

Independent Schools Queensland

Submission:

Foreign Policy White Paper

Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) is the peak body representing Queensland's independent schooling sector. Our 200 member schools are a vital part of the state's education system. Together, these schools educate over 120,000 students, or 15 percent of Queensland's school enrolments.

Independent Schools Queensland is a not-for-profit organisation. Membership is voluntary and open to all not-for-profit non-government schools in Queensland.

Below are ISQ's responses to the Education Sector Discussion Questions¹ provided to Roundtable participants.

01 AUSTRALIA'S FOREIGN POLICY NEEDS TO BE GROUNDED IN A CLEAR-EYED ASSESSMENT OF OUR NATIONAL INTERESTS.²

How should we define Australia's national interests in a changing world?

How would you define the 'national interests' of young Australians at school in the next 10 years?

Young people enrolled in Australian schools face unprecedented change and uncertainty in their future lives, largely due to the consequences of globalisation, including rapidly emerging and disruptive technologies. This is regardless of whether these young people are citizens, permanent or temporary residents, and where they will live, study or work in the future.

It is incumbent on our governments, education system and society to adequately prepare all young people enrolled in our schools and under our care to confidently and productively engage, live and work within their local and global communities.

It is in our national interests to ensure young people exiting Australian schools value and respect their own cultural identities as well as those of others, and can begin to find their place in the world with confidence, able to engage and communicate effectively in culturally diverse communities, and with the skills and motivation to continue to learn and adapt when facing the challenges that lay ahead.

¹ Foreign Policy White Paper Key Questions are in blue. Questions in red were provided to guide School Education Sector discussions.

² Questions are copied from http://files-au.clickdimensions.com/unimelbeduau-a5zjb/files/foreignpolicywhitepaperconsultations-educationroundtable.pdf?_cldee=bWxhbmVAYWlzcS5xbGQuZWR1LmF1&recipientid=contact-52dc6e8b810be211a4a40050568d0d27-544caa085e07481e921ac71ec5d802e9&esid=f5800c6e-3cf7-e611-9463-0050568d0279. Accessed 25/02/17.

Our young people will not be served well by an isolationist view of the world, believing that provided Australia is safe, “Everything is okay...”.

It is in our interests in times of change, that the world, not just Australia, be safe – free from war and violence, safe in terms of food and water security and environmental health, and finally, safe because there is respect for the sanctity of life.

Globalisation, disruptive technologies and cheap and accessible cross-border transport mean that our children are global citizens in every respect and our role is to help to equip them to act ethically and responsibly to contribute to global stability and indeed global improvement.

How should our values underpin Australia’s foreign policy?

What key values best support young Australians to thrive in a changing world?

The vision for Australian education articulated in the preamble of the 2008 *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* remains relevant:

*As a nation Australia values the central role of education in building a democratic, equitable and just society— a society that is prosperous, cohesive and culturally diverse, and that values Australia’s Indigenous cultures as a key part of the nation’s history, present and future.*³

However, since 2008, what was perceived as a “need to nurture an appreciation of and respect for social, cultural and religious diversity, and a sense of global citizenship”³ has become a more pressing imperative.

To function and thrive in their own physical and virtual communities now and in the future, along with basic literacy and numeracy skills, young people must acquire what are commonly known as “21st century skills” and more recently “enterprise skills”, as well as “global competences”.

“Global competences” are of relevance to the development and implementation of foreign policy. These are usefully identified in Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4 on Education) of UNESCO’s Education 2030 Agenda and Framework for Action,⁴ and defined in the OECD’s proposal for the PISA 2018 Global Competence Assessment Global competency for an inclusive world⁵.

In Australia, the General capabilities and Cross-curriculum priorities for years F-10 in the Australian Curriculum identify and elaborate on skills and capabilities students need for the future.⁶ While all of the General capabilities are necessary to execute Australia’s foreign engagement, developing the capability of *intercultural understanding* is critical, particularly as this skill will be included in PISA

³ Op. cit.

⁴ See UNESCO’s approach – Global Citizenship Education <http://en.unesco.org/gced/approach>. Accessed 25/02/17.

⁵ <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/oecd-proposes-new-approach-to-assess-young-peoples-understanding-of-global-issues-and-attitudes-toward-cultural-diversity-and-tolerance.htm> accessed 25/02/17.

