

Inter-governmental relations

Introduction

- 2.1 Government relations play an important role in the Australia-RoK relationship. As in any bilateral relationship, the ability of governments to communicate and work together on a wide range of issues determines the success of the overall relationship and has the potential to impact those involved.
- 2.2 Links between Australia and the RoK occur on many levels ranging from tourism to educational services and resources trade. Government relations are reflective of this diverse relationship, and as a result, a variety of Australian Commonwealth and RoK Government agencies communicate on a regular basis.
- 2.3 This chapter discusses high-level government relations, specifically exchanges and visits between Commonwealth Government ministers and Parliamentarians, defence connections and the role of the Australia-Korea Foundation.

Government and Parliamentary visits

- 2.4 Every Australian Prime Minister since 1982 has visited the RoK during their time in office. RoK Presidents, likewise, have visited

Australia on a consistent basis.¹ Additional contact takes place during annual talks between Australian and RoK Foreign and Trade Ministers, with a variety of other government Ministers also engaging in regular dialogue.

Commonwealth Government visits to the Republic of Korea

2.5 There have been the following Commonwealth Government visits to the RoK:

- Prime Minister John Howard MP – 2000, 2003 and 2005;
- Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer MP – 1999;
- Foreign Minister Alexander Downer MP – 2001 and 2003;
- Trade Minister Mark Vaile MP – 2002;
- Treasurer Peter Costello MP – 2005; and
- Communications, IT and the Arts Minister Senator Helen Coonan – 2005.²

Republic of Korea Government visits to Australia

2.6 There have been the following RoK Government visits to Australia:

- President Kim Dae-jung – 1999;
- Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon – 2004;
- Trade Minister Hwang Doo-yun – 2003; and
- Defense Minister Yoon Kwang-ung – 2005.³

2.7 In addition to unilateral government visits between Australia and the RoK, leaders from both countries often meet at regional and global forums. Participation in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the East Asia Summit process, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the UN represents valuable occasions for Australia and RoK leaders to meet and discuss relevant issues.

1 Embassy of the Republic of Korea, *Submission No. 18, Vol. 1*, p. 229.

2 DFAT, *Submission No. 21, Vol. 1*, p. 273; Embassy of the RoK, *Submission No. 44, Vol. 2*, p. 535.

3 DFAT, *Submission No. 21, Vol. 1*, p. 273; Embassy of the RoK, *Submission No. 44, Vol. 2*, p. 535.

2.8 The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) noted that:

South Korea is a valuable partner and ally for Australia in multilateral fora. As influential regional democracies, with often overlapping trade and strategic interests, Australia and South Korea share similar perspectives on international and regional affairs and generally support each other's positions, arguments and candidates in multilateral forums.

Increasingly, Australia and South Korea act in diplomatic concert, especially within the region, to advance common global and multilateral goals.⁴

2.9 In recognition of the value of government visits, the RoK Embassy has called for increased exchange between heads of government. The Ambassador believed that:

The exchange of visits by heads of government is the most effective method in elevating across-the-board bilateral relations and will provide increased awareness of each other's strategic, economic and cultural importance.⁵

Government cooperation

2.10 Evidence would suggest that heads of government visits between the RoK and Australia do result in tangible, positive benefits. The following meetings are excellent examples of the kinds of benefits that government exchange can generate:

- Australia-Korea Broadband Summit 2003;
- Australia, New Zealand-Korea Broadband Summit 2005; and
- Korea-Australia Joint Committee on Energy and Mineral Resources Consultation and Cooperation Meetings.

Australia-Korea (New Zealand) Broadband Summits

2.11 Australia, the RoK and subsequently New Zealand met in 2003 and 2005 to discuss issues and areas for collaboration in the broadband field. In both instances, the meetings generated outcomes for Australia and the RoK. Key outcomes from the Summits included:

4 DFAT, *Submission No. 21, Vol. 1*, p. 274.

5 Embassy of the RoK, *Submission No. 44, Vol. 2*, p. 535.

- a collaborative arrangement between Korea's Electronics and Telecommunications Research Institute and the Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Research Organisation (CSIRO);⁶
- an MoU between Australia's Electrical and Electronic Manufacturers Association and ICA Korea (Korean Government agency which develops collaboration between Korean companies and companies located outside of Korea);⁷
- Australian Film Commission invitation to participate in a 2005 digital content conference in Seoul;⁸ and
- A memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the countering of spam between the Australian Communications Authority and the Korean Information Security Agency.⁹

