

Chapter 4

Public diplomacy in Australia

4.1 The previous chapter traced recent developments in international relations and found that overseas governments attach great significance to public diplomacy and are increasingly devoting more resources to promote their country's image abroad. Against this background, the committee provides an overview of Australia's public diplomacy activities. In this chapter, it considers Australia's level of awareness of public diplomacy and the activities it undertakes to build an international reputation.

Awareness of public diplomacy in Australia

4.2 Some commentators in Australia are acutely aware of the importance of public diplomacy to Australia. A former diplomat, Mr Kirk Coningham, believed that public diplomacy 'particularly in the global village as it stands right now, will do far more to ensure Australia's future wellbeing and future security than traditional diplomacy'. He explained:

If we cannot maintain a neutral to positive stance on a government's sense of cooperation with Australia then we will fail...So it [public diplomacy] really does matter—not just in a tree-hugging, feeling good about ourselves sense. It matters in achieving our international objectives, because that is in some ways subordinate to how people feel about Australia, whether it be neutral or positive. If it is negative then we are not going to be able to achieve our objectives.¹

4.3 The Australian Government recognises the significant place that public diplomacy has in Australia's foreign policy. In its White Paper, *In the National Interest*, the government stated:

In its multilateral strategies, as in its regional and bilateral efforts, Australia's international reputation is itself a factor in our capacity to advance Australian interests. An international reputation as a responsible, constructive and practical country is an important foreign policy asset.²

4.4 Despite the recognition given by some Australians and by the government to the role of public diplomacy in Australia's foreign policy, little has been written on this matter domestically. Indeed, the paucity of material on public diplomacy in Australia and the confusion surrounding the use of the term has been one of the most striking features of this inquiry. For example, Dr Pauline Kerr from the Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy, ANU, observed that 'it is quite noticeable when looking

1 *Committee Hansard*, 12 April 2007, p. 41. Mr Coningham was the Counsellor, Public Affairs, at the Australian Embassy, Jakarta from 2000–2004.

2 Commonwealth of Australia, *In the National Interest, Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy, White Paper*, Overview, 1997, p. iii.

through the diplomatic literature that public diplomacy really is not a topic that Australian academics find all that interesting'.³ The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) also observed that there is 'a real absence of discourse about public diplomacy in Australia outside Government circles'.⁴ Indeed, a research project being conducted in the Crawford School of Economics and Government and research underway in the Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy are the exceptions.⁵



Dr Pauline Kerr noted that generally the scholarly research that is done on public diplomacy comes from Europe and Britain. She is showing the committee a publication from the Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations as an example of the material that the institute regularly produces on public diplomacy. (*Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 9)

4.5 Australia's lack of interest in public diplomacy is evident when compared with the growing body of literature on public diplomacy produced overseas and at recent

3 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 8.

4 *Submission 9*, p. [3].

5 Dr Yasuku Horiuchi and Mr Trevor Wilson, ANU, are currently working on a book on public diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region. The book will examine why the state makes public diplomacy efforts and how their efforts changed over time. The aim is to formulate a better theoretical framework to understand public diplomacy in the context of today's global and dynamic international relations and to pave the way for further development of studies on public diplomacy. Dr Pauline Kerr, Director of Studies at the Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy at the ANU, referred to the study into public diplomacy in her evidence, *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 8.

international conferences and seminars discussing all aspects of public diplomacy.⁶ Furthermore, Australia is not among the countries such as the US, the UK and Canada whose public diplomacy has undergone comprehensive and independent review.⁷



Dr Yusaku Horiuchi and Mr Trevor Wilson, who attended the committee's roundtable, are currently engaged in a research project on public diplomacy. (*Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 8)

4.6 Not only is there an absence of serious discussion on public diplomacy in Australia but the very term appears to have little currency even among those who may be practicing public diplomacy. Mr Jacob Townsend from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, cited the white paper, *Protecting Australia Against Terrorism*, which listed the four components of Australia's approach to terrorism. He noted that

6 For example, see Report on Wilton Park Conference WP05/4, *Diplomacy Today: Delivering Results in a World of Changing Priorities*, 3–6 March 2005; WPS06/21, *Public Diplomacy: Key Challenges and Priorities*, Friday 10–12 March 2006; Summary of discussion, Conference on 'Challenges for Foreign Ministries: Managing Diplomatic Networks and Optimising value', 31 May–1 June 2006, Geneva; 'The Present and Future of Public Diplomacy: A European Perspective', the 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p. 7 and 9 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp> (accessed 23 January 2007).