⁶ See <http://www.acara.edu.au/> and <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/> for more information. Accessed 25/02.17.

suite of assessments in 2018, and Australia's results will be compared with those of other countries, rightly or wrongly, as is the case with other PISA results.

What should we do differently? How can we do better?

What should Australian school education be doing to equip young Australians to navigate a changing world?

We should consider reviewing the *Educational Goals for Young Australians* from a whole of government perspective. This may mean committing greater resources to the full implementation of the Australian Curriculum to better serve Australia's future national interests.

At the current time, the Australian Curriculum is being implemented from years F-10. The critical skills and capabilities we require for global engagement are embedded in the curriculum adopted nationally for younger students, but are only assessed or measured if this is considered desirable by individual schools.

These skills and capabilities have yet to be intentionally and explicitly developed in a consistent way for senior schooling. It would be useful to have a means of assessing and / or recognising these skills and capabilities for credentialing, employability and other purposes.

It is thus in our national interests to support the development of "21st century skills" alongside interpersonal and critical thinking skills of *all* young people enrolled in our schools to ensure school students can meet and adapt to the challenges that stem from rapid change and a society where uncertainty has become a norm.

We could also better foreground the values that underpin our national identity. It is important that as well as developing policy frameworks for a secure and prosperous nation, that we are, and are perceived to be, an open, welcoming, just and inclusive society that values and respects diversity. We are one of the most successfully multicultural nations in the world and we will all be diminished if we retreat from the qualities that have made us such. As a nation, we have traditionally been resilient and responsive to change. It is important that these qualities continue to inform our national identity.

Finally, the importance of communicating in the languages of a globalised world cannot be overstated. In addition to the development of skills in English, a renewed focus on learning other languages, and better recognition and utilisation of the foreign language skills that already exist in our multicultural communities are in our national interests. Australians should be supported to *learn and use* languages from early childhood through all levels of education and beyond.

Consider the human resources potential of our nation that could be unleashed if there were components of language learning that could to some extent be freed from the constraints of institutional and curriculum based assessment practices.

If, as a society, and in our institutions and departments of education, we recognise that learning second or other language can take place at any age and in many settings, including online and outside classrooms, we would create many more opportunities for language acquisition and maintenance to become an accepted part of our society. We would still formally teach languages

and cultural studies in schools, universities, online, etc., but the actual acquiring of skills could happen anywhere.

Perhaps this is an area where a whole of government approach to and investment in life-long learning of languages might deliver significant outcomes.

For example, we had a national system of recognition of language proficiency for learners or speakers of key languages at any age and at any point in time – a recognised framework that could be utilised by any institutions or individuals to verify achievement of the language competency component of a course, or for employment purposes – this could potentially be a game-changer. Government should actively seek to support initiatives of this nature.

02 AUSTRALIA HAS DIVERSE INTERESTS THAT SPAN THE GLOBE.

Which countries will matter most to Australia over the next 10 years? Why and in what ways?

Which countries will matter most to young Australians who exit schooling in the next 10 years?

The question to be asked is not: “Which countries will matter most?” but “For what?”.

Enabled by technology and cheap travel, young Australians will develop their own connections in actual and virtual communities at home and globally depending on their interests, studies, family, friends or work at any given time.

For school age Australians in the process of laying the foundation of a future life and career, the world is their oyster. Developing essential skills and competences through our education system that foster respect for others, curiosity, critical and creative thinking, resilience, etc., will better assist young people make their own opportunities in the world than focussing on countries at this stage of their lives.

In terms of languages education and cultural studies, it is more important for young people to aspire to learn a language and develop an understanding of a different culture – any language or culture – than it is to attempt to favour study of some languages / cultures over others. Skills, once learned, are transferable, and it is more important that our young learners be engaged in the learning process than directed what to learn.

If in this process, we are also equipping our young people to become informed and critical users of information and media as well as responsible and active global citizens, then we are indeed making a positive contribution globally.

Specifically, which countries will matter most to the Australian international education market?

Again, the question to be asked is: “For what purpose?”

A scan of international student enrolment statistics across all providers reveals very different source countries for student cohorts by state, sector, and provider type, as well as by level of study and discipline.

