



Submission No 39

## **Inquiry into Australia's Overseas Representation**

SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION

**Organisation:** Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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**Parliamentary Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade**  
**Public Hearing**  
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**Topic: Australian Diplomatic post - Kiev**

**Question on Notice (Page 7)**

**Mr Danby**

Is it true that the Ukrainian Government has set aside land in Kiev for an Australian diplomatic post? Do you know the veracity of that claim?

**Answer**

The Department is not aware of any formal designation by the Government of Ukraine of land in Kiev for an Australian diplomatic mission, nor has the relevant Post (Vienna UN) been informed by Ukrainian Ministers/officials of any such designation. It is standard practice worldwide for governments to set aside land for future diplomatic missions. Therefore, we cannot discount the possibility there may be sites/buildings in Kiev considered by the Government of Ukraine as suitable for countries seeking to establish resident accreditation.

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**Topic: Consular services**

**Question on Notice (Page 7)**

**Senator Ferguson**

List of countries in which Australia provides consular services on behalf of Canada and vice versa.

**Answer**

A consular sharing agreement with Canada was signed on 7 August 1986 to provide consular services under certain conditions to the other's nationals in areas where only one of the countries is represented. The Agreement, which has Treaty status, was extended in August 1989.

A supplementary Memorandum of Understanding specifies the services provided, the locations involved, and the conditions. The consular areas covered by each country are listed in the Schedule attached to the MOU.

We provide consular services to the same number of countries (21) on each others behalf as outlined below:

<b>Locations where Canada provides consular assistance on behalf of Australia</b>	<b>Locations where Australia provides consular assistance on behalf of Canada</b>
Ivory Coast	Samoa
Algeria	Bali
Mali	Nusa Tenggara Barat
Gambia	East Timor
Guinea	Solomon Islands
Senegal	Hawaii
Syria	Nauru
Tanzania	Tonga
Guatemala	New Caledonia
Cuba	French Polynesia
Dem Rep of Congo	Cambodia

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<b>Locations where Canada provides consular assistance on behalf of Australia</b>	<b>Locations where Australia provides consular assistance on behalf of Canada</b>
Gabon	Micronesia
Niger	Marshall Islands
Burkina Faso	Palau
Ecuador	Guam
Morocco	C'wealth of Nthn Marianas Islands
Costa Rica	Papua New Guinea
El Salvador	Vanuatu
Venezuela	Burma
Tunisia	Kiribati
Cameroon	Laos

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**Topic: Travel Program**

**Question on Notice (Page 8)**

**Senator Moore**

The Committee is interested in the frequency of travel, including when and how travel is performed and if there is a set frequency of travel that officers try to adhere to when covering multiple country accreditations.

**Answer**

There is no general rule governing the frequency of travel where a post has multiple accreditations. Decisions regarding travel schedules and programs to countries where Australia has non-resident accreditation vary from post to post. A number of considerations must be taken into account, including the timing of credentials ceremonies, respective bilateral priorities involving the different countries of accreditation and individual post priorities.

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**Topic: Australian Overseas Representation**

**Question on Notice (Page 8)**

**Mr Danby**

I would like to see a paper that actually deals with what are the demands that we are unable to effectively represent in particular areas and it would help me in terms of suggesting to the government where priorities ought to be.

**Answer**

DFAT's capacity to advance Australia's interests internationally continues to be tested by changes in the global outlook – the operating environment for Australian foreign and trade policy.

The most immediate demand on DFAT is to ensure Australia benefits from shifts in relative global power and wealth towards emerging economies, many in our region. This transformation presents both opportunities and risks to Australia's international economic and security interests.

As a major resource and services exporter, Australia is well-placed to benefit from developing world growth, especially China's ongoing urbanisation and India's increasing industrialisation. These trends are starting to emerge in changes to the direction of Australian trade, but will only continue to grow.

New openness in emerging economies and resource-rich regions towards foreign investment is also creating opportunities for Australian resource investors e.g. in Western Africa. Australian companies are also looking outside of traditional financial hubs for investment opportunities in regional areas, such as western China.