7 See GAO, *U.S. Public Diplomacy: State Department Expands Efforts but Faces Significant Challenges*, September 2003; GAO, *U.S. Public diplomacy: State Department Efforts to Engage Muslim Audiences Lack Certain Communication Elements and Face Significant Challenges*, May 2006; UK Government, 'Changing perceptions: Review of public diplomacy', March 2002; Lord Carter's review of the effectiveness of public diplomacy work, presented to the Foreign Secretary and Chief Secretary of the Treasury, 13 December 2005; Foreign Affairs Canada, Office of the Inspector General, Evaluation Division, *Cross Cutting Issues—A Horizontal Review of the Range of Canadian Public and Cultural Diplomacy Programming, Final Report*, August 2005.

prevention, preparedness, response and recovery were identified but that public diplomacy was not listed in the prevention section. He concluded:

Counter-radicalisation is a long-term prevention technique. This is a long war so it seems to me that we need to put two and two together and include that in our counter-terrorism strategy.⁸

4.7 Dr Julie Wells, RMIT University, noted that public diplomacy is 'not a term that is well understood by the people we would expect to be the government's partners in the project'.⁹ She informed the committee that, when she mentioned RMIT's submission on public diplomacy to the head of the University's alumni office, she was asked 'what's public diplomacy?' Dr Wells pointed out that Australia has not had explicit dialogue involving leaders of universities about public diplomacy.¹⁰

4.8 The Centre for Democratic Institutions provides another example of the lack of awareness of relevant individuals and organisations to their place in Australia's overarching public diplomacy framework. When asked whether the Centre saw itself as a formal contributor to Australia's public diplomacy processes, Dr Benjamin Reilly, Director, replied that he had not thought about it in terms of public diplomacy until the inquiry encouraged him to do so. On reflection, he believed that, although independent of government or DFAT, the work of the centre is 'part of Australia's international public diplomacy efforts'. He noted that most of the countries and individuals the centre works with have 'great difficulty distinguishing one Australian agency from another' and added:

I think the fact that we have a very strong regional focus, particularly on the South Pacific, East Timor and Indonesia, which are all regions of enormous importance to Australia, heightens that. And I think the fact that we work not just with the formal institutions of Australian politics, such as the parliament and parliamentarians, but also with organisations like political parties, which are in a slightly different category, means that we do have an important role to play there.¹¹

4.9 During the course of this inquiry, the committee learnt first-hand of the lack of interest in public diplomacy and the confusion surrounding its meaning. Its call for submissions received a poor response even from government departments or agencies actively engaged in public diplomacy. Clearly, public diplomacy is not a term commonly used or understood in Australia. Furthermore, and of some concern, it would seem that Australia is not actively involved in the international conversation about public diplomacy.

8 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 15.

9 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 28.

10 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 28.

11 *Committee Hansard*, 15 May 2007, p. 31.

4.10 This lack of interest in, or awareness of, public diplomacy does not mean that Australia is not actively engaged in public diplomacy. The following section provides an outline of the public diplomacy activities undertaken by government departments and agencies in Australia and some of the more significant government-funded programs. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive account of Australia's programs but rather to indicate the number and diversity of the government's public diplomacy activities.

Public diplomacy activities

4.11 The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) submission stated that the department, particularly its Images of Australia Branch (IAB), has primary responsibility for implementing Australia's public and cultural diplomacy programs to advance Australia's foreign and trade policy objectives. Its programs aim to create positive perceptions towards Australia and to ensure that Australia's international image is 'contemporary, dynamic and positive'.¹² Dr Lachlan Strahan, Assistant Secretary, IAB, informed the committee that public diplomacy:

...spans an extremely wide range of activities. It is everything from integrated promotions, where we will work with other agencies to do a promotion of Australia encompassing culture, business and politics, all the way through to quite specific targeted activities, such as what we might do on nonproliferation.¹³

4.12 The outline given below groups DFAT's public diplomacy programs under general headings and provides just a small sample of its public diplomacy activities. A detailed listing and description of the various programs can be found in DFAT's submission.¹⁴

Bilateral foundations, councils and institutes

4.13 DFAT explained that the department provides secretariats for, and cooperates with, nine bilateral foundations, councils and institutes (FCIs). The FCIs 'promote people-to-people links and accurate, contemporary images of Australia in support of the Government's foreign and trade policy goals'.¹⁵ They operate both in Australia and abroad to shape perceptions of Australia held by individuals and organisations overseas. As DFAT explained:

FCI projects are expected to foster perceptions of contemporary Australia as scientifically, technologically and educationally advanced, economically enterprising and culturally diverse. FCI activities are required to build

12 *Submission 18*, p. 5.

13 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 3.

14 *Submission 18*.

15 *Submission 18*, p. 40.

networks and contacts, influence opinion-makers and facilitate exchange of knowledge.¹⁶

4.14 The first FCI, the Australia–Japan Foundation, was created as a statutory body under the *Australia–Japan Foundation Act 1976*. Since then, the following FCIs have been established: Australia–China Council, Australia–India Council, Australia–Indonesia Institute, Australia–Korea Foundation, Council on Australia–Latin America Relations, Council for Australian–Arab Relations, Australia–Malaysia Institute and Australia–Thailand Institute.¹⁷ The committee uses the Australia–China Council to indicate the range and type of public diplomacy activities that the FCIs undertake.