Korea-Australia Joint Committee on Energy and Mineral Resources Consultation and Cooperation Meetings

2.12 The Joint Committee for Energy and Mineral Resources Consultation and Cooperation provides the opportunity for Australia and the RoK to 'exchange views on energy and minerals trade, energy use and demand forecasts and cooperation in energy and minerals research.'¹⁰ The most recent meetings of the Joint Committee took place in 2004 and 2005. Key outcomes from the meetings included:

- the conclusion of a bilateral treaty on resources cooperation;
- the linking of the Korean Institute of Geoscience and Mineral Resources (KIGAM) with Geoscience Australia;
- an MoU signed between KIGAM and CSIRO establishing the framework for future collaboration; and
- an exchange of information on Australia's and the RoK's recent energy policies.¹¹

6 Mr Peter Baxter, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 13.

7 Mr Angus Robinson, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 17.

8 Mr Kim Dalton, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 67.

9 DCITA, *Submission No. 22, Vol. 1*, p. 319.

10 DITR, *Submission No. 49, Vol. 2*, p. 563.

11 DITR, *Submission No. 49, Vol. 2*, p. 564.

Parliamentary delegations

- 2.13 Parliamentary delegations have also been a feature of the Australia-RoK relationship. The RoK Embassy noted that:
- ... since the 1970s most Speakers of the Korean National Assembly have visited Australia during their term in office and many Australian parliamentary leaders (seven Speakers and three Presidents of the Senate) have also visited Korea.¹²
- 2.14 As the RoK Embassy submission noted, 'political exchanges between parliaments of the two democracies are extremely significant in promoting favourable foreign policy environments for each country' and 'need to be further increased.'¹³
- 2.15 The RoK Ambassador has commented that the RoK:
- ... would like to see the exchange visits of the [current] Speakers of [the] two Parliaments realised at an early date. We would also like to see Australian MPs and Senators increase their visits to Korea. Korean MPs comparatively often visit Australia on various occasions.¹⁴
- 2.16 There have been five Australian Parliamentary delegations to the RoK since 1998:
- January 1998 – 6th Annual Meeting of APPF;
 - July 1998 – Bilateral visit to RoK and Malaysia;
 - May 2001 – Official visit to RoK to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Korean War;
 - July 2001 – Official visit to RoK and Indonesia; and
 - December 2003 – Official parliamentary delegation visit to RoK and Japan.¹⁵

12 Embassy of the RoK, *Submission No. 18, Vol. 1*, p. 229.

13 Embassy of the RoK, *Submission No. 18, Vol. 1*, p. 229.

14 Embassy of the RoK, *Submission No. 44, Vol. 2*, p. 535.

15 *Exhibit 15*, House of Representatives, Parliamentary Relations Office.

Committee comment

- 2.17 The Committee supports the need for regular governmental consultation between Australia and the RoK. It is satisfied with the current level of government visits and recognises the tangible benefits that can result from such exchange.
- 2.18 The Committee is pleased that a substantial level of parliamentary exchange between Australia and the RoK has occurred in the past.

Security relations

The Republic of Korea security posture

- 2.19 Massive economic growth has been the impetus behind an increasing RoK military capability. This enlarged capability, in turn, has allowed the RoK to realign its security priorities.
- 2.20 The view of the Department of Defence (Defence) is that under President Roh, the RoK is pursuing a dual defence strategy based on self-reliance, while maintaining strong US alliance ties. The RoK is focused on the need to defend the South from a potential invasion by the DPRK, with consideration being given to the eventual need to defend the entire peninsula upon reunification. Defensive considerations such as these are being coupled with the development of power projection capabilities designed to propel the RoK into the role of a regional power.¹⁶

Australia-Republic of Korea shared security interests

- 2.21 The RoK and Australia share a number of security interests in the Asia-Pacific region. The most important is ensuring the stability of the Korean peninsula itself. A complete discussion of the DPRK can be found in Chapter 7; however, both the RoK and Australia are committed to the peaceful settlement of the on-going North Korean nuclear issue. Other shared security interests include combating:

16 Department of Defence, *Submission No. 5, Vol. 1*, p. 39.

- terrorism – Australia and the RoK are participants in the global struggle against terrorism and have both contributed troops to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq;¹⁷ and
- Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferation – the Commonwealth Government leads the Australia Group of which the RoK has been an active participant. The RoK chairs the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) which is supported by Australia, in particular MTCR outreach activities towards India and Pakistan.¹⁸

