



THE INDO-PACIFIC A WESTERN PERSPECTIVE

Secretary Frances Ad
@dfat @DFATinWA





The concept of an Indo-Pacific region is driven by a need to incorporate India into the Asia-Pacific. The Indo-Pacific region spans 37 countries, and in 2018 the Centre's focus was on the following nations: China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea and Vietnam.

Leveraging off the geopolitical position and economic significance of Western Australia, the Indo-Pacific Regional Focus shaped strategic thinking, and encouraged stronger relationships within the dynamic Indo-Pacific region.

INDO-PACIFIC REGIONALISM

The emergence of the Indo-Pacific concept has led to major changes in regional architectures for trade, security and diplomacy. Many of the Centre's programs and events addressed the cross-cutting issues that link nations across the Indo-Pacific. Twenty-one events in 2018 addressed topics of regional integration and connection, across issues as diverse as counter-terrorism, great power competition, foreign investment, critical infrastructure, new trade agreements and business strategies for regional expansion. Prominent speakers included Mike Pezzullo (Secretary, Department of Home Affairs), Greg Moriarty (Secretary, Department of Defence), and Louise McGrath (National Manager, AiG).

A prominent theme in 2018 was recent disruptions to the regional trade architecture, as a result of the US-China trade dispute and evolving developments in the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement. Two major publications explored this theme in depth. *'Towards a Fairer and Stronger TPP'*, published jointly with the United States Studies Centre in April; considered how the newly-formed Comprehensive and Progressive Partnership for the TPP (CPTPP) would provide new trade policy options for the United States. *'Expanding the TPP? Options, Prospects and Implications for the Indo-Pacific'*, published in June and launched in Seoul and Jakarta in September, built on this agenda. It explored the prospects for new member accessions to the CPTPP agreement, and the changes in the regional trade architecture this would entail.

SOUTH ASIA PROGRAM

As the Indo-Pacific system continues to grow in importance and India emerges as an increasingly important strategic player, we will need to understand more about how Delhi's plans will shape the region. The program focussed on broadening the understanding of the major challenges facing India and how they impact on Australia and the region. For policymakers, it is important to get an Indian perspective on how they frame problems in the region.

In 2018, we hosted eight events focussed on South Asia, five of which we hosted in-country in India. Highlights included an informative foreign policy roundtable with the Hon Vasantha Senanayake, Sri Lanka's State Minister for Foreign Affairs. We hosted a book launch for Washington-based India expert Dr Alyssa Ayers. In New Delhi, we convened a high-level discussion on what Australia and India can achieve through working together in the region. Partnering with Brookings India, we hosted a public panel focussing on Australia-India-Indonesia relations, and examining how the three democracies' interests overlap. To get an Indian perspective on regional issues, we brought a number of India-based policymakers and thought-leaders to Perth for our major conferences this year, including Shyam Saran, Former Indian Foreign Secretary; Dhruva Jaishankar of Brookings India; and Dr Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan of the Observer Research Foundation.



HOSTED AND PARTICIPATED IN
16 EVENTS ACROSS SOUTHEAST ASIA, SOUTH ASIA AND NORTHEAST ASIA



5 OF WHICH WERE IN INDIA



SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM

Recognising Australia is a part of Southeast Asia, and has a national interest in the security and prosperity of its closest neighbours, this program seeks to enhance Australia's relations with Southeast Asia and facilitate the development of sound policy towards the countries and emerging issues in the region.

In 2018, we hosted fourteen programs under the banner of our Southeast Asia program. The Centre identifies Vietnam as a country of rising importance for Australia. In 2018, Vietnam became a research focus and we launched our edited volume, *Vietnam in the Indo-Pacific: Challenges and opportunities in a new regional landscape* which was authored by a mix of Australian and Vietnamese analysts. We also continued our in-depth program and research work on Indonesia, launching our second edited volume of 2018, a study of Indonesia's regional engagement, at Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta in September. We also hosted several prominent Indonesian leaders, including former Finance Minister Dr Chatib Basri, former Deputy Foreign Minister Dino Patti Djalal, and Executive Director of the Habibie Centre Ima Abdulrahim.

Closing out the year was the Western Australia-ASEAN Trade and Investment Dialogue; a two-day event with a private dialogue on the first day and a public event on the second. The purpose of the program was to change the way WA views Southeast Asia, and to help build a network between WA business and our closest neighbours. The Centre hosted ten participants representing business and economic policymaking from Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam, including a representative from one of Southeast Asia's first start-ups valued at over US\$1 billion, and the former finance minister of the largest country in ASEAN, Indonesia.

NORTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM

The Northeast Asia program examines how changing strategic configurations in Northeast Asia affect the broader Indo-Pacific region, and their implications for Australian diplomacy. The program focuses on three elements: building upon Australia and Japan's 'special strategic partnership', helping strategic thinkers in Korea recognise the important role of Australia in the coming decades; and examining the future challenges and opportunities facing Australia's relationship with China.

In partnership with the Japanese Consulate in Perth, the Centre convened the inaugural Japan Symposium on Australia-Japan-US Relations in March. Given the importance of China as Australia's number one trade partner, the Centre hosted the national China Matters Young Professionals Conference in September; as well as presentations by Professor Jia Qingguo (Peking University) and Graham Fletcher (DFAT, Ambassador-designate to China). Developments on the Korean Peninsula in 2018 saw six events during the year, including hosting H.E. James Choi, Australian Ambassador to Korea. The Centre also published a major report – *Maturing the Korea-Australia Investment Relationship*; which was launched in Canberra and Seoul.

The Centre was also honoured to receive a formal commendation from the Japanese Foreign Minister in recognition of our work to advance the bilateral Australia-Japan relationship.



2018

PROGRAM ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS



Collaborated with more than **40** partners to host **80** events in **9** cities across **6** countries



Engaged a collective audience of over **4,100**



Staff represented the Centre at **95** events, forums and conferences in **12** cities across **7** countries



Convened **5** major conferences here in Perth attracting over **170** speakers from **12** different nations, with a collective audience of **1,600**



Hosted **236** expert speakers in Perth, from **13** countries, with representation from government officials **36%** the business community **34%** and academia **30%**

- Australia
- China
- Germany
- India
- Indonesia
- Japan
- Korea
- Malaysia
- Philippines
- Singapore
- Sri Lanka
- United States
- Vietnam



“It’s about the power of proximity. Asia is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, and it presents so many opportunities for Australian entrepreneurs.”

Gemma Manning,
Gemstar Technology

WA-ASEAN TRADE AND INVESTMENT DIALOGUE

The Centre delivered the inaugural WA-ASEAN Trade and Investment Dialogue in November 2018. Convened in partnership with The Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation. The Dialogue included public and private policy discussions to support the State Government’s ongoing efforts to strengthen Western Australia’s ties with emerging markets in Southeast Asia.

Many experts contributed to the Dialogue, anchored by former Indonesian Minister of Finance Dr Muhammad Chatib Basri, alongside many leading entrepreneurs from the region including Cat Thao Nguyen (Vietnam), Gemma Manning (Singapore), Syed Nabil Aljeffri (Malaysia) and Shinto Nugroho (Indonesia). The Dialogue generated important insights on how WA businesses can most effectively build new trade and investment partnerships in Southeast Asia, with a particular focus on the education, services, technology and agriculture sectors.

 **219**
GUESTS

 **38**
FROM
6 COUNTRIES

 **24**
STUDENTS

 **120**
ORGANISATIONS
REPRESENTED

 **19**
GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS