AUSTRALIA IN THE
ASIAN CENTURY

Implementation Plan
April 2013
Introduction

The transformation of Asia into the world’s most dynamic economic region is the defining development of our time. What individuals, businesses and governments do to build Australia’s capabilities and its connections with Asia will determine how Australia fares in the Asian Century.

To this end, the Australian Government commissioned the White Paper on Australia in the Asian Century, released on 28 October 2012. It is a wide-reaching policy document, setting ambitious targets for the country to achieve by 2025.

Targets cannot be reached without setting goals and timeframes for implementation. While the timeframe to achieve the White Paper’s objectives is 2025, some policy choices and actions must start now, with the Australian Government already taking the first steps.

The Australian Government has established implementation arrangements for the pathways in the White Paper. This document details the governance structures it will put in place to work with State and Territory and local governments, businesses and educational institutions, unions, academics and community groups to achieve the White Paper’s 25 objectives. It also outlines progress already made against longer-term targets and communicates how and when the Government will report on its progress on the White Paper’s objectives.

Putting the White Paper into practice is not a task for the Australian Government alone — the nation’s success in the Asian Century will depend on a whole-of-Australia effort. Businesses, unions, communities and governments are partners in our transformation. Through the implementation of the White Paper, the Australian Government will continue to engage with these stakeholders to seek their advice and input and to keep them informed about progress. The Government will work with these groups to ensure Australia is well positioned in the Asian Century.

White Paper objectives: what success will look like

The White Paper articulates the Australian Government’s goal: by 2025, Australia will be a more prosperous and resilient nation that is fully part of our region and open to the world.

It sets out a road map for the Government’s strategic direction to ensure Australia is well placed to meet the challenges and capitalise on the opportunities presented by the rise of Asia.

The White Paper acknowledges that Australia starts from a position of strength and takes into account those policy directions and programs that are already positioning Australia well in the Asian Century. We have strong, world-leading institutions, a multicultural and highly skilled workforce, and a productive, open and resilient economy. Nevertheless, to achieve the White Paper’s vision, the Government must continue to review the policy settings and pathways that have served the nation well and respond effectively to the rapid changes underway in our region.
The White Paper identifies five broad policy directions for Australia to make the most of opportunities presented by the Asian Century (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Roadmap to navigate the Asian Century

Success for Australia in 2025 will involve:

1. The Australian community benefiting from prosperity built on the foundation of a productive and resilient Australian economy, where our investment and performance in skills and education, innovation, infrastructure, tax reform and regulatory reform enhances and drives our productivity.

2. An Australian community building on its strengths and capabilities; that is, more Asia-literate, with a deeper and broader understanding of Asian cultures and languages forming the basis of strong connections and partnerships across the region.

3. A business sector comprising highly innovative, competitive Australian firms and institutions that have developed collaborative relationships with others in the region, and are proficient at operating in and connecting to growing Asian markets.

4. A nation that has helped to build trust and cooperation through its own strong bilateral relationships with Asian countries and its support for existing regional mechanisms that contribute to sustainable security in the region.

5. Deeper and broader relationships between Australians and people and communities across Asia, spanning business, unions, community groups, governments and educational and cultural institutions.
Progress to March 2013

To ensure the Government makes progress towards all its goals, the White Paper takes account of both established and emerging policy initiatives from across Government and weaves them into a cohesive whole. Engaging with the Asian region is now being integrated into Government policy development and will inform major policy statements, including the Defence White Paper, the National Food Plan and the Digital Economy White Paper.

The White Paper builds on existing policies such as the National Broadband Network (NBN), Building Australia’s Future Workforce, building a Seamless National Economy and pursuing a Clean Energy Future.

As well as drawing on these existing reforms, the Government is making progress towards achieving a number of the 25 objectives since the White Paper’s release in October 2012.

- Australia was among 16 countries across the region which met to launch negotiations for a new trade agreement, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). The RCEP comprises all the members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) plus China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand and Australia. It will form part of the Government’s strategy for lowering trade barriers and securing improved market access for Australian exporters of goods and services and Australian investors. Nine out of Australia’s top 12 trading partners (China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, New Zealand, India, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia) are participating in RCEP negotiations. Together with the other six participating countries, the group accounts for 70 per cent of Australia’s goods and services exports.

- A new visa for migrants willing to make an investment of at least $5 million in Australia — the Significant Investor Visa — was introduced in November 2012. The Significant Investor Visa will help Australia compete effectively for high net worth individuals seeking to immigrate.

- The Government has extended tourist visas for parents visiting Australian citizens from three months to one year and introduced label-free visas for visitors from China, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

- The Government is assisting Australian university students wanting to study in Asia through its Higher Education Support Amendment (Asian Century) Bill 2013. From 2014, the legislation will provide greater financial assistance through the OS-HELP scheme for students wanting to undertake part of their study in Asia. Under this legislation, the maximum loan available for students undertaking study in Asia will be increased from $1,250 to $7,500.

- Chinese (Mandarin) will be one of the first two languages released under the Australian Curriculum, with the draft Foundation to Year 10 Chinese (Mandarin) Australian Curriculum released for public consultation in December 2012. The curriculum will include specific learning pathways to meet the needs of first language learners, background learners and those who wish to learn Chinese (Mandarin) as a second language.
The release of the first joint study by the Australian and Chinese Governments — *Feeding the Future: A Joint Australia-China Report on Strengthening Investment and Technological Cooperation in Agriculture to Enhance Food Security* — has paved the way for closer agricultural cooperation between the two countries. The study provides a blueprint for partnership in northern Australia, including investment in water and soil conservation, efficient farming technologies and better logistics infrastructure, and for Australian investment in both countries’ agriculture.

In January 2013, the **Malaysia-Australia Free Trade Agreement** (MAFTA) entered into force. MAFTA builds on the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement to open up opportunities for Australian investors and suppliers of goods and services, bringing our economies closer together. MAFTA is an important part of the network of Free Trade Agreements that Australia is pursuing to advance its trade interests in the Asian Century.

The Government opened the **Asian Century Business Engagement Plan** for expressions of interest and released the grant guidelines. The Asian Century Business Engagement Plan is a competitive grants program which will be run annually from 1 July 2013. The program will assist member-based business organisations, and through them small and medium-sized enterprises, to harness the opportunities emerging in the region.