US regional engagement

2.22 US regional engagement is an important factor in Australian and RoK defence strategy. Defence noted that, 'Australia and [the RoK] occupy important geostrategic positions in the region and actively support US engagement in the region as a factor for stability.'¹⁹ Likewise, the RoK 'strongly supports US engagement as the key element of stable and sustainable security architecture in the Asia-Pacific region.'²⁰

Senior level defence visits

2.23 On May 31st 2005, RoK Minister for National Defense, Mr Yoon Kwang-Ung visited Australia for the first time. The visit allowed Australia's and the RoK's defence ministers to meet and 'exchange views on issues of mutual strategic importance.'²¹ Areas of mutual interest agreed upon during Mr Yoon's visit were:

- practical cooperation in peacekeeping;
- consequence management; and
- defence industry cooperation.

2.24 Australia and the RoK also engage in regular strategic dialogue on security issues and defence policies as well as annual senior level defence policy talks.²²

17 Embassy of the RoK, *Submission No. 18, Vol. 1*, p. 228.

18 Embassy of the RoK, *Submission No. 18, Vol. 1*, p. 228.

19 Mr Benedict Coleman, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 36.

20 Embassy of the RoK, *Submission No. 18, Vol. 1*, p. 224

21 Mr Benedict Coleman, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 37.

22 Mr Benedict Coleman, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, pp. 36–7.

- 2.25 In 2003, the Chief of the Navy visited the RoK for the 50th anniversary celebrations of the signing of the Korean War armistice agreement.²³

Peacekeeping

- 2.26 Australia is a participant in many peacekeeping activities around the world. It is a member of the United Nations Command in the RoK, which oversees the 1953 armistice agreement,²⁴ and in October, 2005 an Australian army officer joined an international team monitoring border crossings between the RoK and the DPRK.²⁵
- 2.27 The RoK is active in the field of international peacekeeping. Recent RoK peacekeeping activities include:
- Somalia – 1993;
 - Georgia – 1994;
 - Western Sahara – 1994;
 - India-Pakistan – 1994;
 - East Timor – 1999;
 - Afghanistan – 2002;
 - Liberia – 2003; and
 - Burundi – 2004.²⁶
- 2.28 Defence stated that it was ‘hopeful that there are mutual lessons to be shared’ between Australia and the RoK in the peacekeeping field and perhaps ‘some cooperation [to be had] in peacekeeping doctrine.’²⁷
- 2.29 Participation in peacekeeping training courses is another potential area for cooperation. Defence has invited RoK officers to attend a peacekeeping operations course and is hopeful that ‘there may be similar [RoK] courses which might be suitable for the ADF.’²⁸

23 Defence, *Submission No. 5, Vol. 1*, p. 40.

24 Defence, *Submission No. 5, Vol. 1*, p. 41.

25 AAP Wire, *Australia to help UN in Korea*, 24, October, 2005.

26 Mr Benedict Coleman, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, pp. 43–4.

27 Mr Benedict Coleman, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 44.

28 Mr Benedict Coleman, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 44.

Consequence management

2.30 Defence believed that RoK forces were 'likely to have some good capabilities in the area of consequence management – dealing with the consequences of a terrorist attack,'²⁹ and noted that:

There are not many countries in the Asia-Pacific with good capabilities in this area, so it is important that we explore whether they have capabilities that are of interest to us – again, in terms of lessons learned and the type of techniques, equipment, skills, doctrine and organisation of their units. This is still a new, unfolding area, so the chance to compare notes about how they do business and how we do business in that area is pretty useful to us.³⁰

Defence industry cooperation

2.31 An MoU on defence industry cooperation between Australia and the RoK was signed on 8 August 2001. Since then, regular defence industry meetings have been held 'to identify opportunities to promote defence industry cooperation.'³¹

2.32 Recent examples of defence industry cooperation include:

- Australian purchase of a \$50 million oil tanker to replace HMAS *Westralia*;
- Boeing Australia has submitted a tender for the RoK's airborne early warning and control aircraft upgrade project;
- Samsung's interest in promoting their K9 self propelled gun for the Australian Defence Force project LAND 17 (a project designed to provide the Australian Defence Force with a indirect fire-support platform capability through to 2025-2030); and
- an agreement to purchase RoK manufactured 155 millimetre high-explosive artillery ammunition.³²