At the same time, shifting wealth patterns are creating new centres of global influence. The emerging 'multipolarity' in international politics is most obvious in changes to global governance, such as the emergence of the G20. Regionalism, through groups like the East Asia Summit, is also taking on greater prominence in addressing regional security risks.

Transnational security threats will require more work in the Middle East and Africa. Often volatile, these regions are likely to also add substantially to our expanding consular obligations as more Australians travel abroad. Ensuring stability in small Pacific states will become more important as changing economic patterns and climate change affect vulnerable populations.

In order to meet the demands of this changing world order, DFAT will need to continue to:

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- a) increase our engagement with rising powers and emerging economies to maximise security, strategic and economic outcomes for Australia in the changing world order;
- b) deepen critical government-to-government relations with resource-rich countries to maximise economic outcomes for Australia through better access to new and emerging markets;
- c) strengthen our contribution in multilateral fora and our coordination with key players to secure our interests in the evolving multilateral mechanisms on international security and finance; and
- d) expand our presence in volatile regions to ensure emerging regional security mechanisms produce strategic, security and economic outcomes in line with Australian interests.

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**Topic: Diplomatic Representation**

**Question on Notice (Page 7 & 8)**

**Mr Danby**

Does the embassy in Moscow represent Georgia, Moldova, Azerbaijan and European countries?

**Answer**

Australia's Embassy in Moscow has responsibility for the Russian Federation, Moldova, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Belarus. Our Embassy in Vienna covers Ukraine, and our Embassy in Ankara has responsibility for Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Immigration and Visa issues are a matter for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.



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**Topic: A-Based distribution**

**Question in Writing**

**Ms Brodtmann**

Some submissions have criticised the European weighting of Australian representation. But this DFAT table in fact seems to show that Asia as a whole (North plus South-East) has 29 percent of posts and 43 per cent of A-based staff. If we add in the Pacific (presumably New Zealand, PNG, Fiji, and other island nations) this comes to 41 per cent of posts and 53 per cent of A-based staff.

A. This isn't an exact science of course but broadly would you expect an "ideal" DFAT A-based distribution to be much different from this?

**Answer**

The current DFAT A-based distribution is about right for the resources we have available to meet the Government's foreign and trade policy priorities.

See also our response to the Question on Notice from Mr Danby concerning Australian overseas representation.

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**Topic: AusAID LES**

**Question in Writing**

**Ms Brodtmann**

I was struck by Ausaid's comment that it has "the fourth largest overseas representation of any Australian Government agency with 740 of its 1775 staff at 30 June 2011 posted overseas, mostly in overseas missions". As the table on page 10 of Ausaid's submission makes clear, this figure includes Locally Engaged Staff.

A. The role of LES had in the past been seen almost exclusively as enablers – are we now entering a new paradigm where LES increasingly perform more policy oriented roles? Anecdotally I am aware for example of the heavy use in some UK consulates in China of locally engaged staff in this way.

**Answer**

Locally Engaged Staff (LES) are engaged at overseas posts largely to perform supporting service roles across corporate functions. Small numbers are also engaged to provide support in professional activities such as research, project management and, in the case of Austrade, marketing. In some countries, a limited number of LES positions are Designated Security Assessment Positions (DSAP) - these positions are usually filled by Australian nationals, who are not usually dual nationals of the country of employment, and can be granted security clearances. DSAPs may undertake roles such as research officer, systems administrator, and personal assistant to the Head of Mission/Head of Post.

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**Topic: SATIN**

**Question in Writing**

**Ms Brodtmann**

The present SATIN platform, which has been in place since 2007, is nearing the end of its viable operating life. Increasingly, the business requirements of the department, and government more generally, are exceeding the capability of SATIN. This is leading to issues of systems stability with increasing effort and resourcing needed to manage risks.[page 27]

You are in the process of arguing for replacement of SATIN. But more generally to what extent would the new system change the way DFAT does business?

- A. Is the new system basically an improved means of sending cables and emails or does it provide additional capacity to improve interaction between posts and Canberra?

In this context, what you call "mobile computing capability" is an important part of greater efficiency and productivity:

The pilot project you mention [on page 26 of the submission] is about email and calendar access on Satin Low (the non – national secure system) for SES officers and users requiring the mobile capability

Allowing for the security levels of material you deal with, this still seems a bit unambitious

- B. How would it compare with what other officers of comparable foreign services or organisations might have access to? For example, within the parliamentary system, we now can have full access to our secure desktops on an iPad.

