circulation of ideas, knowledge, people and capital for the purpose of trade, investment and collaboration.

The strengths of the Asian business diasporas lie in their ability to accelerate the development and maintenance of trusted people-to-people links that provide real-time information on economic, political and cultural changes, emerging markets and business opportunities. They use their language skills, cultural knowledge and global networks in their business activities. These characteristics constitute their *diaspora advantage*.

Representation of Australia's Asian business diasporas

Finding 4: For Australia to further benefit from its *diaspora advantage*, its governments, businesses, and organisations need to ensure greater representation and participation of the Asian diasporas in the development of policies and programs aimed at strengthening Australia's economic, political and cultural relations with Asia.

While Asian business diasporas are developing Asia-Australia business links in a wide variety of ways, they face an equally significant range of barriers. Themes emerging from the interviews conducted for this project reveal many different challenges including bureaucratic impediments, lack of institutional capabilities and lack of clarity in both Australia and Asia about the rules of business activities across borders.

The under-representation of Australia's Asian diasporas in public office, industry councils, business associations and in trade discussions and delegations is of concern. Asian diasporas are also under-represented on peak bodies that promote Australia-Asia diplomacy, bilateral business relations and lead educational institutions. In corporate Australia, only around four per cent of Australia's top 200 publically listed companies have board directors of Asian descent.

To realise the diaspora advantage, Australia needs to increase the engagement and representation of the business diasporas across Australian governments, institutions and industry, and within the community more broadly.

Greater recognition needs to be given to the leadership roles that Australians of Asian origins can potentially play in driving more effective engagement with Asia. Such leadership can greatly assist in improving the quality of programs designed for the broader Australian community to enhance intercultural competence, the capacity to forge transnational science, research and cultural collaborations, and the ability to develop and sustain commercial networks across the region.

Policy and program development

Finding 5: While most advanced economies have developed policies to attract highly skilled migrants, they have yet to develop strategies that accommodate the changing nature of the business diasporas' experiences, motivations and advantages in a globally interconnected economy. Australia is well positioned to take a leading role in developing such strategies.

In considering opportunities for Australia to realise its diaspora advantage, this report discusses policies and initiatives of the United States, Canada, Germany and Singapore. These policies primarily focus on attracting skilled immigrants and inviting others for the purposes of skill transfer, business and investment.

These policies assume the ideas of *brain drain/brain gain* of intellectual capital and capability. They do not appear to adequately address the emerging phenomenon of diasporas—their dynamic circulation, connectivity and newer flexible forms of belonging. Less understood is how to articulate or encourage this emerging

phenomenon in financial incentives, ease of physical and resource mobility, and citizenship options. Moving beyond the traditional mode of thinking, the diaspora logic focuses instead on *brain circulation* through the ongoing and fluid transnational movement of knowledge, ideas and people.

With its multicultural population and location within the dynamic Asian region, Australia has the potential to lead the world in developing policies and programs that encourage more effective engagement of the Asian business diasporas in building transnational networks for trade, investment and innovation with Asia. This includes considering how to mobilise transnational capital, facilitate diaspora investments, and transfer human capital in ways that deliver mutual benefits.

An integrated approach to supporting the business diasporas by linking them into Australian science, technology and research infrastructures, and the cultural resources embedded within the broader Australian community, can be of enormous benefit to the diasporas and the nation.



Growth of diaspora populations

Finding 6: The estimated 1.7 million-strong Chinese and Indian diasporas in Australia are growing rapidly in size and significance. They are highly diverse, internally differentiated by religion, culture, language, politics and experience. They include a greater proportion of educated and highly skilled individuals who are globally networked. These networks are a major source of business opportunities, innovation and entrepreneurialism.

In 2015 around 28 per cent of Australia's resident population was born overseas (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016a). Over the past few decades, the number of Asian migrants to Australia has increased markedly. Migration data that quantifies country of birth indicates that Australia's two largest Asian populations are those born in China and India. Current estimates are 447,400 people born in China and 397,200 people born in India (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015a). However, this picture is incomplete and does not capture the totality and dynamism of diasporas.

The majority of the Chinese and Indian diasporas are employees. They are well-represented in knowledge-intensive, service-orientated industries with strengths and expertise in professional services and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. Over the last decade, there have been marked increases in business ownership and investment visa applications in Australia by China-born and India-born diasporas. For example, China is the largest source country for the *Business Innovation and Investment Visa* program.