Australia’s national interests will be best served by proactively encouraging, enabling and supporting diversity of engagement for the full range of education programs and purposes – short and long term studies enabled by student as well as visitor visas, educator and student cultural and academic exchanges, research, TNE, people-to-people, institution-to-institution and government-to-government relationships and partnerships.

How should we deepen and diversify key relationships?

What contribution can Australian school education make to deepen key global relationships? What is required to achieve this?

There is very little understanding of the extensive reach of school sector relationships globally. Whilst the Australian Government has been active to some degree in supporting school sector engagement globally through partnerships such as the Asia Education Foundation (AEF) BRIDGE School Partnerships Program⁷ there is a great deal more scope for greater support and research in this area.

Comments and suggestions for achieving deeper and more diverse school sector relationships has previously been provided to the Australian Government in the Independent Schools Council of Australia’s submission for the Draft National Strategy for International Education (June 2015):

.... school level enrolments of international students provide an important element of internationalisation, and are a significant part of the cultural landscape of many schools. Further, they are a valuable pipeline for higher education institutions providing tertiary applicants who already have years’ experience in the Australian education system and in living in Australia.

But student enrolments are not the only way that non-government schools engage in international education. Our schools are already involved in a range of activities that fall under the ‘umbrella’ of international education and which are mentioned as possible areas of activity in the draft Strategy. These include

- Sister school relationships involving language and cultural exchange
- Student exchange programs
- Teacher exchange programs
- Study tours (inbound and outbound)
- Teaching of foreign languages
- Use of international curriculum e.g. International Baccalaureate
- Involvement in international schools organisations and programs e.g. Round Square, Duke of Edinburgh’s Award
- Participation in international conferences for professional development

⁷ <http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/programmes/school-partnerships> accessed 26/02/17. See also comments for Question 05, below.

- Sponsorship of students and fund raising for international causes

It is also characteristic of our sector that there are a large number of schools (CRICOS registered and not CRICOS registered) that conduct international Service Learning Programs.

Many of these school programs are unmeasured so it is difficult to quantify the extent of activity within the sector, however it is clear that non-government schools want to, and are engaging broadly in international education. **What they need is systemised support to ensure that opportunities to internationalise education are consistent across all schools and on-going.** (Emphasis added.)

This submission also provided detailed non-government school case studies with examples of programs demonstrating a commitment to internationalisation of schooling.

Which global trends, such as developments in technology, environmental degradation and the role of non-state actors, are likely to affect Australia’s security and prosperity? How should Australia respond?

What global trends most impact Australian school education?

As with all sectors and levels of society, the consequences of globalisation are having a major effect on school education. These include the impacts of disruptive technologies, the changing nature of work and demands for employability skills, costs of post-secondary education, security and environmental concerns, and so forth.

However, many of these challenges have a flip side. The drivers of global change also offer young people unlimited opportunities if they are sufficiently prepared, confident and adaptable enough to grasp these. Schools have a role in countering the real sense of ‘fear’ and uncertainty some parents have about what the world and what it will be like in twenty years’ time. “Futures thinking”, which teaches students to understand that they can steer the course for a preferred future, is very important.

What role can school education play in strengthening Australia’s response to global trends?

As outlined above, increasing support for *full* implementation of the Australian Curriculum and opportunities for global engagement across a spectrum of school programs (for public and private schools) will better assist schools to prepare young people for their future lives and work.

However, there are some specific educational challenges for our sector.

In order for students to be truly prepared for an uncertain future, schools need to have adequate *time* to develop the General capabilities and Cross-curriculum priorities in our young people, which in turn means having greater flexibility around delivery of the learning areas.

In some year levels, it may be sufficient to expose students to certain key understandings and not to formally assess or report on those. The challenge for schools is this. It is a given that English and

Mathematics should always be taught in full. Literacy and numeracy skills are critical. But the heavy emphasis on the eight learning areas and sixteen subjects up to the end of Year 8 in the Australian Curriculum means that much of the content is covered superficially - without time for deep engagement in meaningful concepts such as power, responsibility, ownership, respect and freedom – all of which we have identified as important understandings to meet future challenges in life and work.

03 AUSTRALIA IS AN INFLUENTIAL PLAYER IN REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS.

Which regional and global organizations matter most to us? And specifically, in education?