4.15 The three major themes in the activities supported by the Australia–China Council link with public diplomacy: encouraging Australian knowledge of and interest in China; encouraging Chinese knowledge of and interest in Australia; and broadening and deepening bilateral contact and exchange. The Council has a number of programs to advance these goals, such as the Year in China Program and Australian Studies Program. It has initiated projects such as the Young Business and Professional Scholars Program. The Council stated that in 2005–2006, it funded around sixty separate projects and several hundred individuals. Ms Dinah Dysart, Deputy Chair of the Council, informed the committee that the Council gives preference to:

...projects that project Australia as an innovative, multicultural, open and liberal society and that offers prospects of long-term institutional links and continuing exchanges.¹⁸

4.16 The Council emphasised the importance of alumni organisations and people-to-people contacts in increasing public diplomacy and positive attitudes toward Australia.

Culture

4.17 DFAT funds the Australia International Cultural Council (AICC), Australia's peak consultative group for the promotion of Australian culture overseas. Its membership includes 'representatives from government, the arts and cultural community and business with a common interest in more effective international showcasing of Australian arts and culture'.¹⁹

4.18 According to DFAT, the AICC is one of the government's most important cultural diplomacy tools. Its aims include producing a wide range of high quality cultural products to project a positive image and to encourage greater understanding of Australia. The Council also promotes Australian cultural exports and facilitates links between institutions to encourage longer-term cooperation. The Council is also

16 *Submission 18*, p. 40.

17 See Appendix 5 for information on FCIs.

18 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 33.

19 *Submission 18*, p. 25.

involved in the International Cultural Visits Program and the Cultural Relations Discretionary Grants.²⁰

- The International Cultural Visits (ICV) Program organises visits to Australia by senior and influential arts representatives and cultural media from a range of countries. It promotes awareness of the diversity and excellence of Australian cultural product, enhances links and networks, and improves commercial opportunities for the Australian arts industry.²¹
- The Cultural Relations Discretionary Grant (CRDG) program, provides *ad hoc* funding to individuals and organisations that project a modern image of Australia abroad through cultural activity.²²

4.19 Further examples of cultural public diplomacy outlined in DFAT's submission are the touring exhibitions, including the Embassy Roadshow, a package of contemporary Australian films and documentaries, Indigenous Arts Program, the Australian Visual Arts Touring Program, and the Australian Fine Music Touring Program.²³

Environment

4.20 DFAT is also active in environmental matters. It informed the inquiry that it:

... uses a range of PD tools to support Australia's international advocacy on environment issues and to promote Australia's strong credentials as a country committed to addressing environmental matters, including climate change, biodiversity conservation and whales conservation.²⁴

4.21 Speeches, workshops and public relations campaigns are used to inform international audiences of Australian policies on the environment. In January 2006, the department initiated Asia-Pacific Partnership (AP6), a 'key element of Australia's international climate change effort, focusing on practical technology-based initiatives'.²⁵

Major events and expositions

4.22 DFAT coordinates Australia's participation in or supports major events such as the Commonwealth Games or World Expos.²⁶

20 *Submission 18*, pp. 25, 27.

21 *Submission 18*, p. 27.

22 *Submission 18*, p. 28.

23 *Submission 18*, pp. 28–31.

24 *Submission 18*, p. 38.

25 *Submission 18*, p. 38.

26 *Submission 18*, 46–48.

Humanitarian

4.23 In its submission, DFAT stated that it 'uses public diplomacy to help shape positive international opinion regarding Australia's human rights credentials and to promote human rights fields of endeavour where Australia has a distinctive international reputation'.²⁷

4.24 DFAT uses funding administered by AusAID for organising various activities, including visits of foreign officials and NGOs to Australia for discussion on the role of human rights in Australia's foreign policy.

4.25 According to DFAT, the 'diplomacy of the deed', in this case Australia's response to disasters and emergencies overseas, 'augments our image as a good international citizen, committed to assisting other nations regardless of religious, ethnic and political considerations'. A good example of this was the response to the Boxing Day Tsunami.²⁸ DFAT stated that:

[s]uch efforts have a particularly enduring PD outcome because they are motivated by humanitarian considerations and are ascribed a level of integrity which sets them apart from any other PD program. Emergency relief efforts underline the shared interests and values which bind Australia and other societies, including in the Muslim world, together.²⁹

4.26 Other examples of Australia's efforts in the field of human rights are hosting or participating in forums such as the *Anti-violence against Women and Children Act* in Manila and addressing child trafficking and labour issues in conjunction with a cultural program in Hanoi.³⁰

Media

4.27 In Australia, DFAT's International Media Centre in Sydney runs an International Media Visits program and liaises with the Foreign Correspondents Association to generate informed international media coverage on Australia. Under the International Media Visits program, senior international journalists and commentators are invited to Australia to participate in tailored programs focused on particular issues and to meet a wide range of people from ministers to business leaders and academics.³¹

27 *Submission 18*, p. 39.