As part of its drive to help businesses break into and expand in Asia’s emerging and growth markets, the Government will open a **new Austrade office in Yangon**, Myanmar. A Trade Commissioner has been appointed and he will be supported by a number of locally-engaged business development managers. The Austrade office in Yangon will help Australian companies establish a presence in Myanmar’s promising but challenging market.

The Government introduced legislation to revise the mandate of the Export Finance and Insurance Corporation (EFIC) so that more of its resources are devoted to supporting small and medium-sized enterprises looking to expand overseas, particularly in frontier and emerging markets. EFIC’s **new mandate** and revised powers are important steps towards realising White Paper objectives, and follow recent reforms at Austrade and to the Export Market Development Grants program to sharpen the focus on businesses exporting to emerging and frontier markets.

The **National Security Strategy** constructs a framework to guide Australia’s national security efforts over the next five years. *Strong and Secure: A Strategy for Australia’s National Security* marks a new national security era in which the dramatic shift of economic and strategic weight to Asia dominates Australia’s national security outlook over this decade. Australia’s national security objectives in the region can only be realised if there is sustainable security in Asia.

The Government announced a $1 billion investment to boost Australian innovation, productivity and competitiveness through the **Industry and Innovation Statement, A Plan for Australian Jobs**. The Statement will help Australian businesses to seize opportunities for growth in our region and adapt to changing economic conditions associated with the rise of Asia. The plan will be delivered through a range of
initiatives, including the establishment of up to 10 Industry Innovation Precincts and a new $350 million round of the Innovation Investment Fund to stimulate private investment in innovative Australian start-up companies.

- The Government signed the 13th Australia-China Cultural Implementation Program, which reaffirms the strong cultural ties between the two countries. The Cultural Implementation Program includes: official and academic exchanges; radio, television and film; media, press and publishing; performing and visual arts; cultural heritage protection and sport.

- To celebrate the trade and cultural connections between India and Australia, the Government launched the Australia Unlimited app-based magazine. The magazine had its debut at Oz Fest, the biggest Australian cultural festival ever staged in India. The festival showcases the ideas and achievements of Australians, both at home and around the world, who are at the centre of Australia’s rich relationship with India.

A full list of action taken to date against all White Paper objectives is at Attachment A.

Much work has already been done to engage with countries in the region about the White Paper, including several ministerial visits and public diplomacy by Australia’s overseas posts.

The White Paper has been met with a warm reception in the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key ministerial visits</th>
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<tr>
<td>3 November 2012: Former Minister for the Arts and Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government the Hon Simon Crean MP travelled to India through Singapore for business and diplomatic engagements with a focus on the White Paper and to foster stronger cultural and region-to-region ties.</td>
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<td>4 November 2012: During a visit to Malaysia, Foreign Minister Senator the Hon Bob Carr announced a joint Australia-Malaysia cultural exchange program for young Australians and Malaysians to travel to each other’s countries and develop a stronger understanding of other cultures and faiths.</td>
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<td>4 November 2012: Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig led an industry delegation to Vietnam and Thailand to promote the White Paper and address a number of technical market access issues.</td>
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<td>5 November 2012: Prime Minister Julia Gillard travelled to Laos to attend the Asia-Europe Meeting where she briefed Leaders on the contents of the White Paper. Her visit also marked 60 years of diplomatic relations between Australia and Laos.</td>
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<td>9 November 2012: The Prime Minister and Senator Carr attended the fifth annual Bali Democracy Forum in Denpasar and announced a program to help emerging leaders and officials put democratic ideas into practice.</td>
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<td>20 November 2012: The Prime Minister, accompanied by Minister for Trade and Competitiveness and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Asian Century Policy the Hon Dr Craig Emerson MP, joined leaders from 15 countries of the Asian region to launch negotiations for a new trade agreement, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). The RCEP will support the goal of a more open Australian economy, integrated with Asia, and help improve the flow of goods, services, capital and ideas.</td>
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<td>1–5 December 2012: Former Minister for Resources, Energy and Tourism the Hon Martin Ferguson MP visited India for the first ever ministerial-level energy security dialogue and to promote energy, resources and tourism links.</td>
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9 December 2012: Former Minister Crean visited China to mark the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Australia and China, and to build on business and cultural partnerships that will underpin Australia’s participation in the Asian Century.

10 December 2012: The Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer the Hon Wayne Swan MP travelled to India to meet with senior Indian Government and business leaders to discuss the opportunities for the two countries in the Asian Century.

11 December 2012: Minister for Infrastructure and Transport the Hon Anthony Albanese MP visited Indonesia to renew the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in the transport sector with the Republic of Indonesia. Minister Albanese and Indonesia’s Minister for Transportation, Lieutenant General (Ret.) E. E. Mangindaan, jointly signed the revised MoU and an associated transport safety annex. The MoU supports the continuation of the strong transport safety and security relationship between Australia and Indonesia, while the transport safety annex sets out arrangements for the Indonesia Transport Safety Assistance Package to further enhance Indonesia’s capabilities in aviation, maritime, and road safety.

12 January 2013: The Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer visited Hong Kong to promote Australia’s economic interests in the region and continue to pursue the opportunities outlined in the White Paper.

13 January 2013: Senator Carr and Japan’s Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida held talks in Sydney on regional security, development and whaling.

22 January 2013: Australia’s relationship with India was advanced in talks between Senator Carr and India’s Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Minister of External Affairs Salman Khurshid in New Delhi.

28 January 2013: Minister Emerson arrived in India for the 14th Australia-India Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC), to explore how to deepen and broaden the commercial relationship between the two countries. During his visit, the Minister launched a special edition of the Australia Unlimited online magazine, celebrating the strength and diversity of the Australia-India relationship. He also attended the Confederation of Indian Industry Partnership Summit in Agra to deliver an address on Australia in the Asian Century.

21 February 2013: In Thailand, Senator Carr held talks with Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Surapong Tovichakchaikul. They discussed regional security and economic matters, including a review of progress in the bilateral trade relationship, which is underpinned by the Thailand-Australia Free Trade Agreement (TAFTA) and the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA).

Next steps

Activity to support all objectives of the White Paper is continuing across the Government. Activities scheduled for the next few months include work to develop country strategies for five of our neighbours, and additional research to support White Paper priorities.

