

# FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

## Ministers and portfolio responsibilities

The four portfolio ministers are the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, the Minister for Trade and Investment, the Hon Steven Ciobo MP, the Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, and the Minister for Tourism and International Education and the Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment, Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck.

The portfolio consists of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade), the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS), the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Tourism Australia and the Export Finance and Insurance Corporation (Efic).

DFAT works to make Australia stronger, safer and more prosperous by promoting and protecting our interests internationally and contributing to global stability and economic growth, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. In partnership with government and non-government organisations, business and community groups in Australia and overseas, the department leads the Government's efforts to shape the regional and international environment, progress Australia's international security priorities and strengthen global cooperation in ways that advance Australia's interests.

The department works to maintain and open up new access to markets and generate conditions for increased trade and investment to strengthen Australia's economy and create new higher paying jobs. It helps lift economic growth and reduce poverty in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. The department projects a positive image of Australia as a preferred destination for business, investment, tourism and study and provides high-quality passport and consular advice to Australian citizens. The department leads the Government's response to international crises, including humanitarian disasters.

The Government's economic diplomacy agenda – led by DFAT with support from Austrade, Tourism Australia, Efic and ACIAR – is driving innovation, and boosting access to global markets and investment in Australia. DFAT will support the ongoing implementation of recent free trade agreements with China, Japan and the Republic of Korea as well as other existing agreements, and also support the entry into force of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement. The department will continue negotiating other priority bilateral and regional trade agreements, and renew efforts to progress plurilateral and multilateral trade negotiations.

### *Portfolio overview*

DFAT will deliver an innovative aid program, centred on the Indo-Pacific region, which contributes to sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction and regional stability. The Australian aid program will maintain a strong commitment to development in the Pacific and focus on building economic partnerships in Asia. DFAT will strengthen the aid program's engagement with the private sector and embed gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls across 80 per cent of its mainstream aid investments. DFAT's innovationXchange will continue to build on and facilitate innovation in the aid program, experiment with new ways of solving intractable problems and forge new collaborations with the private sector and entrepreneurs in this work.

By supporting Australian undergraduates to study and undertake internships in the region, the New Colombo Plan will continue to increase knowledge of the Indo-Pacific in Australia and strengthen people-to-people links. In 2016-17, the opportunities for young Australian students offered under the program will continue to grow.

With more Australians travelling overseas than ever before, DFAT will continue to provide high quality consular services, responsive travel advice and a secure and efficient passport service. In 2016-17, the department will build on its first Consular Strategy to develop a second three-year Strategy covering 2017-19. This will refine consular policy and practices to respond to increasing demands while maintaining Australia's consular service at the forefront of world's best practice. Austrade will also deliver consular and passport services in specific locations overseas.

The effectiveness and security of Australia's network of overseas diplomatic missions will remain a high priority. The department will continue to maintain and protect Australia's secure government communications system. DFAT will provide high-quality protocol services to diplomatic and consular missions and international organisations accredited to Australia.

Austrade will contribute to Australia's economic prosperity by promoting Australia's international trade, investment and education interests, and providing advice to Government on tourism policy. Austrade has a particular focus on growth and emerging markets, including those in Asia that offer commercial potential and provide opportunities aligned with Australia's comparative advantage. Within these markets, there is a clear role for Austrade as a Government agency to support Australian businesses and education institutions. Austrade, with DFAT, will also continue to promote the opportunities created by free trade agreements.

Austrade will partner with state and territory governments and other Commonwealth Government agencies to attract productive foreign direct investment in priority sectors from established and other emerging markets. Austrade will also promote Australia as a preferred education destination and provider of education services, and continue to

administer several grant programs. Austrade will continue implementing the Government's tourism policy, *Tourism 2020*, working on tourism policy, projects, programs and research to strengthen Australia's tourism industry, and grow Australia's tourism market share.

Tourism Australia will continue to promote Australia as a compelling tourism destination for international leisure and business events visitors. Tourism Australia will focus its marketing on consumers in key international markets, working in partnership with state and territory tourism organisations, industry and commercial partners to increase the economic benefits of tourism to Australia by building demand and increasing visitation and visitor spending.

DFAT will work closely with Austrade, Tourism Australia and other Commonwealth Government agencies to advance Australia's *Tourism 2020* domestic reform priorities. The department will continue to strengthen bilateral tourism relationships with major source countries and participate in key multilateral tourism forums.

Through ASIS, the portfolio will continue to enhance government understanding of the overseas environment affecting Australia's vital interests and take appropriate action, consistent with applicable legislation, to protect identified interests.

ACIAR's work underpins Australia's national interest by contributing to economic growth and poverty reduction in the Indo-Pacific region. ACIAR will continue to improve the productivity, sustainability and profitability of agricultural systems, through international agricultural research and training partnerships. ACIAR's research partnerships will enhance and promote agricultural competitiveness and sustainability, increased market access, and value-chain efficiencies and effectiveness. Farm-level productivity and the competitiveness of both traditional and emerging value chains to achieve access on domestic and international markets will continue to be a primary focus. Projects will tackle gender inequality in their design, delivery and impact. ACIAR will maintain its core mandate of producing excellent research, and will work through others to achieve up-scaling and broader development outcomes. ACIAR will also continue to administer and manage Australia's investment in multilateral innovation through the CGIAR (formerly 'the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research').

Efic helps Australian companies exporting and investing overseas to gain access to finance and insurance services. Efic provides financial facilities for exporters, including loans, guarantees, bonds and political risk insurance, with a focus on small and medium enterprises and those seeking to do business in emerging markets. Efic will continue to work closely with DFAT and Austrade in the delivery of these services. It will also manage the National Interest Account on behalf of the Commonwealth.

For information on resourcing across the portfolio, please refer to Part 1: Agency Financial Resourcing in *Budget Paper No. 4: Agency Resourcing*.

**Figure 1: Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio structure and outcomes**

