



Australian Government

Australian Government response to the
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References
Committee report:

*Inquiry into opportunities for strengthening
Australia's relations with the Republic of France*

May 2024

Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

The Committee recommends that the Prime Minister of Australia visit France with a focus on strengthening strategic cooperation and economic engagement, including a business delegation to identify export and joint venture opportunities.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 2:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government explore opportunities to increase the number of ministerial and parliamentary visits to France.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 3:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government consider releasing a progress report periodically on achievements under AFiniti to record the progress and achievements on the planned work agenda agreed between the nations.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 4:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with the French Government to explore enhanced engagement opportunities between the Defence services in response to the emerging strategic challenges in the Indo Pacific region, particularly focussing on joint maritime exercises.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 5:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government continue to explore opportunities to enhance cooperation between Australia and France in logistical and operational arrangements, and pooling of resources, in relation to Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, particularly through the use of Hobart as a logistical hub for transportation to Antarctica

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 6:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, in consultation with the French and Indian Governments, explore reinvigorating the India France Australia trilateral dialogue to enhance strategic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 7:

The Committee recommends the Australian Government explore and engage other avenues for trilateral engagement in the Indo-Pacific region with like-minded partners.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 8:

The Committee recommends the Australian Government consider seeking observer status with the Indian Ocean Commission in order to strengthen Australia's regional engagement in the Indo-Pacific.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 9:

The Committee recommends the Australian Government, in consultation with relevant countries, including the French territories in the region, participate in the development of disaster preparedness arrangements in the Indian Ocean.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 10:

The Committee recommends the Australian Government explore options to establish an environmental security forum with France and other like-minded countries in the Indian Ocean region to address environmental security threats.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 11:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work to finalise the timing for the next Australia-France Trade and Investment Dialogue as soon as possible, considering virtual options as required.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 12:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government consider establishing a France-Australia Critical Minerals Dialogue to pursue opportunities to become a key supplier of critical minerals to France.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 13:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government explore the development of a formal agreement in the area of FinTech with France to facilitate further links in this area.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 14:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government consider delegations to France from Growth Centres relevant to priority areas of engagement to further promote collaboration and investment.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 15:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government consider a business delegation to New Caledonia to further connections made during the recent visit from the New Caledonian Minister for the Economy who was accompanied by a business delegation. This delegation could also visit the other French territories to explore additional engagement opportunities.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 16:

The Committee recommends that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade review the suggestions made to the Committee in the cultural and arts areas for consideration in Australia Now events.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 17:

The Committee recommends that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, should the Australian Government progress the establishment of a safe travel zone with New Zealand, the inclusion of French Polynesia and New Caledonia should be considered.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 18:

The Committee recommends that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade undertake a review of scholarships available between Australian research institutions and those in the French territories to ensure there are opportunities available to facilitate research in areas of shared interest.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 19:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government investigate the establishment of partnerships with industry to support Australian PhD students to undertake industrial work placements and joint 'cotutelle' PhDs with French companies and laboratories for up to a year based on the CIFRE Industry model.

Response:

The Government **notes** this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.