Country strategy development

The Government is committed to working with the Australian community to develop country strategies that set out objectives and priorities for relationships, with five countries — Japan, China, Indonesia, India and the Republic of Korea — being the top priority.

In the coming months, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will consult with business and other community leaders to help identify opportunities to deepen and strengthen our national relationships. These strategies will be tabled in Parliament and regularly evaluated and updated.
**Research projects**

The Government has commissioned three research studies to help identify how best to help Australian businesses take advantage of opportunities in expanding Asian markets. The studies are on: food processing innovation; regional value chains and collaborative business models; and health and aged care services. Teams from across the Australian Public Service are being drawn together to undertake these projects in consultation with the relevant industry stakeholders. They will be completed by mid-2013.

**Implementation planning and objectives**

**Objectives and pathways**

Twenty-five objectives, setting targets for 2025, are grouped under the five broad policy themes of the White Paper. Objectives include, by way of example, Australia’s school system being in the top five in the world.

Each objective, in turn, is supported by several pathways — the actions that the Australian Government, in partnership with key stakeholders, needs to take to achieve that objective. The White Paper seeks to build on existing Government initiatives as well as to introduce future policies to maximise the opportunities resulting from the rise of Asia. The 133 policy pathways can be categorised as follows:

- pathways that propose specific new initiatives that the Government will work to deliver throughout 2013 and beyond;
- pathways that articulate key reforms and initiatives already underway and how these support the objectives of the White Paper; and
- pathways that set directions for future policy development.

The White Paper sets out ways to measure many of the pathways and objectives. Measures of success for the remaining pathways are being refined through their respective implementation processes.

Since the release of the White Paper, the Government has developed a plan for coordinating work across Government agencies. It has also set out how the Government will collaborate with other levels of government and sectors of the community to best implement White Paper policy pathways.

Implementation of each pathway is allocated to a lead Minister. A framework for the work across Government and with other sectors has been developed to:

- ensure effective and coordinated delivery of implementation-ready initiatives announced in the White Paper;
- support the pursuit of initiatives already underway, and ensure their final design and delivery is adjusted where necessary to meet the outcomes set out in the White Paper; and
• enhance existing policy-making processes to ensure the principles and pathways articulated in the White Paper will be considered in the development of future policies.

What the Government is doing

To achieve Asian Century policy outcomes and objectives, the Government is establishing governance, monitoring, reporting and evaluation arrangements and processes. These arrangements are outlined below.

Governance: managing connections across government

A governance structure has been established to oversee implementation of White Paper objectives and pathways, to provide a coordinated approach across Government, and to ensure ongoing public engagement on Asian Century issues.

Australia in the Asian Century Committee of Cabinet

The Australia in the Asian Century Committee of Cabinet provides oversight and considers advice on the development and implementation of policies associated with the White Paper.

Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Asian Century Policy

The Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Asian Century Policy will work closely with ministerial colleagues and the Strategic Advisory Board to oversee development and implementation of reforms that contribute to the White Paper’s objectives. The Minister will also provide regular implementation updates to the Cabinet. At the end of 2013, the Minister will oversee a review to assess the policy settings for White Paper implementation.

Portfolio Ministers and Departments

Responsibility for implementation of individual White Paper pathways will rest with the relevant portfolio Minister, with the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Asian Century Policy having responsibility for overseeing implementation of the White Paper as a whole.

Agencies will be responsible for day-to-day implementation and management of pathways within their portfolio, including those requiring strong coordination across government, engagement with business and partnerships with State and Territory governments.

In addition, senior public officials will act as champions across each of the White Paper themes to ensure coordinated delivery of White Paper outcomes across Government.

Strategic Advisory Board

The Strategic Advisory Board will provide advice to the Prime Minister and the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Asian Century Policy on implementation of White Paper objectives, aspirations, pathways and related emerging policy issues.

The Strategic Advisory Board comprises external members and, on an ex-officio basis, senior public officials. The external members of the Strategic Advisory Board will have an
important role to play in promoting dialogue with the community and in raising awareness and understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing Australia in the Asian Century. Ex-officio members will support implementation of White Paper objectives by the public sector. The Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Asian Century Policy will agree to final terms of reference for the Strategic Advisory Board.

**Deputy Secretaries Steering Committee**

Deputy Secretaries from lead portfolios will provide direction and guidance across all Australian Government agencies on implementation of White Paper outcomes. The Steering Committee will review and help prioritise policy initiatives based on feedback from stakeholders and the Government. It will also identify new policy options relevant to achieving the White Paper objectives for consideration by Cabinet Ministers.

**Australia in the Asian Century Implementation Taskforce**

The Australia in the Asian Century Implementation Taskforce, based in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, will support implementation of the White Paper across Government. This will include monitoring and reporting progress to the Prime Minister and the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Asian Century Policy; communicating and engaging with stakeholders; providing secretariat support to the Strategic Advisory Board and Deputy Secretaries Steering Committee; and developing a strategy to build Asia-relevant capabilities into the Australian Public Service through a partnership with the Australian Public Service Commission.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet will oversee the Implementation Strategy and will elevate any major implementation issues or risks and challenges to the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Asian Century Policy.
Figure 2: Governance arrangements for implementation of the White Paper

Australia in the Asian Century Committee of Cabinet
Members - Prime Minister; Deputy Prime Minister; Minister for Finance and Deregulation; Minister for Defence; Minister for Foreign Affairs; Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth; Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research, Minister for Trade and Competitiveness, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Asian Century Policy; and Minister for Climate Change, Industry and Innovation.

Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Asian Century Policy
The Hon. Dr Craig Emerson

Portfolio Ministers and Departments

Deputy Secretaries Steering Committee
Chair - PM&C
Members - Treasury, DFAT, Austrade, DEEWR, DIICCSRTE, Defence

Strategic Advisory Board
Chair - Mr Hamish Tyrwhitt
Members - Ms Rebecca Dee-Bradbury, Mr John Denton, Professor Peter Drysdale AM, Professor Margaret Gardner AO, Dr Ken Henry AC, Ms Catherine Livingstone AO
Ex-officio members
Dr Ian Watt AO, Dr Martin Parkinson PSM, Mr Peter Varghese AO

Implementation Taskforce
Secondee from DFAT, Austrade, DIAC, DEEWR, PM&C, Treasury, DIICCSRTE
A commitment to ongoing collaboration and engagement

The foundations for collaboration and engagement were laid during the development of the White Paper. This approach will continue through the White Paper’s implementation. Portfolio Ministers, the Australia in the Asian Century Committee of Cabinet and members of the Strategic Advisory Board will engage with the broader community on Asian Century policy concerns.