28 An earthquake struck off the western coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, on Boxing Day morning, 2004. It triggered tidal waves that swept into coastal villages and seaside resorts causing many tens of thousands of deaths and widespread devastation in countries including Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Myanmar, the Maldives, Malaysia, and Bangladesh.

29 *Submission 18*, pp. 48–49.

30 *Submission 18*, p. 14.

31 *Submission 18*, pp. 20–21.

Australia Network is a television service to the Asia Pacific region. It delivers 'high quality and contemporary programming in education, arts, culture and drama', as well as an independent news and current affairs service. Radio Australia is another media outlet providing news and other programs in the region.³²

4.28 Overseas, DFAT posts monitor coverage of Australia in the local press and report on emerging or contentious issues. They also run information and public affairs campaigns to influence official perceptions and the public image of Australia.³³

Publications

4.29 DFAT develops publications for specific bilateral, regional and thematic public diplomacy purposes.³⁴

Defence/Military

4.30 DFAT uses public diplomacy in relation to military or defence matters, for example in the fight against terrorism or to promote Australia's commitment to arms control and counter-proliferation. It provides support to regional governments in their efforts to combat terrorism.³⁵

Sports

4.31 DFAT regarded sports diplomacy as:

an important facet of [its] PD efforts, taking advantage of Australia's international reputation for sporting excellence. Like culture, sport acts as a neutral bridge between Australia and other countries, facilitating the communication of PD messages in a subtle and less overtly political way.³⁶

4.32 Some examples of sporting events which contributed to public diplomacy were the Prime Minister's XV (rugby union) match during the Australia-Japan Year of Exchange in 2006, and the Commonwealth Games.

Trade

4.33 DFAT is involved in various projects, including the organisation of APEC 2007, for which DFAT coordinates a whole-of-government communications and outreach strategy. DFAT stated that it is addressing the 'considerable Chinese

32 *Submission 18*, p. 23.

33 *Submission 18*, p. 22.

34 *Submission 18*, pp. 12, 16.

35 *Submission 18*, p. 35.

36 *Submission 18*, p. 49.

sensitivities' in Australia's free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations with China, including misconceptions about potential harm to some of China's industries.³⁷

Other departments and agencies

4.34 Many government departments and agencies contribute to Australia's public diplomacy even though their primary responsibility may not be public diplomacy. An outline of the programs of some of these agencies is provided below.

Department of Defence

4.35 The Department of Defence submission outlined the various Defence activities that promote understanding and awareness of Australia. Defence activities, such as ship visits at Australian and foreign ports, often generate media coverage, as do community outreach and humanitarian assistance programs, emergency evacuations and search and rescue operations carried out by the Australian Defence Force (ADF). For example, Defence mentioned in its submission ADF's contribution to humanitarian assistance operations such as Operations Sumatra Assist and Pakistan Assist. Defence noted, however, that:

Although the deployment (Operation Sumatra Assist) was directed at providing humanitarian relief, it also made a positive impression on public perceptions of Australia both locally and more widely within Indonesia.³⁸

4.36 Further programs include the Defence Cooperation Program (DCP) that, according to the Department of Defence:

...provides significant support to regional security forces in the areas of strategic planning, education and training, command and control, infrastructure, counter-terrorism, communications and logistics support.³⁹

Invest Australia

4.37 Invest Australia is the Australian Government's inward investment agency. Its mission is to attract 'productive foreign direct investment into Australia to support sustainable industry growth and development' through promoting Australia as an internationally competitive investment destination.⁴⁰

We try to work with other government agencies to make sure that there is a consistent approach to portraying Australia as an investment destination that is consistent with the other images of Australia in the public domain as a tourism and trade destination, for example.⁴¹

37 *Submission 18*, pp. 32–33.

38 *Submission 19*, p. 3.

39 *Submission 19*, p. 3.

40 *Submission 24*, p. 1.

41 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 52.

4.38 Invest Australia noted that its public diplomacy efforts involve:

...increasing its international presence through a range of international promotional activities including public relations activity, a global advertising campaign, attendance at key events and a multilingual website.⁴²

4.39 Like several other departments and agencies, Invest Australia does not distinguish between public diplomacy and promotional activities. Mr Barry Jones, Invest Australia, stated that he thought Invest Australia would argue that 'you could consider all of our general promotional activities as being public diplomacy'.⁴³

4.40 Invest Australia participates in various inter-departmental committees, including the Committee on Marketing, Information and Communications Technologies for Australia and the Committee for Public Diplomacy. Further, Invest Australia is involved in running media relations programs such as a Visiting Journalists' Program (VJP), and liaising with the Foreign Correspondents' Association (FCA), with tailored programs comprising ministerial interviews and interviews with business and investment organisations.