Through the interviews for this project, the Asian business diasporas display a greater propensity towards connectivity—becoming locally embedded in Australia while remaining connected to their friends and family around the world. These connections are multifaceted, borderless and highly valued. Networks are forged through social, cultural, educational and professional connections. Relationships are maintained through online communication and affordable travel. This helps to create extensive networks that are internationally dispersed and highly mobile, not constrained by location or nation, and that are timeless, with 24/7 instant updates.

Mapping and modelling

Finding 7: While qualitative interviews indicate the significant contribution Asian business diasporas make to the Australian economy, this contribution has yet to be measured quantitatively through economic modelling. However, such modelling requires new approaches to collecting, using and analysing data, as current data sets do not fully take into account diaspora experiences, flows and networks.

Much of the available data and research on the business activities of Asian-Australians is based around the categories of migration and ethnicity. This data is important for tracking legal changes in citizenship status and for monitoring other specific national demographic factors. However, the diaspora logic suggests a different orientation.

Australia needs new ways of mapping the number and contribution of business diasporas who circulate between countries—either as a matter of personal choice or more frequently for business and work—to deepen understanding and potential of the broader notion of diaspora.

To quantify the nature and extent of Australia's Asian diaspora advantage, new approaches to economic modelling need to go beyond the traditional notions of migration and ethnicity. Such economic modelling would be helpful in identifying the relationships between economic activity and outputs generated by the business diasporas, both within Australia and transnationally. It could also inform public debate and policy development for the greater mobility of transnational capital, attractive incentives, and better management of trade, investment and innovation with Asia.

Barriers and challenges

Finding 8: While the Asian business diasporas display an ability to negotiate the complexities of the transnational economic space, greater awareness of the many barriers they face is also needed. This will guide a better understanding of how cultural, national and regional differences influence approaches to business.

Public perceptions of Asia and Asians in Australia are gradually becoming more positive, despite some issues, such as reported concerns on foreign investment and ownership and treatment of international students. There is now a growing recognition of China and India as economic partners. Recent government policies herald a move beyond the policies of multiculturalism that supported passive tolerance and acceptance of diversity, towards deepening engagement with Australia's Asian population, as a resource to advance economic links to the region. This is articulated in trade policies and collaborative research programs that aim to facilitate greater people-to-people links between Australia and Asia. The physical institutional and corporate presence of Australian interests in China and India is also increasing.

Public diplomacy measures around *people, policy and place* have supported and encouraged the business aspirations and activities of Asian business diasporas in Australia. They now feel more confident about investing in new business ventures and pursuing innovation. However, it is important to recognise the barriers and challenges faced by the business diasporas to further support their work within the region.

Conduits for culture, commerce and connections

Finding 9: There is a compelling case for bilateral councils and business associations to engage Australia's Asian diasporas to enhance connections between investors, entrepreneurs and industry with innovation, research and science infrastructures and programs.

The interviews conducted for this project provide accounts of how the Australian Chinese and Indian diasporas engage with their global networks, local ethnic business councils and cultural associations. This demonstrates how their own intercultural capabilities and networks continually develop through such engagement, revealing interplay between culture, commerce and connectivity. As a result, their participation contributes to building a confident cultural community within Australia.

In particular, associations that promote bilateral business relations appear to have a strong diaspora membership base. Many members have 'on the ground' experience of doing business in China or India, resulting in a rich resource of information and connections. Australia's Chinese and Indian associations and chambers are well placed to act as conduits between research collaborations and the business diasporas. Their knowledge, expertise and connectivity can potentially assist efforts with commercialisation, business modelling and export into Asia.

While ethnic business associations would like to do more in regards to networking events, facilitating introductions, or even establishing branches in China or India, they are often constrained by time and financial resources.

Strategies to use diaspora expertise for mutual benefit

Finding 10: The Chinese and Indian governments recognise the importance of their diasporas abroad and have begun to develop strategies to use expertise to increase trade, investment and knowledge transfer. Australia needs to develop similar ways of using its own diaspora resources for research, cultural and business collaborations in ways that are mutually beneficial.

As outlined earlier, this report considers how other nations regard their own Asian business diasporas to learn how this project's findings resonate. China and India are alert to their significant global diasporas—estimated at 40 million Chinese and 25 million Indians. These countries want to continue using the knowledge and skills of their emigrants who have settled elsewhere. In recent years they have sharply focused on using their diasporas abroad to forge and sustain links for economic development and increased knowledge transfer and innovation collaboration. The Chinese and Indian governments are therefore working on strategies to overcome long-standing legal, political and administrative barriers to the participation of their diasporas abroad for the benefit of the Chinese and Indian economies respectively.