In addition to these governance arrangements, established networks and committees — including the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and its committees, as well as economic, university and business forums — will be used to encourage collaboration. The Government will also coordinate a number of topic-specific forums to encourage further dialogue and capture current and emerging thinking.

Partnerships with States and Territories

All levels of government have a role to play in building Australia’s success in the Asian Century. The Australian Government is working with its State and Territory counterparts, through COAG, to pursue crucial reforms and initiatives across a number of areas, from early childhood and school education, infrastructure and water management, to taxation and regulatory reform.

At the COAG meeting of 7 December 2012, the Australian Government and State and Territory governments agreed to use COAG processes and structures, including the Standing Councils, to work towards the national objectives in the White Paper, particularly those relating to infrastructure, regulatory reform, schools, skills and capability.

In addition to cooperation through the COAG system, the Australian Government is working bilaterally with relevant State, Territory and local governments on specific policy pathways to the White Paper’s objectives.

Each of Australia’s six State governments has representative offices in various cities in Asia. State and Territory governments promote sub-national, sister-state and sister-city relationships with regional counterparts. As governments at all levels look to make the most of opportunities presented by the rise of Asia, we expect these relationships and initiatives to continue and to expand.

States and Territories are developing their own policy responses. The Tasmanian Government has, for example, commissioned a White Paper on Tasmania’s Place in the Asian Century, to ensure Tasmania is in a position to adapt to the rise of Asia. The Northern Territory Chief Minister has also commissioned the Northern Territory Office of Asian Engagement to develop a response to the White Paper on how to guide the Territory’s strategic planning and policy formation into the future.
Engaging with business and the broader community

Stakeholder forums

The Government is planning targeted forums for priority policy areas in 2013. The forums will engage non-government stakeholders in the implementation process to help identify both opportunities and policy gaps, and to inform the approach of different stakeholders as they help deliver initiatives that cut across several sectors.

The Strategic Advisory Board, comprising senior figures with extensive experience in Asia, will play an important role in engaging with stakeholders through forums. The Board will promote an ongoing national dialogue on the implementation of the White Paper. Importantly, the Strategic Advisory Board will advise the Government on further opportunities to engage with non-government stakeholders on Asian Century issues.

To ensure it receives private sector input, the Government has established a number of business forums such as the Business Advisory Forum (BAF), the National Panel for Economic Reform (NPER) and the Business 20 (B20). Each will be relevant to different yet complementary aspects of the White Paper. Business representatives on the Strategic Advisory Board will further complement the work of these business forums by providing advice to the Government on overall implementation of White Paper objectives.

Business Advisory Forum

The BAF provides a practical way for business leaders, representatives of Australia’s peak business organisations and COAG members to exchange information, perspectives and knowledge on how to lower costs for business and improve productivity. At the first BAF, all participants agreed they share the goals of improving national productivity growth to boost the prosperity of all Australians — and a commitment to working together to secure gains in productivity. All governments and business leaders have signed a National Compact on Regulatory and Competition Reform which sets out how they will work together to develop, implement and review regulatory and competition reforms. Through its focus on regulatory and competition reform, the BAF will support the national goal set out in the White Paper to assure Australia’s place among the most efficiently regulated places in the world — in the top five globally by 2025 — and to reduce business costs by billions of dollars a year.

Business 20

The B20 is the key business advisory body to the Group of 20 (G20) economic forum, which Australia will host in 2014. The B20 will generate policy recommendations for G20 leaders. While the B20 comprises international stakeholders and considers global business issues, its work will also be relevant to two White Paper themes — operating in and connecting to growing Asian markets, and building sustainable security in the region — by strengthening global relationships, economic integration and cooperation.
National Panel for Economic Reform

The NPER brings together leaders from the Government, business community, union movement and community sector to develop, agree and champion reforms which will drive long-term productivity growth. The NPER helps move towards the White Paper goal of ensuring that Australia’s Gross Domestic Product per person is in the world’s top 10 by 2025. As Australia’s greatest asset is its people, the Government has decided that the NPER’s initial focus will be on human capital and the role of the skills and education system in preparing Australians for an increasingly high-skill workplace.

Beyond government: the role of Australian community sectors

The White Paper recognises that businesses and their employees — and others in the community — can be big winners in the Asian Century. However, to realise this, Australia will need more business leaders with a deep knowledge and understanding of Asia, including more with Asian language skills. To develop leaders for the future, business will also need more employees with Asia-relevant capabilities at the entry and middle-management level.

Building demand for an Asia-literate workforce should influence how the broader community thinks about skills. For example, parents would see the benefit of encouraging their children to study an Asian language or pursue an interest in Asian studies.

Just as business will need to increase its capacity and willingness to engage with the region, universities will need to forge closer links and exchange relationships with their regional counterparts to increase research collaboration and boost the number of Australian students who study in Asia. To better prepare students for the Asian Century, universities will also need to increase the Asia-relevant content of many courses — including in humanities, social sciences, the arts, science and technology. Universities can also help to support the development of Asia-capable school communities by embedding studies of Asia into teacher training curricula.

By 2025, more Australian vice-chancellors, deans, professors and lecturers should have a sound knowledge and understanding of Asia, with this knowledge and understanding being in strong demand. Universities can also look for opportunities to reach out beyond the campus and engage with business and other institutions to build Asia-capable communities and workplaces.

School leaders and education authorities will play a leading role in preparing young Australians for the Asian Century. Through their participation in the National Plan for School Improvement, education authorities will, for example, help to ensure that studies of Asia become a core part of school education. It is expected that all schools will encourage their students to study an Asian language, and ensure all learn about Asia and interact with classrooms across Asia through the use of digital technologies.