4.41 Invest Australia reported having developed an *Australians Abroad* pilot program 'to increase positive public diplomacy within the international business community':

A key strategy of the program is to educate and encourage endorsement, word-of-mouth marketing and reinforcement of key messages by influential Australian business leaders based in key international markets.⁴⁴

4.42 Invest Australia reported that it chairs the National Investment Marketing Group (NIMG) that is used for coordinating the national investment marketing effort between the States and Territories and the Australian Government.

AusAID

4.43 According to AusAID, the objective of Australia's overseas aid program is to assist developing countries reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development in line with Australia's national interest. It stated that public diplomacy plays a key role in its activities and is used for:

...strengthening engagement in international and multilateral fora to facilitate advocacy of regional issues, research and development of guidelines regarding protection of vulnerable populations in humanitarian

42 *Submission 24*, p. 2.

43 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 56.

44 *Submission 24*, p. 6.

situations, and identifying and integrating lessons learned from the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami into enhanced humanitarian response mechanisms.⁴⁵

4.44 AusAID's public diplomacy efforts are incorporated in the program management and delivery, that is, through aid programs or disaster relief missions such as the Boxing Day tsunami or the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands. It also contributes to Australia's public diplomacy, through educational assistance, including the Australian Leadership Awards Fellowships Program that has the aim of supporting and strengthening long-lasting ties to Australia.⁴⁶

4.45 Communicating with the public in Australia and in partner countries is a priority. AusAID admits, however, that although its aid program enjoys a high degree of awareness and support in Australia and amongst the key stakeholders, 'this is not necessarily reflected in awareness levels amongst the broader population' in recipient countries.⁴⁷

4.46 In answering the question about how AusAID's public diplomacy funding of \$4.57 million is spent, Ms Jenny Da Rin, Director, Media and Parliamentary Services, AusAID, explained that:

Out of those funds we fund our global education program...internet presence and the management of that and our photo library. We fund our media activities...promotional activities and events, media launches and things like that. We fund our media monitoring services. We also fund our stakeholder engagement activities, which include domestic and international activities...We fund our publications, including *Focus* magazine. We fund our post and public affairs support. That includes things like in-country newsletters, in-country websites, graphic design and that sort of work.⁴⁸

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

4.47 The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) stated that it closely cooperates with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to advance a whole-of-government approach to public diplomacy. It participates in a number of inter-departmental committees (IDCs), including addressing matters relating to border security and quarantine.⁴⁹

4.48 DAFF's public diplomacy efforts fall into three categories: market access and reputation, including negotiations; biosecurity; and emergency preparedness. To reinforce biosecurity, DAFF has developed brochures in 15 different languages, and

45 *Submission 25*, p. 13.

46 *Submission 25*, p. 5.

47 *Submission 25*, p. 16.

48 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 68–69.

49 *Submission 26*, p. 1.

the same information is also displayed on its website and on the websites of Australian embassies. Further, DAFF noted that:

...quarantine messages are developed and required, under Australian law, to be broadcast on all international airlines and cruise lines into Australia; [and] prominent messages are displayed at international arrival terminals.⁵⁰

Department of Education, Science and Training

4.49 The Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) reported that international education is gaining increasing recognition for the significant role it plays in contributing to Australia's global engagement and the perception of Australia around the world, and thus contributing to Australia's public diplomacy efforts.

4.50 Its *Study in Australia* program operates as an umbrella brand for the promotion of Australian education internationally. An independent evaluation of the brand found that the brand is well-recognised, being the third strongest national education brand globally behind those of the United States and the United Kingdom.⁵¹



4.51 Australian Education International (AEI), the international arm of DEST, implements promotional activities such as familiarisation visits to Australia for senior officials, education leaders, journalists etc., organises public lectures, research symposia and support for international alumni networks.⁵² Its media releases are distributed directly to international media outlets and through DFAT and Austrade.⁵³ DEST noted that:

Student and academic mobility and exchange are seen to provide the basis for friendship, mutual respect and understanding, just as education is the key to prosperity, security and peace in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.⁵⁴

50 *Submission 26*, p. 2.

51 The brand research delivered a brand position—Freedom, Challenge, Status—that clearly differentiated Australia from its major competitors. Working in consultation with students and industry, AEI then developed a brand identity, including a logo and graphical elements. The customised Study in Australia brand was launched in December 2002. logolicence@studyinaustralia.gov.au

52 *Submission 28*, p. 3.

53 *Submission 28*, p. 4.

54 *Submission 28*, p. 4.