2.33 The Committee notes that the K9 is a tracked, self-propelled gun that is currently in service in Turkey and has been trialled in Malaysia. A decision on the LAND 17 project will be made before 2008 and the

29 Mr Benedict Coleman, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 44.

30 Mr Benedict Coleman, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 44.

31 Mr Benedict Coleman, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 37.

32 Mr Benedict Coleman, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 37.

potential exists for Defence to choose the Samsung K9 self propelled gun, should Samsung decide to bid on the tender.³³

- 2.34 In relation to the 155 millimetre high-explosive artillery ammunition purchased from the RoK, the Committee notes that the Australian Defence Industry was contracted to supply the ammunition and subsequently subcontracted to a Korean company (HANWHA) to supply that ammunition. Defence declared this was a 'stand-alone, one off buy.'³⁴

Exercise observation and participation

- 2.35 Australia and the RoK are participants in Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC), a multinational maritime warfare exercise. In addition to RIMPAC, the RoK has been invited to, or sent observers to the following Australian exercises:
- Royal Australian Air Force Exercise, Pitch Black – 2004;³⁵
 - Royal Australian Navy Exercise, Kakadu – 2005;
 - Royal Australian Navy Exercise, Pacific Reach – 2007; and
 - occasional Royal Australian Navy ship visits to the RoK, including goodwill passage exercises.³⁶
- 2.36 Australia does not conduct bilateral exercises with the RoK. Defence noted that:

It is just not something that either side has raised at this stage. It might be one of the things that both sides might be able to identify as being in their interests in the future.³⁷

Defence educational exchange

- 2.37 In support of educational exchange between the RoK and Australia, Defence administers a 'modest' defence engagement program for the RoK. In the 2005-06 financial year, Defence expects to spend \$30 000 on the program. The relatively small amount of this expenditure

33 Defence, *Submission No. 47, Vol. 2*, p. 555.

34 Defence, *Submission No. 47, Vol. 2*, p. 555.

35 Defence, *Submission No. 5, Vol. 1*, p. 41.

36 Defence, *Submission No. 47, Vol. 2*, p. 554.

37 Mr Benedict Coleman, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 43.

reflects Defence's expectation that the RoK 'pays its own way ... in recognition of the strong state of the [RoK] economy.'³⁸

- 2.38 The Committee questioned Defence's decision to welcome RoK students on a full fee paying basis and sought clarification of the numbers of RoK students studying at the Australian Defence College and whether that number was affected by Australia's limited financial support for RoK defence students.
- 2.39 Defence noted that it does 'not have any difficulty in filling places [it makes] available to [the RoK] at the college'³⁹ and that 'Defence has a standing invitation to the RoK to send officers to the Australian Defence College each year.'⁴⁰ Defence added that:
- Since 2001 [the RoK] has sent three officers of a colonel equivalent level to the senior course at the staff college – the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies. In 2001, 2002 and 2003, Defence paid for the attendants; it was at no cost to [the RoK]. The next [RoK] officer, a naval captain, to attend the same course in 2006 will be on a full fee for service basis which [the RoK] will be paying.⁴¹
- 2.40 In 2003, Australian Defence College students and Australian Defence Force Academy cadets visited the RoK.⁴²

Committee comment

- 2.41 The Committee is encouraged that Commonwealth and RoK Defence Ministers have recently met and supports their belief that cooperation in the areas of peacekeeping, consequence management and defence industry cooperation are key focal points for the Australian-RoK defence relationship.
- 2.42 A regional US presence is a significant component of Australian defence strategy and, therefore, the Committee recognises and sympathises with the RoK position towards a US presence in the Asia-Pacific region.
- 2.43 The Committee is pleased to note that the RoK has been a regular observer in Australian defence exercises. It is important for Australia

38 Mr Benedict Coleman, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 36.

39 Mr Benedict Coleman, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 42.

40 Mr Chris Birrer, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 42.

41 Mr Chris Birrer, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 42.

42 Defence, *Submission No. 5, Vol. 2*, p. 41.

and the RoK to continue participation in exercise observer programs in order to better understand each other's operational capabilities.

- 2.44 The current level of educational exchange between the RoK and Australian Defence forces is satisfactory. It is the Committee's hope that as Australia and the RoK's defence relationship grows, so too will the number of defence student and cadet exchanges.

Recommendation 1

- 2.45 **In recognition of the growing importance of the Australia-RoK defence relationship, the Committee suggests that Defence continues to explore opportunities to enhance participation in bilateral defence exercises.**

The Australia-Korea Foundation

- 2.46 The Australia-Korea Foundation (AKF) was established by the Commonwealth Government in 1992. Its aim is to develop and strengthen the relationship between Australia and the RoK through the promotion of exchanges and institutional links with specific focus on the areas of commerce, industry and tourism, science and technology, education, the arts, media and sport.⁴³

Membership

- 2.47 The AKF is comprised of a board of 11 part-time members chaired by Dr Don Stammer (Chairman and Company Director of Deutsche Bank Australia), with a secretariat based in Canberra and Seoul. The board members have experience in a range of backgrounds that reflect the focus of the Foundation.
- 2.48 Dr Hyung-a Kim of the Australian National University has stated in her submission that the Australia-Korea Foundation board lacks membership with a thorough understanding of Korean culture and affairs.⁴⁴

43 DFAT, *Australia-Korea Foundation Annual Report 2003-2004*, p. 1.

44 Dr Hyung-a Kim, *Submission No. 11, Vol. 1*, p. 77.

- 2.49 The Committee sought a response from DFAT, which provided a list of AKF Board members and their interests. The Committee notes that membership comprises:
- two senior Commonwealth Government officials;
 - three Australian business leaders;
 - one former Ambassador to the RoK;
 - four academic and community leaders; and
 - one member of the Korean community in Australia.⁴⁵
- 2.50 Board selection would appear to be well considered. For example, the Committee has learned that in the case of AKF board member, Mr Kim Dalton, he ‘knew a lot about ... Korean industry prior to being approached to be on the AKF [board],’ and that he was asked to be on the board because, as a representative of the Australian film industry, he represented the potential for strategic engagement with the RoK in that field.⁴⁶

Funding and activities

- 2.51 Since 2003, the AKF has supported a number of products, activities and exchanges including:
- the *Investigating Australia* Multi-media study kit;
 - the Australia-Korea Broadband Summit;
 - George Rose photographs – touring exhibition and photographic book;
 - the Korean War Honour Roll quilt;
 - Australia-Korea collaborative e-health research; and
 - a variety of educational, sporting and scientific exchanges.⁴⁷
- 2.52 The AKF receives a budget of \$740,000 per annum which is provided through DFAT’s International Relations Grants Programme.⁴⁸ This level of funding is commensurate with the funding received by the

45 DFAT, *Submission No. 38, Vol. 2*, pp. 493–5.

46 Mr Kim Dalton, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 65.

47 For a complete list of recent AKF activities see DFAT, *Australia-Korea Foundation Annual Report 2003–2004*.

48 DFAT, *Submission No. 21, Vol. 1*, p. 275.

Australia-China Council, the Australia-India Council and the Australia-Indonesia Institute. Additional funding received by bodies of this nature is sought from the non-government sector. In this area, the AKF receives less than these other bodies.⁴⁹

- 2.53 Despite limited funding, the AKF has had successes. The AKF's *Investigating Australia* media study kit has been distributed to every lower secondary school in the RoK and elements of the kit have been incorporated into the curriculum.⁵⁰ As a result, the RoK Ministry of Education has congratulated Australia for being the only foreign country to undertake such a promotional initiative.⁵¹
- 2.54 Financial sponsorship is, perhaps, the most important service the AKF provides. Each year the AKF offers financial support to individuals and institutions looking to engage with the RoK. Those awarded grants must have links in the RoK. This requirement effectively multiplies the impact of the grants by involving people in both countries. These exchanges, and the relationships that develop from them, are essential to building a stronger Australia-RoK relationship.
- 2.55 Major exchanges include:
- Gold Coast City – Chunchon City secondment program – an administrative officer exchange which assisted in the coordination of the 2003 Global Digital Cities Network Conference held on the Gold Coast;
 - the on-going Australia-Korea Teacher Exchange Program;
 - funding for scientific study between Charles Stuart University and Gyeongsang National University;
 - sponsorship of an Art residency program;
 - funding for McKinnon Secondary College and Barmera Primary School Korean exchange programs; and
 - funding for Korean film directors to participate in Australian film festivals.