Parents, families and communities also have a role to play in encouraging and supporting children and young adults to develop an interest in the region, expand their horizons, make the most of emerging opportunities and study an Asian language.
Sport will also play an integral role in building relations with our Asian neighbours through diplomacy, trade and business. This will be particularly true in the coming years, with Australia hosting the Asian Cup for football and the Cricket World Cup. These events will provide opportunities for government, business and community engagement.

Permanent migration from Asia to Australia has grown four-fold in the last 15 years. The total number of departures and arrivals, including for temporary stays and tourism, has more than doubled. Australians of Asian heritage can offer valuable perspectives to Australia, and encourage an informed and up-to-date view of Asia in Australia, and of Australia in Asia. Temporary visa holders, including workers, students, working holiday makers, visitors and tourists, can form relationships that complement Australia’s formal government-to-government relationships.

Building capability across the Australian Public Service

Developing the capabilities needed for the Asian Century will also be a challenge for the public sector. Across all levels of government, the public sector will need to take a long-term view, while at the same time implement in the short and medium term the changes that will shape outcomes in the years ahead. At the Australian Government level, it will be necessary for the Australian Public Service (APS) to change.

Australia will need a public service that has a deeper understanding of Asia, and of its role in helping to secure the potential benefits of the Asian Century. Australia will need a public service that integrates policies and programs and that uses effective and efficient collaboration across governments and within government. It has never been more important than now to ensure that our public service has the capacity to change and adapt to the challenges of the future.

To achieve this, the Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Australian Public Service Commissioner are developing a capability strategy for the APS, to be released in 2013.

Implementation timeframes and key milestones

The timeline for implementation of the White Paper has been divided into three stages to 2025. In the initial stage of implementation, covering 2013, the Government has a leadership role in promoting and facilitating discussion about how Australia can best prepare for the rise of Asia across all sectors, and a responsibility to build sound foundations to foster awareness and understanding that engaging with Asia is the key to success in the 21st Century.

The second stage (2014–18) will concentrate on building deeper understanding and relationships in the region and broader economic integration and connectivity. Stage three, 2019–25, will focus on ensuring Australia becomes fully part of the region across all levels of society, business, government and the community.
Monitoring and evaluation

The Government has developed monitoring and reporting arrangements to ensure that timely and accurate information regarding the pace of implementation is provided to the Prime Minister, the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Asian Century Policy, the Cabinet, and the Strategic Advisory Board.

The aims of the monitoring and reporting arrangements are to:

- ensure Australian Government agencies are accountable for implementation of policy pathways;
- inform Government and stakeholders of the progress that is being made in implementing the White Paper’s policy pathways; and
- ensure Government is advised of current or emerging risks that may impede implementation of the policy pathways and how such risks are being managed.

Monitoring and reporting to the Government by the Australia in the Asian Century Implementation Taskforce will focus on the pathways that propose specific new initiatives that the Government will work to deliver throughout 2013 and beyond, and pathways that articulate key reforms and initiatives already in train and how these support White Paper objectives. Oversight of other policy pathways will draw on existing governance arrangements where possible.

In addition to regular reporting on the activities and the delivery of milestones, further work on evaluation will be developed to define measures of success and ensure agencies are well placed to report to Government on progress on outcomes. This reporting is expected to start in the medium term, as data on the impact of White Paper initiatives become available, and will be led by members of the Deputy Secretaries Steering Committee.
Attachment A: White Paper progress

The Australian Government’s reform agenda articulated in the White Paper on *Australia in the Asian Century* aims to provide Australians with a productive and resilient economy, high quality education systems, emerging workforce skills, reliable and connected infrastructure, a culture of innovation, enhanced security and social equity.

It encompasses existing reforms such as the National Broadband Network (NBN), Building Australia’s Future Workforce, building a Seamless National Economy and pursuing a Clean Energy Future. As well as drawing on these existing reforms, the Government has already made progress on achieving White Paper objectives since its release in October 2012.

Since the release of the White Paper, the Government has focused on developing systems and arrangements for the Australian Public Service that are needed for effective, flexible, long-term implementation. Much work has already been done to engage with the countries in our region about the White Paper, including several ministerial visits to deepen our relationships, and public diplomacy by our overseas posts.

The following table summarises the action taken since the release of the White Paper in October 2012, by White Paper theme and objective.
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<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<td><strong>A productive and resilient Australian economy</strong></td>
<td><strong>28 November 2012</strong>: The Government introduced the Australian Education Bill 2012, a commitment to giving every Australian school student access to a high-quality, high-equity education, no matter where they live, the school they attend or their personal circumstances.</td>
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| | **17 December 2012**: The Government has called for proposals from organisations or consortia with sufficient capacity and expertise to establish and administer the Centre for Workplace Leadership. The Centre will encourage higher performing, innovative workplaces and stronger leadership capability in Australian workplaces, boosting productivity and ensuring Australian workers have quality jobs. |

| | **2 February 2013**: The Government announced it would invest more than $375 million in the South Australian, Tasmanian, West Australian and Australian Capital Territory training systems to deliver vital reforms, under the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform. Through this partnership the Government is working with State and Territory Governments to ensure that more Australians get the quality training they need to get and keep a job. |

| | **28 February 2013**: The Government released the *Employment Services – building on success: Issues Paper* as the start of a public consultation process, to help the government review existing services and determine the delivery of employment services from July 2015. |

1. All Australians will have the opportunity to acquire the skills and education they need to participate fully in a strong economy and a fairer society.
2. Australia will have an innovation system, in the top 10 globally, that supports excellence and dynamism in business with a creative problem-solving culture that enhances evolving areas of strength and attracts top researchers, companies and global partnerships.

17 February 2013: The Government announced a $1 billion investment to boost Australian innovation, productivity and competitiveness, through the Industry and Innovation Statement, *A Plan for Australian Jobs*. The Statement supports Australian businesses to seize opportunities for growth in our region and adapt successfully to changing economic conditions associated with the rise of Asia. This plan for Australian jobs will be delivered through a range of initiatives including: the development of a new Australian Industry Participation Authority; establishment of up to 10 Industry Innovation Precincts, chosen to support areas where Australia has a natural advantage or export potential; and a new $350 million round of the Innovation Investment Fund to stimulate private investment in innovative Australian start-up companies.

3. Australia will implement a systematic national framework for developing, financing and maintaining nationally significant infrastructure that will assist governments and the private sector to plan and prioritise infrastructure needs at least 20 years ahead.