4.52 The department has several programs that pursue these goals. *Endeavour Program* brings high achievers from around the world to Australia for study, research, vocational training or professional development. *Australian Scholarships* initiative combines relevant aspects of AusAID and DEST education programmes in the Asia-Pacific under a single umbrella.⁵⁵ DEST explained that through an awardee network, the *Australian Scholarships* and the *Endeavour Program* will develop enduring linkages with former participants/awardees ensuring that influential and strategic relationships with Australia are maintained.⁵⁶

4.53 Scientific projects with international partners and collaboration through international fora provide an opportunity for Australia to raise international awareness of its expertise. Like cultural or sports diplomacy:

[s]cientific collaboration often provides an opportunity to establish or strengthen relations that may be otherwise under-developed or sensitive.⁵⁷

4.54 Some examples of such projects and programs in the field of science include the tsunami monitoring and early warning system and the *Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate Change*.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

4.55 In February 2007, a restructure of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) created ABC International.⁵⁸ ABC International consists of Radio Australia and Australia Network (formerly ABC AsiaPacific).⁵⁹ According to the ABC, it is 'a major player in how our nation is represented offshore, in terms of television, radio and online'.⁶⁰ It stated that its functions are to 'encourage awareness of Australia and an international understanding of Australian attitudes on world affairs', and [through ABC Radio] 'connect audiences in Asia and the Pacific through programs that complement and enrich their lives and foster an informed dialogue'.⁶¹

4.56 In order to reach their target audience, ABC broadcasts radio programs in seven languages and has a radio and/or television presence in around 40 countries. Its regular weekly audiences are estimated at some 20 million, and its multilingual

55 *Submission 28*, p. 4.

56 *Submission 28*, p. 5.

57 *Submission 28*, p. 6.

58 See 'ABC bolsters its commitment to international broadcasting', *Media Release*, 7 February 2007.

59 ABC Asia Pacific commenced broadcasting on 31 December 2001.

60 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 86.

61 *Submission 22*, pp. 2, 3.

website had over 18 million page views in the last year.⁶² It informed the committee that:

A key to Radio Australia's success and growing audiences in recent years has been its ability to directly engage with Asian and Pacific broadcasting partners and audiences in their own languages and in response to their needs and interests.

...

Radio Australia's...approach builds on a long established reputation for credibility and independent coverage but also relies on resident linguistic and cultural expertise

...

Through content exchange, dialogue and interactivity, RA seeks a more equitable and long term relationship with the region and audiences.⁶³

4.57 Radio Australia also has a role as an educator. It has developed a new vocational English series *English for Tourism* and *English for Business*.⁶⁴

4.58 In line with promoting good governance and democratic values as part of public diplomacy, Radio Australia noted that it is an active participant in 'the development of a competent and independent media in Asia and the Pacific'.⁶⁵ It delivers training and technical support to its partners, and works together with AusAID to foster more open media in the Asia-Pacific region.⁶⁶

The ABC actively fosters international relationships with public broadcasters and a range of media-related organisations. These include ABC participation in policy and regulatory forums, membership of peer organisations (for example, the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union), the delivery of formal capacity-building assistance to public broadcasters (especially in Asia and the Pacific) and the provision of informal collegiate support to fellow public broadcasters.⁶⁷

4.59 Australia Network is the Australian television service to the Asia Pacific region operated by the ABC under contract to DFAT. The aims of the service are in line with the Australian Government's public diplomacy policy. That is, Australia Network is to:

- provide a credible, reliable and independent voice in the region;

62 *Submission 22*, pp. 3–4.

63 *Submission 22*, p. 4–5.

64 *Submission 22*, p. 5.

65 *Submission 22*, p. 6.

66 *Submission 22*, p. 7.

67 *Submission 22*, p. 17.

- present...a 'window' on Australia and Australian perspectives on the world; project images and perceptions of Australia in an independent impartial manner;
- foster public understanding of Australia, its people and its strategic and economic interests, and
- raise awareness in the region of Australia's economic and trade capabilities, including in the education and tourism industries.⁶⁸

Australian Sports Commission

4.60 Mr Greg Nance, Director, National Sports Programs, noted the Australian Sports Commission's (ASC) long involvement in public diplomacy. He advised the committee that:

the public diplomacy aspect has always been alive and well with the commission. Any activity undertaken with another developing country has always had that element to it, be it involving athletes in the environment here in Australia or sending experts into those countries.⁶⁹

4.61 Sport is used as a public diplomacy and developmental tool because:

...sport is such a neutral thing. It does not divide people but generally brings them together no matter what level you engage at.⁷⁰

4.62 The ASC efforts have ranged from organised sports events to initiatives such as the *sport for development* or the *Australian Sports Outreach Program* that the ASC delivers in cooperation with or for AusAID. The *sport for development* program has evolved from the early initiatives focused on the elite level:

[A]lthough noteworthy for their ability to expose individuals to the benefits of the Australian sports system, [the earlier ASC's overseas activities] lacked any real depth and sustainability in building capacity in the countries involved.⁷¹

4.63 The *sport for development* program, however, uses sport for individual and institutional development that, in turn, contributes to the development of the society as a whole. The program provides public diplomacy benefits to Australia. Mr Greg Nance said:

Sport for development, rather than developing sport...is where you are not developing sport for sport's sake but using sport as a tool to create better communities in the areas that you are working in. You are creating better communities through the people or the infrastructure or just the playing of

68 *Submission 22*, p. 9.

69 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 76.

70 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 75.