How should we support and shape them?

How can we maximize our influence?

There are any number of regional and international organisations that inform and influence policy direction – UNESCO and OECD, APEC, ASEAN’s East Asia Summit, etc.

An education agenda is included in many of these, and Australia subscribes to global or regional educational goals as part of our bi-lateral and multi-lateral commitments.

Individual schools also choose to align themselves beyond our education system with international organisations such as the International Baccalaureate Organisation⁸ and the Council of International Schools⁹.

We should continue to support existing organisations and maintain participation in strategically important forums, but be mindful that, with the pace of change, new opportunities will arise, and we will need to remain responsive to these as well.

⁸ See <http://ibo.org/>. Accessed 26/02/17.

⁹ See <http://www.cois.org/>. Accessed 26/02/17.

04 AUSTRALIA NEEDS TO BE AMBITIOUS IN GRASPING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES.

What steps should be taken to maximise our trade and investment and expand commercial opportunities for Australian business?

How can we maximize the Australian international education market in schools?

According to the Australian Government's *National Strategy for International Education 2025*

... Australian schools support more than 3.7 million students each year, with a broad curriculum delivered by university qualified teachers. Focussing on growing our international student numbers at the school level will provide significant opportunities for continued engagement through further education.¹⁰

In Action 9.3 of the Strategy *Identifying and responding to new opportunities*, the Australian Government undertakes to:

be agile and responsive to opportunities to increase the number of international students and international partnerships, capitalising on identified growth areas such as schools.¹¹

We are hoping to have more detail from the Australian Government about the role of Government in achieving these goals. In our experience, the non-government school sectors tend to be less represented or acknowledged in Government initiatives than government schools. For the schools' sectors, Government should be mindful that recruitment of international students is one strategy among many to internationalise schooling as a response to the impacts of globalisation.

We provide further comments on this, below, under responses to Q 06.

How can we ensure Australia is positioned to take advantage of opportunities in the global economy?

What workforce capabilities do young Australians need from their schooling to maximize our trade and investment opportunities?

Students in our schools need to be taught to be highly functional in literacy and numeracy. Without question, they need to be able to communicate. But after this, what they most need are the skills of being able to work and get along effectively with others - including being comfortable working in teams with people from other cultures - to be innovative and agile in their thinking, to come up with unique solutions to problems, to be creative and to contribute positively to workplace culture. To

¹⁰ See

https://nsie.education.gov.au/sites/nsie/files/docs/national_strategy_for_international_education_2025.pdf p.3. Accessed 25/02/17.

¹¹ Op.cit. p.31. Accessed 25/02/17.

remain employable. In short students need to have clusters of skills to allow them to adapt to changing workplaces.¹²

How do schools need to maximize the opportunities of the international education market?

The most effective way Government can assist non-government schools operating in the international education market to maximise opportunities is to reduce the regulatory burden and costs that individually CRICOS registered non-government schools have to bear.

What are the key risks to Australia's future prosperity and how should we respond?

What are the key risks to the international education market in schools?

The key risks to international education export in schools are a lack of diversity of student source countries and continued focus on export earnings rather than the mutual benefits of an international school sector education experience.

05 AUSTRALIA CONFRONTS A RANGE OF STRATEGIC, SECURITY AND TRANSNATIONAL CHALLENGES.

How can Australia best deal with instability beyond our borders?

How can our foreign policy, including our overseas development assistance program, support a more prosperous, peaceful and stable region?

How should our international engagement work to protect Australia against transnational security threats, such as terrorism?

What role can Australian education play in 'supporting a more prosperous, peaceful and stable region'?

The Australian Government does provide some school sector support for wider sectoral engagement:

We are seeing increased collaboration and partnerships between educational institutions, not just at the tertiary level through research agreements with universities, but increasingly earlier in the education pathway, with sister school arrangements. To help promote these arrangements, the Australian Government was instrumental in establishing the Building Relationships through Intercultural Dialogue and Growing Engagement (BRIDGE) program, which connects Australian teachers, students and school communities with their counterparts across Asia.¹³

¹² See for example <http://www.fya.org.au/report/the-new-work-mindset-report/> . Accessed 27/02/17.

¹³Op.cit. p.19. Accessed 25/02/17.