8 November 2012: The Energy White Paper was released. It sets out the Australian Government’s strategic policy framework to guide Australia’s energy transformation to a cleaner and more productive energy economy. The Energy White Paper identifies four priority areas for further action: delivering better energy market outcomes for consumers; accelerating Australia’s clean energy outcomes; developing Australia’s critical energy resources, particularly gas; and strengthening the resilience of Australia’s energy-policy framework.

4 December 2012: Release of the third State of Australian Cities report, which charts the progress towards the goals of the national urban policy of the 18 Australian cities with a population of over 100,000. The key message of the 2012 report is that the rise of knowledge-intensive industries concentrated in city centres is changing the structure of our cities.

Currently underway: The development of the Nation Building Program 2 (NB2) is well advanced. Submissions to the program from the states and territories are currently being assessed. Projects have been assessed against the NB2 themes of moving freight, connecting people, safety and innovation and contributing to lifting Australia’s productivity through nationally significant land transport infrastructure. Infrastructure Australia is also conducting an assessment of projects over $100 million as part of the update to its National Priority List.
4. Australia’s communications infrastructure and markets will be world leading and support the rapid exchange and spread of ideas and commerce in the Asian region.

December 2012: By the end of 2012, 34,500 premises had an active NBN connection and 339,700 premises or lots had been passed.

26 February 2013: The NBN switched on in the ACT and central Toowoomba with work underway in Penrith and Homebush.

4 March 2013: The Government signed a contract for the launch of two next-generation satellites to deliver high-speed broadband to Australians living in rural and regional areas.

5. Australia’s tax and transfer system will be efficient and fair, encouraging continued investment in the capital base and greater participation in the workforce, while delivering sustainable revenues to support economic growth by meeting public and social needs.

10 December 2012: Assistant Treasurer David Bradbury announced the members of the specialist reference group on multinational corporate taxation. The formation of this group, made up of business representatives, tax professionals, academics and members from the community sector, will support Treasury’s examination of multinational tax minimisation strategies and the risks it poses to the sustainability of Australia’s corporate tax base. A key role of the specialist reference group will be to build community understanding of the nature of the challenges we face.

26 February 2013: The specialist reference group had its first meeting. Its work will inform Australia’s contribution to international efforts to address base erosion and profit shifting through the OECD and the G20.

February 2012: The Not-for-Profit Tax Concessions Working Group was formed to examine the current range of tax concessions available to not-for-profit entities, and whether there are fairer, simpler and more effective ways of delivering the current envelope of support. The Working Group is expected to deliver its final report to Government in March 2013.

6. Australia will be among the most efficiently regulated places in the world, in the top five globally, reducing business costs by billions of dollars a year.

7 December 2012: Through COAG, the Australian Government and State and Territory governments agreed to the further competition and regulatory reform directions and proposals outlined in the Business Advisory Forum Communiqué.
7. The Australian economy and our environmental assets will be managed sustainably to ensure the wellbeing of future generations of Australians.

4 November 2012: The Government announced the National Wildlife Corridors Plan, which sets a vision for reconnecting the Australian landscape through a network of wildlife corridors across Australia.

16 November 2012: The Government established the world’s biggest network of marine reserves. The reserves will protect more than 2.3 million square kilometres of ocean.

22 November 2012: The Government signed the Murray Darling Basin Plan into law, delivering a Plan that will restore rivers to health, support strong regional communities and support sustainable food production.


8. Australia’s macroeconomic and financial frameworks will remain among the world’s best through this period of change.

1 January 2013: The Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority implemented the Basel III capital standards in Australia.

Building capabilities

9. Australia’s school system will be in the top five schooling systems in the world, delivering excellent outcomes for all students of all backgrounds, and systematically improving performance over time.

28 November 2012: The Government introduced the Australian Education Bill 2012, a commitment to giving every Australian school student access to a high-quality, high-equity education, no matter where they live, the school they attend, or their personal circumstances.

7 December 2012: The Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood endorsed the senior secondary Australian Curriculum for English, Mathematics, Science and History as the common base for development of state and territory senior secondary courses.
10. Every Australian student will have significant exposure to studies of Asia across the curriculum to increase their cultural knowledge and skills and enable them to be active in the region.

11. All Australian students will have the opportunity, and be encouraged, to undertake a continuous course of study in an Asian language throughout their years of schooling.

12. Australia will remain among the world’s best for research and teaching in universities, delivering excellent outcomes for a larger number of Australian students, attracting the best academics and students from around the world and strengthening links between Australia and the region.

22 November 2012: Business leaders, academic experts and non-government leaders in Asia-literacy education groups joined the Minister for School Education Peter Garrett at the second Ministerial Roundtable on Asian Literacy.

5 March 2013: The first Asia Literacy Teacher Education Roundtable was convened by the Asia Education Foundation and Australian Council of Deans of Education. Key stakeholders in the tertiary education sector, though the Roundtable, are developing strategies to support White Paper education objectives.

19 December 2012: The Government announced that the draft Foundation to Year 10 Chinese (Mandarin) curriculum will be one of the first two languages released as part of the Australian Curriculum. The Chinese (Mandarin) curriculum will include specific learning pathways to meet the needs of first language learners, background learners, and those who wish to learn Mandarin as a second language. Writing commenced for Foundation to Year 10 Indonesian and Japanese curricula in October 2012.

14 November 2012: The Australian and Malaysian Governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Higher Education, which reflects Australia’s and Malaysia’s joint commitment to increasing collaboration and policy dialogue on higher education issues. The MoU supports the Government’s efforts to ensure young Australians are well placed to take advantage of deepening engagement with Asia.

28 November 2012: The Government launched the National Plan for Research Investment which, for the first time, provides a comprehensive national research planning process to enable a coordinated approach to research investment to ensure this investment meets national needs and provides value for money.

12 December 2012: The Australian and Chinese Governments announced six new joint research centres would be established under the Australia-China Science and Research Fund.

14 February 2013: The Higher Education Support Amendment (Asian Century) Bill 2013 was introduced into Parliament to help provide greater financial
assistance through the OS-HELP scheme for students wanting to undertake part of their study in Asia.