71 *Submission 21*, p. 1.

sport. There are health outcomes, social outcomes and personal outcomes for the people involved.⁷²

4.64 According to Mr Nance, all ASC work is public diplomacy due to the 'fairly good and neutral story' that requires little promotion.⁷³

Australian Film Commission

4.65 The Australian Film Commission (AFC) is an Australian Government agency operating under the Commonwealth Film Program (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts). Through the National Film and Sound Archive, the AFC collects, documents, preserves and provides access to Australia's screen and sound heritage. The AFC is the major collector and analyst of data about the industry. It informs opinion, outlook and policy about the audiovisual industries and screen content in Australia.⁷⁴

4.66 The AFC outlined the importance of its work in delivering significant public diplomacy outcomes for Australia through 'informing and influencing foreign public perception of Australia, its culture and people'.⁷⁵

Film, television and digital content has played a central role in establishing an international profile for Australia and its culture...Australian film and television programs are ambassadors for this country around the world.⁷⁶

4.67 The Commission stated that most of its public diplomacy objectives occur through its membership of the Australia International Cultural Council (AICC):

The AICC's strategy is to project a broad and diverse image of Australia which advances our foreign and trade policy interests and promotes and enhances the export of Australian cultural products.⁷⁷

4.68 The AFC noted its involvement in the promotion of Australia internationally through the AICC. One of the initiatives, *Embassy Roadshow*, showcases Australian films through Australian diplomatic missions overseas. Other AFC activities include Australian film festivals, tours, and gifts. The government's 'World Class Australian Film Industry' policy provides funding for the AFC to support the creation of Australian film festivals and events internationally.⁷⁸

72 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 75.

73 *Committee Hansard*, 14 March 2007, p. 78.

74 Australian Film Commission, 'About us', http://www.afc.gov.au/profile/about_us/default.aspx (accessed 2 April 2007). See also *Submission 17*, p. 1.

75 *Submission 17*, p. 2.

76 *Submission 17*, p. 3.

77 *Submission 17*, p. 5.

78 *Submission 17*, p. 6.

4.69 According to the AFC, it participates in a number of international film and television festivals to promote the Australian audiovisual industry overseas. It operates stands or offices at key international markets and festivals and stages special networking events for Australian practitioners.⁷⁹

4.70 The AFC further noted its assistance to the government on diplomatic matters, for example by selecting and sourcing a list of iconic Australian films to be provided as gifts to the twenty national leaders attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in Sydney late 2007.⁸⁰

Australia Council for the Arts

4.71 The Australia Council for the Arts (Australia Council) is the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body. It provides over 1,700 grants each year to artists and arts organisations. Australia's major performing arts companies are supported through funding partnerships with the Australia Council and the State governments. The Australia Council also supports strategies to develop new markets in Australia and internationally.⁸¹

4.72 In line with the Australian Film Commission, the Australia Council emphasised the importance of arts and culture to the promotion of Australia and Australian culture and values internationally.

There is a burgeoning international interest in Australian arts and culture that has been driven, and has continued to drive, many major Australian export successes. These successes have actively and meaningfully complemented and enhanced Australia's diplomatic efforts in profiling our strong, independent national identity.⁸²

4.73 In cooperation with other operators in the field, the Australia Council supports activities such as tours of exhibitions and performing arts projects and international visitors' programs. According to the submission, international activities can create new relationships and public diplomacy opportunities.

4.74 Further, Australia Council activities and initiatives include OzArts Online, briefings to DFAT officers, participation in DFAT's *International Cultural Visitors Scheme* and establishing locally-based Arts Market Development Officer/Program Managers positions in target regions (Japan, UK, Berlin).⁸³ In past years, *artsaustralia berlin* 2002 and 2003 programs as well as a similar program in the UK, *Undergrowth*

79 *Submission 17*, p. 6.

80 *Submission 17*, p. 7.

81 Australia Council, 'About Us: Who and Why We Are'.
http://www.ozco.gov.au/the_council/about_us/who_and_why_we_are/ (accessed 2 April 2007).

82 *Submission 13*, p. 2.

83 *Submission 13*, p. 7.

Australian Arts UK, have been established to promote contemporary Australian arts in the European markets.⁸⁴

Museums Australia

4.75 Museums Australia (MA) was created in 1994, joining together the Museums Association of Australia, the Art Museums Association of Australia and the Museums Education Association of Australia.⁸⁵ It has 749 institutional members (museum or gallery members) and more than 1000 individual members across all states and territories.⁸⁶

4.76 According to Museums Australia, 'public diplomacy abroad relies on presentation of Australian culture in all its diversity to represent Australia as a distinctive society and nation to the world'.⁸⁷

4.77 In its submission to the inquiry, Museums Australia indicated that the nation-wide museums/galleries sector in Australia offers a great variety of human-capital resources, developed professional expertise and performance, that 'could be tapped and "harvested" towards diplomatic objectives in Australia's cultural policy internationally'.⁸⁸ There also exists within the sector 'a huge range of unique collections resources around which so much of our national cultural heritage achievements can be built interpretatively'.⁸⁹