49 DFAT, *Annual Report 2003-2004*, pp. 321-6.

50 Dr Leslie O'Brien, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 10.

51 DFAT, *Submission No. 38, Vol. 2*, p. 503.

2001 review of Australia-Korea Foundation activities

- 2.56 In recognition of the great economic potential that a strengthened Australia-RoK relationship represents, the AKF, in 2001, commissioned a study titled, *Australia-Korea: Strengthened Economic Partnership*.
- 2.57 The study concluded that there were 'emerging new areas for a strengthening of the economic relationship' and that there were opportunities for collaboration 'in the more technology intensive sectors, education and training and in infrastructure and utilities.' The study further noted that the barrier to greater collaboration was the 'lack of knowledge about each other's strengths and weaknesses.'⁵²
- 2.58 The study made 12 specific recommendations designed to enhance Australia's economic partnership with the RoK. Key recommendations were:
- Australia and the RoK enter an umbrella agreement designed to strengthen the economic partnership between the two countries;
 - Australia and the RoK foster greater interest in each other's technology sectors;
 - a long term strategy be developed to promote Australian educational institutions to the RoK Government; and
 - the media be used more extensively to increase the profile of Australia and the RoK in each other's country.⁵³
- 2.59 The Committee questioned witnesses about the outcomes of the 12 recommendations. DFAT's response left some doubt in the Committee's mind as to the extent that the recommendations had been implemented.
- 2.60 The Committee observed that it appeared that approximately five of the 12 recommendations had yielded positive results and suggested that perhaps there has been a lot of dialogue but a lack of 'concrete' results since 2001.⁵⁴

52 Australia-Korea Foundation report, *Australia-Korea: Strengthened Economic Partnership*, August 2001, pp. iii-iv.

53 AKF report, *Australia-Korea: Strengthened Economic Partnership*, August 2001, pp. v-vi.

54 Committee, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 15.

- 2.61 In its defence, DFAT suggested that some of the recommendations called for joint cooperation with the RoK Government, and that the RoK Government, in some circumstances, has not been receptive to Australian overtures.⁵⁵ In categorising the Australia-RoK relationship, DFAT added that it lacked the 'vibrancy' of an Australia-China or Australia-Japan relationship. This is something that DFAT, and by extension the AKF, continues to address.⁵⁶
- 2.62 The RoK Ambassador has responded to DFAT's suggestion that the RoK Government has not always responded positively to Australian proposals for cooperation. The Ambassador stated that while 'both governments may have different priorities in their respective interests and divergent approaches to the strengthening of the relationship,' it is important to remember that 'joint efforts by both governments have been contributing remarkably to the current excellent ties between the two countries.'⁵⁷

Committee comment

- 2.63 The Executive's response to the *Australia-Korea Strengthened Economic Partnership* report and its recommendations gets to the heart of the current Australia-RoK relationship. To date there is much recognition of the potential for the relationship to expand greatly, and although some work is being done to do just that, there is a general malaise that must be overcome. The AKF has the potential to be the Australian conduit for an invigorated relationship.
- 2.64 The Committee recognises the work that the AKF does and encourages it to continue expanding its role in the development of Australian-RoK relations.
- 2.65 Evidence provided to the Committee by DFAT, shows that each board member has been chosen because of their backgrounds in commerce, industry and tourism, science and technology, education, media, the arts or sports. Eight of the 11 members have had direct experience working in the RoK. However, only one is of Korean descent.⁵⁸

55 Mr Peter Baxter, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 16.

56 Mr Peter Baxter, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 16.

57 Embassy of the RoK, *Submission No. 44, Vol. 2*, p. 536.

58 DFAT, *Submission No. 38, Vol. 2*, pp. 493-5.

- 2.66 The membership of the Australia-Korea Foundation Committee adequately addresses the goals of the Foundation; however, the Committee believes that the Foundation's membership could be enhanced by members with a more intimate knowledge of Korean society.
- 2.67 An expanded AKF budget would help to generate greater activity between Australia and the RoK. The Committee encourages Australian non-government bodies – specifically those with interests in the RoK – to increase their funding to the AKF.
- 2.68 The Committee notes that the AKF website is not up-to-date and that many of the AKF's recent activities are not well advertised. Greater public exposure to the AKF and its activities would help advance the profile of the AKF in Australia, and, by extension, the profile of the Australia-RoK relationship.

Recommendation 2

- 2.69 **At the first opportunity, the Australia-Korea Foundation ensure its board membership includes more members with an intimate knowledge of Korean society and culture.**