27 February 2013: The Government released the advice from the International Education Advisory Council, chaired by Michael Chaney AO, *Australia – Educating Globally*, which identified seven issues that are crucial to the sustainability and quality of international education in Australia. It proposed 35 recommendations to address these issues. The seven issues are: quality; a positive student experience; partnerships; ensuring integrity in Australia’s student visa program, data analysis and research in international education; and competition, promotion and marketing.

February 2013: Austrade began a survey of the offshore activities of Australia’s private vocational education providers. This follows a similar survey of the offshore activities of Australia’s TAFE colleges in 2012.

February 2013: Austrade began a survey of employer skill demands in Indonesia. It will undertake additional surveys in another five ASEAN markets in 2013 to identify skills gaps which can be addressed by Australian training capabilities.

February 2013: Austrade led a successful automotive skills mission to Thailand to identify training opportunities in that country. It is currently producing 10 industry-specific capability resources to promote Australia’s VET sector expertise and capabilities in offshore markets.

February 2013: The Government staged a forum with representatives from industry and business to explore and discuss a proposed model for collaboratively building workforce capabilities in the Asian region, through vocational education and training.

29 October 2012: Work started on developing a strategy to prepare the Australian Public Service for the challenges of the Asian Century.

| 13. | Australia will have vocational education and training (VET) systems that are among the world’s best, building capability in the region and supporting a highly skilled Australian workforce. |
| 14. | Decision makers in Australian businesses, parliaments, national institutions (including the Australian Public Service and national cultural institutions) and advisory forums across the community will have deeper knowledge and expertise of countries in our region and a greater capacity to integrate domestic and international issues. |
15. Australian communities and regions will benefit from structural changes in the economy and seize the new opportunities emerging in the Asian Century.

17 February 2013: A Plan for Australian Jobs was released, which identifies plans to support regions with narrow economic bases, those facing sudden transitions, and those with weak business networks. These regions may require assistance in creating new economic and job opportunities to support workers in transition.

21 February 2013: The Government partnered with the jobs site SEEK to maximise work opportunities for Australians in the resources sector. The partnership will bring SEEK’s well-established jobs vacancy technology together with the Government’s Resources Sector Jobs Board.

22 February 2013: The Government announced it would deliver a series of Jobs and Skills Expos across the country this year as part of its nationwide strategy to support jobs and training and promote local job opportunities. The expos will provide a ‘jobs board’ advertising employment opportunities and a ‘skills board’ that displays opportunities for professional training and development. The Jobs and Skills Expos are planned for 11 regions including Hobart, Geelong, Liverpool, Rockingham, Grafton, Penrith, Brisbane, Ipswich, Bundaberg, Launceston and Adelaide.

March 2013: The Government continues to work with the Northern Territory Government on Darwin’s evolution as a sophisticated, liveable city providing a gateway to Asia, and will look at economic development and diversification opportunities as part of this approach.
16. Australia will be a higher-skill, higher-wage economy with a fair, multicultural and cohesive society and a growing population, and all Australians will be able to benefit from, and participate in, Australia’s growing prosperity and engagement in Asia.

7 December 2012: COAG endorsed the Intergovernmental Agreement for the NDIS launch. The Australian Government also signed bilateral agreements with NSW, South Australia, Tasmania and the ACT setting out the arrangements for the NDIS launch. An historic agreement has also been reached between the Commonwealth and New South Wales to establish the full NDIS in NSW by 1 July 2018.

5 March 2013: NDIS rules were released. They provide further detail on how the NDIS will work for people with disability, their families, carers and service providers.

Operating in and connecting to growing Asian markets

17. Australia’s businesses will be recognised globally for their excellence and ability to operate successfully in Asian markets.

1 March 2013: The Government opened the Asian Century Business Engagement Plan for expressions of interest and released the grant guidelines. The Asian Century Business Engagement Plan is a competitive grants program which will be run annually from 1 July 2013 to assist member-based business organisations, and through them small and medium-sized enterprises, to harness the opportunities emerging in the region.

20 March 2013: The Government introduced legislation to revise the mandate of the Export Finance and Insurance Corporation (EFIC). This means more of EFIC’s resources are devoted to supporting small and medium-sized enterprises looking to expand overseas, particularly in frontier and emerging markets. EFIC’s new mandate and revised powers are an important step toward realising White Paper objectives and follow recent reforms at Austrade and to the Export Market Development Grants program to sharpen the focus on businesses exporting to emerging and frontier markets.
18. The Australian economy will be more open and integrated with Asia, the flow of goods, services, capital, ideas and people will be easier, and Australian businesses and investors will have greater access to opportunities in Asia.

23 November 2012: A new visa for migrants willing to make an investment of at least $5 million in Australia — the Significant Investor Visa — was introduced. The Significant Investor Visa will help Australia to compete effectively for high net worth individuals seeking to immigrate to Australia.

20 November 2012: Australia was among 16 countries across the region which met to launch negotiations for a new trade agreement, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). The RCEP comprises all the members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) plus China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand and Australia. It will form part of the Government’s strategy for lowering trade barriers and securing improved market access for Australian exporters of goods and services and Australian investors.

1 January 2013: The Malaysia-Australia Free Trade Agreement (MAFTA) entered into force. MAFTA builds on the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement to open up new opportunities for Australian investors and suppliers of goods and services, bringing our economies closer together.

19. Australia’s agriculture and food production system will be globally competitive, with productive and sustainable agriculture and food businesses.

20 December 2012: The Minister for Trade and Competitiveness and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Asian Century Policy the Hon Dr Craig Emerson MP released the first joint study by the Australian and Chinese Governments — Feeding the Future: A Joint Australia-China Report on Strengthening Investment and Technological Cooperation in Agriculture to Enhance Food Security. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, is a co-signatory to the report. The study paves the way for closer agricultural cooperation between the two countries. The study provides a blueprint for partnership in northern Australia, including investment in water and soil conservation, efficient farming technologies and better logistics infrastructure, and for investment in both countries’ agriculture.

20 January-1 February 2013: Under the Australia-China Agricultural Cooperation Agreement, Australia hosted a delegation of Chinese business representatives and government officials. The delegation met with representatives of Australian agribusinesses, the finance sector and agricultural industry organisations to explore areas for investment and agricultural cooperation between China and Australia, consistent with the recommendations of the joint study by the Australian and Chinese Governments.
Currently underway: A joint meeting of the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum Ministers and Chinese provincial leaders is proposed to take place in Cairns on 14 June 2013 to further deepen engagement under the Australia-China Agricultural Cooperation Agreement.