**Answer**

- A. The International Communications Network (ICN) proposal being developed by the department is focussed on addressing key business problems and making it easier for users of the system, including those at overseas posts, to do their job. In particular, the proposal is designed to enable more productive and modern business practices by removing impediments and limitations inherent in the current SATIN system. Improved collaboration, interaction, information sharing, service provision and mobility are all key capability goals of the preferred option contained in the ICN business case presented to the Government for consideration.
- B. DFAT has offered a range of remote-access solutions for both sensitive and highly classified networks for some time. This capability ranges from 'portable office' solutions through to iPads for non-national security systems.

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The pilot project referred to in DFAT's submission aimed to improve the convenience of that access and to ensure that the technology could be operated and supported globally, was appropriately secure, cost-effective and represented good value for money. The pilot also ensured that DFAT policies and related guidance were sound and relevant before taking steps to implement the mobile capability more broadly. If this capability is implemented, it would provide DFAT staff with a mobile communications capability that would be on a par with that in use in comparable foreign services.

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**Topic: Breakdown of posts**

**Question in Writing**

**Ms Brodtmann**

The table on page 13 of the DFAT submission (breakdown of posts and A-based staff by region) gives a good snapshot of DFAT's distribution of people overseas.

- A. Could we have a similar table drawn up that takes into account all Australian representation overseas – whole of government representation.

On a rough count, if we add in other agencies, based on their submissions, there are something like an additional 626 A-based positions overseas (compared with 599 DFAT A-based).

- B. Given the clarification that some geographical regions include multilateral posts (for example, European posts and staff numbers include Geneva UN and Geneva WTO), a separate category of multilateral posts in this table would give a better sense of the distribution.

**Answer**

As at 31 October 2011, total attached Australian-based (A-based) officer representation at Australian overseas missions was 1232, consisting of 599 DFAT A-based attached staff and 633 other agency A-based attached staff.

Refer to the attached table for all Australian representation overseas including multilateral post representation.

Region	No. of Posts	%	Total Australian based officer representation	%	DFAT A Based Attached staff	DFAT as %age of total representation	Other Agency A-based Attached staff*	Other Agency %age of total representation
Middle East (excludes Cairo)	9	9.47%	75	6.09%	44	58.67%	31	41.33%
Europe (excludes Multilateral agencies)	24	25.26%	181	14.69%	110	60.77%	71	39.23%
Geneva WTO	1	1.05%	12	0.97%	11	91.67%	1	8.33%
Paris OECD	1	1.05%	6	0.49%	3	50.00%	3	50.00%
Americas (excludes UN New York)	12	12.63%	150	12.18%	63	42.00%	87	58.00%
UN New York	1	1.05%	19	1.54%	15	78.95%	4	21.05%
Africa (inc. Nth Africa & sub-Saharan Africa)	8	8.42%	68	5.52%	37	54.41%	31	45.59%
Nth Asia	7	7.37%	144	11.69%	72	50.00%	72	50.00%
S & SE Asia	21	22.11%	432	35.06%	183	42.36%	249	57.64%
Pacific	11	11.58%	145	11.77%	61	42.07%	84	57.93%
Total	95	100%	1232	100%	599	48.62%	633	51.38%

\*Does not include 549 Unattached other agency staff e.g. Defence and AusAID staff working in the countries but away from the Missions, plus 99 staff working in host Government agencies and other bodies.

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**Topic: Strategic Australian representation overseas**

**Question in Writing**

**Ms Brodtmann**

We are talking about "Australian representation overseas":

- A. Could you indicate how strategic decisions are taken on such representation?
- B. Is there a grand plan that establishes a whole of government perspective? Or are decisions taken by individual agencies responding to individual imperatives?

**Answer**

- A. Strategic decisions concerning the location of Australian posts and level of representation are made consistent with Australia's national interests and include consideration of issues such as: bilateral and multilateral policy priorities; security; and budgetary implications.
- B. Individual government agencies make decisions regarding their representation overseas based on their policy priorities and objectives, and agency budget.