Asia capability and education

Finding 11: While science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education is positioned as a policy priority, the success of Australia's Chinese and Indian business diasporas point to the equal importance of the humanities, arts and social science (HASS) education in entrepreneurialism and business skills, Asian languages, and historical and cultural studies, as critical components of Asia capability.

The case studies in this report illustrate China and India's differences in economic relationships, political structures and cultural traditions. It is essential to recognise the complex differences and historical sensitivities of how China and India create knowledge and share information to improve business, policy processes and decision-making. For example, Australian processes may be perceived as impediments or even discriminatory without a culturally informed understanding of their purpose and application. This signals a role for Australia's Asian business diasporas to broker this understanding and support Australian enterprises and research collaborations advancing their *Asia capability*. To realise this, governments, institutions, business associations, and industries are encouraged to consider improvements to structures and mechanisms that facilitate greater engagement and alignment between the diasporas' interests and Australia's economic and trade policies, public and private research programs, and knowledge systems and regulatory frameworks.

This is not restricted to the public and private sector. There would also be benefits in further embedding Asia capability into school, vocational and higher education curriculum—namely humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS) related entrepreneurialism and business skills, Asian languages, history and cultural studies. This would shape the next generation's views on the importance of Australia in Asia (and vice versa), and their ability to successfully participate in the transnational economic space.

Co-ordinated national approach to diaspora policy

Finding 12: The case studies of Australia's Chinese and Indian business diasporas indicate an opportunity for Australia to develop a comprehensive and coherent policy that acknowledges the contribution of all of its diasporas and considers ways in which Australia may realise its diaspora advantage to further extend its economic links globally.

This report calls for a national co-ordinated approach to realising Australia's Asian diaspora advantage. New and responsive pathways for greater engagement of Australia's Asian diasporas are needed to create favourable social, economic, institutional and technical conditions to encourage transnational circulation of ideas, knowledge, people and capital. This report presents possibilities such as: increasing representation and mobilisation of the diasporas in economic and trade policy formation, as well as in the public and private sectors; improving mechanisms for greater engagement in business and investment programs; and connecting the business diasporas with research collaborations for innovation and commercialisation of ideas. Support for such options will boost nation-wide Asia capability and ways in which sources of advice, support and educational outreach can accelerate transnational entrepreneurialism.

This work needs to be underlined by a clear vision for Australia in Asia. A diaspora policy needs to build on work done to date, receive bipartisan support and not be subject to election cycles. It needs to recognise the complexities of Asia and seek a deeper understanding of its diverse interests. In creating fertile conditions for fluid engagement between *people, policy and place*, such policy will better position Australia to anticipate, and swiftly respond to, opportunities in Asia in a highly nuanced, Asia-capable way.

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About Securing Australia's Future

In June 2012 the Australian Government announced *Securing Australia's Future*, a \$10 million investment funded by the Australian Research Council in a series of strategic research projects. Projects are delivered to the Commonwealth Science Council by the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) via the Office of the Chief Scientist and the Australian Chief Scientist.

Securing Australia's Future is a response to global and national changes and the opportunities and challenges of an economy in transition. Productivity and economic growth will result from: an increased understanding in how to best stimulate and support creativity, innovation and adaptability; an education system that values the pursuit of knowledge across all domains, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics, the humanities and social sciences; and an increased willingness to support change through effective risk management.

Six initial research topics were identified:

- i. Australia's comparative advantage
- ii. STEM: Country comparisons
- iii. Smart engagement with Asia: leveraging language, research and culture
- iv. The role of science, research and technology in lifting Australian productivity
- v. New technologies and their role in our security, cultural, democratic, social and economic systems
- vi. Engineering energy: unconventional gas production

Five further research topics have been identified:

- vii. Australia's agricultural future
- viii. Delivering sustainable urban mobility
- ix. Translating research for economic and social benefit: country comparisons
- x. Capabilities for Australian enterprise innovation
- xi. Business diasporas in Australia: maximising people to people relationships with Asia

The Program Steering Committee responsible for the overall quality of the program, including selection of the Expert Working Groups and the peer review process, is comprised of three Fellows from each of the four Learned Academies:

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