Building sustainable security in the region

20. Australian policies will contribute to Asia’s development as a region of sustainable security in which habits of cooperation are the norm.

23 January 2013: The National Security Strategy provides the overarching framework to guide Australia’s national security efforts over the next five years. *Strong and Secure: A Strategy for Australia’s National Security* marks a new national security era in which the dramatic shift of economic and strategic weight to Asia dominates our national security outlook over this decade. Australia’s national objectives in the region can only be realised if there is sustainable security in Asia.

21. The region will be more sustainable and human security will be strengthened with the development of resilient markets for basic needs such as energy, food and water.

25 November 2012: Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced the establishment of a new Laos-Australia Institute to provide comprehensive training to Government, civil society and the private sector. This program will help selected organisations improve their human resource development planning, leading to more efficient delivery of basic services.

21 January 2013: Foreign Minister Senator the Hon Bob Carr announced the first phase of a Water Technology Partnership with India, with Australia committing a total of $12 million in funding over four years.

Deeper and broader relationships

22. Australia will have the necessary capabilities to promote Australian interests and maintain Australia’s influence.

29 January 2013: As part of its drive to help businesses break into and expand in Asia’s emerging and growth markets, the Government announced it would open a new Austrade office in Yangon, Myanmar.

18 March 2013: Mark Wood was appointed as Trade Commissioner for Yangon. He will be supported by a number of locally-engaged business development managers.
23. Australia will have stronger and more comprehensive relationships with countries across the region, especially with key regional nations — China, India, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea.

3-9 November 2012: Former Minister for the Arts and Minister for Regional Development the Hon Simon Crean MP visited India to advance people-to-people and cultural links in the context of Oz Fest, the largest ever celebration of Australian culture in India.

4 November 2012: During a visit to Malaysia, Senator Carr announced a joint Australia-Malaysia cultural exchange program for the purpose of developing stronger cross-cultural and interfaith understanding.

4 November 2012: Senator Ludwig led an industry delegation to Vietnam and Thailand to promote the White Paper on Australia in the Asian Century and address a number of technical market access issues.

5 November 2012: The Prime Minister travelled to Laos to attend the Asia-Europe Meeting where she briefed Leaders on the contents of the White Paper. Her visit also marked 60 years of diplomatic relations between Australia and Laos.

9 November 2012: The Prime Minister and Senator Carr attended the fifth annual Bali Democracy Forum in Denpasar and announced a program to help emerging leaders and officials put democratic ideas into practice.

18 November 2012: Minister Emerson travelled to Phnom Penh, where he briefed counterparts from the Asia-Pacific region on the White Paper.

20 November 2012: The Prime Minister, accompanied by Minister Emerson, joined leaders from 15 countries of the Asian region to launch negotiations for a new trade agreement, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). The RCEP will support the goal of a more open Australian economy, integrated with Asia, and help improve the flow of goods, services, capital and ideas.

1–5 December 2012: Former Minister for Resources Energy and Tourism the Hon Martin Ferguson MP visited India for the first ever ministerial-level energy security dialogue and to promote energy, resources and tourism links.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>10 December 2012</td>
<td>Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer the Hon Wayne Swan MP travelled to India to meet with senior Indian Government and business leaders.</td>
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<td>11 December 2012</td>
<td>Minister for Infrastructure and Transport the Hon Anthony Albanese MP visited Indonesia to renew the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in the transport sector with the Republic of Indonesia. Minister Albanese and Indonesia’s Minister for Transportation, Lieutenant General (Ret.) E. E. Mangindaan, jointly signed the revised MoU and an associated transport safety annex. The MoU supports the continuation of the strong transport safety and security relationship between Australia and Indonesia while the transport safety annex sets out arrangements for the Indonesia Transport Safety Assistance Package to further enhance Indonesia’s capabilities in aviation, maritime, and road safety.</td>
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<td>12 January 2013</td>
<td>The Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer visited Hong Kong to promote Australia’s economic interests in the region and continue to pursue the opportunities outlined in the White Paper.</td>
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<td>13 January 2013</td>
<td>Senator Carr and Japan’s Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida held talks in Sydney on matters including regional security issues, economic development, and whaling.</td>
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<td>22 January 2013</td>
<td>Australia’s relationship with India was further advanced in talks between Senator Carr and India’s Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Minister of External Affairs Salman Khurshid in New Delhi.</td>
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<td>28 January 2013</td>
<td>Minister Emerson advanced Australia’s trade and investment ties with India at the 14th Australia-India Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC), held in New Delhi.</td>
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<td>21 February 2013</td>
<td>In Thailand, Senator Carr held talks with Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Surapong Tovichakchaikul. They discussed regional security and economic matters, including a review of progress in the bilateral trade relationship, which is underpinned by the Thailand-Australia Free Trade Agreement (TAFTA) and the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA).</td>
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<td>7 February 2013</td>
<td>Minister Albanese hosted a visit to Canberra by Indonesian Minister for Transportation, E. E. Mangindaan, where they jointly signed a new treaty-level Air Services Agreement and a transport security annex to the transport cooperation MoU.</td>
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<td>28 January 2013</td>
<td>Minister Emerson joined cricketer Adam Gilchrist in New Delhi to launch a magazine celebrating the trade and cultural connections between India and Australia.</td>
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<td>1 February 2013</td>
<td>The Australia Awards Scholarships opened. The Australia Awards Scholarships provide applicants from eligible developing countries with the opportunity to obtain a tertiary qualification through Australia’s universities and vocational education and training institutions.</td>
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<td>21 February 2013</td>
<td>Senator Carr announced eight Australian high schools would participate in the Australia-Thailand school partnerships BRIDGE project.</td>
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<td>14 December 2012</td>
<td>The Government signed the 13th Australia-China Cultural Implementation Program, which reaffirms the strong cultural exchange between the two nations. The Cultural Implementation Program includes: official and academic exchanges, and exchanges in radio, television and film; media, press and publishing; performing and visual arts; cultural heritage protection and sport.</td>
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