4.78 Ms Erica Billington Sanders, Executive Director, Museums Australia, Victoria Branch, would like to include galleries, museums, science centres, botanical gardens and national parks as public diplomacy tools. She argued:

The people and professionals involved with it are looking after Australia's cultural heritage. They have the stories of Australia's culture, they have the networks that capture and present a current and past Australian culture, and they are professionals in presenting and interpreting Australian culture, which is very useful in public diplomacy.⁹⁰

4.79 In line with other cultural/art organisations, Museums Australia emphasised the value that art institutions in Australia can offer in building trust and stable social institutions through their expertise in cultural debate and diverse interpretation. These 'useful socio-cultural' skills:

84 *Submission 13*, pp. 11, 13.

85 *Submission 12*, p. 5.

86 *Submission 12*, p. 17.

87 *Submission 12*, p. 4.

88 *Submission 12*, p. 10.

89 *Submission 12*, p. 10.

90 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 30.

...could be promoted at a cultural exchange level, drawing in institutions and people working in the cultural heritage sector broadly in other countries.⁹¹

4.80 According to Museums Australia, these skills are often of interest in other countries—especially those countries of highly significant interest to Australia's foreign affairs interests in the Asia-Pacific region. They 'convey a lot subliminally about underpinning Australian social attitudes and cultural life'.⁹²

National Gallery of Victoria and Art Gallery of Western Australia

4.81 In their submissions to the inquiry, the National Gallery of Victoria and the Art Gallery of Western Australia noted their roles in promoting cultural diplomacy via Australian cultural assets. This is carried out mainly through bringing international exhibitions to Australia or taking Australian art overseas, or through individual contacts and participation in international cultural fora.

Preliminary assessments of Australia's public diplomacy activities and programs

4.82 The range of public diplomacy activities undertaken by Australians is diverse and extensive. Although public diplomacy is not a popular topic of conversation in Australia and the government's public diplomacy activities are not well understood by Australians in general, Australia does conduct many and varied programs and engages in a wide range of activities that clearly contribute to Australia's international reputation. The sheer number of activities is evidence that the Australian Government is very conscious of the importance of public diplomacy.

4.83 Despite the impressive list of agencies engaged in public diplomacy and the activities they undertake to promote Australia's reputation abroad, a number of witnesses questioned the effectiveness of the programs. Ms Jennifer McGregor, Director, Asialink Arts, was of the view that 'perhaps the whole is not as great as the sum of the parts in our public diplomacy'.⁹³ Mr Chris Freeman, a public affairs practitioner and former DFAT officer, was not convinced that over the last 30 or 40 years Australia had ever reached its 'full potential in the effectiveness' of its public diplomacy programs. In brief, he observed that a lot of emphasis is placed on the importance of public diplomacy but Australia no longer has the kinds of resources it used to have: that Australia 'no longer [has] the capacity to undertake sustained long-term multimedia communication strategies'.⁹⁴ Mr Kirk Coningham, another former

91 *Submission 12*, p. 9.

92 *Submission 12*, p. 10.

93 *Committee Hansard*, 15 March 2007, p. 9.

94 *Committee Hansard*, 11 April 2007, p. 3.

DFAT officer, agreed with this view. He asserted that 'very little has been achieved in terms of hard-nosed public diplomacy' in the past decade.⁹⁵

4.84 In the second part of this report, the committee looks more closely at this criticism of Australia's public diplomacy and considers in detail the nature and conduct of Australia's public diplomacy programs.

95 *Submission 1*, p. [2].

Part 2

The committee in Part 1 of the report highlighted the growing importance attributed to public diplomacy and the increasing pressure on countries to devote more resources to promoting their reputation abroad. It noted that currently, Australians do not have a high level of interest in, or awareness of, Australia's public diplomacy. They are not particularly engaged in the international discussion on public diplomacy. Even so, the committee compiled a list of public diplomacy activities that clearly demonstrates the large number of programs and activities that contribute to Australia's public diplomacy. The list of activities, however, does not indicate how well or effectively they are planned, managed and delivered.

In the second part of this report, the committee examines the range of public diplomacy activities undertaken by Australian entities to ascertain whether Australia is using public diplomacy effectively.

Firstly, the committee considers the main difficulties facing Australia's public diplomacy. It examines in detail how well Australia is meeting the challenge of making itself understood and recognised by the rest of the world in ways that serve Australia's long-term foreign policy objectives.

The committee then looks at the coherence, credibility and consistency of Australia's public diplomacy messages and the dialogue and understanding that underpins the network of relations between Australia and other countries. In subsequent chapters, the committee considers the coordination of public diplomacy activities, the extent to which the government takes advantage of opportunities to strengthen links with foreign countries; the training and qualifications of those responsible for Australia's public diplomacy; the evaluation of public diplomacy programs and the funding available for these programs.