Schools are also able to become involved in some of the People-to-People programs supported by DFAT through various foundations, councils and institutes.¹⁴

As noted above in comments under Question 02, there is “a great deal more scope for greater support and research in this area”, as well as better promotion of access to these programs for schools.

06 AUSTRALIA USES A RANGE OF ASSETS AND CAPABILITIES TO PURSUE OUR INTERNATIONAL INTERESTS.

What assets will we need to advance our foreign policy interests in future years?

What capabilities do young Australians require from their schooling to best equip them to advance Australia’s foreign policy interests?

Our young people *are* our greatest asset to advance our foreign policy and national interests in future years. It is imperative we provide them with the environment to develop values, skill sets and tools from the youngest possible age to allow them to contribute productively to our own and global communities now and in the future. The role of the General capabilities and Cross-curricular priorities in the Australian Curriculum in doing this has been discussed, above.

How can we best use our people and our assets to advance Australia’s economic, security and other interests and respond to external events?

How can Australian education best advance Australia’s economic security and other interests?

The young people who are currently in our schools *are* our nation’s future. It is important that our educational leaders and foreign policy makers have an understanding of each other’s work and purpose, so that these align.

¹⁴ See <http://dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/foundations-councils-institutes/Pages/foundations-councils-and-institutes.aspx> for more information. Accessed 26/02/17.

How can Government work more effectively with non-government sectors, including business, universities and NGOs, to advance Australia's interests?

How can Government work more effectively with the education sector to advance Australia's interests?

Independent schools in Queensland have a clear commitment to global citizenship education, as evidenced by extensive international engagement through programs and activities such as those listed in the Independent Schools Council of Australia's submission, above.

According to the Schools Census (Commonwealth) August Collection, there were 1,716 full fee paying overseas students enrolled in 75 Queensland independent schools in 2016 (an increase from 1,434 students in 2015 and 1,379 students in 2014). Many schools that offer a foreign language have active sister school partnerships in other countries, and many offer student and teacher exchange opportunities and organise outbound cultural, sporting and service learning programs that support internationalisation of schooling.

Independent schools in Queensland have a clear commitment to holistic education – developing the whole child – academically, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Delivery of education in our member schools clearly aligns with our national interests. Government has a range of formal mechanisms for working with the school sectors in delivering domestic and international education programs and services. The non-government school sectors in particular work closely with DET in the area of school funding, and such are subject to a high degree of regulation and accountability.

However, there are ways in which Government can work more effectively with our sector to assist member schools engage more widely the world. These include:

- *Reducing regulatory burden and costs for CRICOS registered schools*
There are 90 CRICOS registered schools in Queensland, only 75 of which enrolled full-fee paying students in 2016. Many schools wish to remain CRICOS registered to be able to enrol overseas students from time to time to enhance student diversity. However, because non-government schools are individually responsible for costs and compliance associated with registration (in contrast to government schools which share a single state/territory department of education CRICOS registration), many smaller schools struggle with the amount of red tape required to do this. Similarly, the Entry to Market Charge (EMC)¹⁵ faced by a small school wishing to become CRICOS registered is exorbitant.
- *Including and engaging more closely with non-government schools and sector peak bodies in national strategies and funding initiatives related to international engagement*
- Very often non-government peak bodies and schools fail to be acknowledged or included in high level Government initiatives. Quite often it is easier for Government agencies and consultants involved in research and policy making to view state and territory departments of education as responsible for and the source of information for all schools, whereas in fact they hold data and are responsible for government schools. Consequently, there is little actual

¹⁵ See <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/Regulatory-Information/Provider-Registration/Fees-And-Charges/Pages/default.aspx#EMC>. Accessed 27/02/16.

data on the actual extent of international engagement and contribution of non-government schools to Australia's overall foreign relations and interests, even though, anecdotally, we know this contribution is significant. Likewise, Government funding initiatives for outbound activities often favour larger public providers rather than smaller private ones. As a sector peak body, we consistently advocate for greater inclusion in and support for our sector in broader Government strategies and initiatives.

For further information on this submission, please contact:

Mariana Lane

Project Manager (International Education)

Independent Schools Queensland

Email: mlane@isq.qld.edu.au

Direct: +61 (0)7 3228 1569

Mobile: +61 (0)421 917 330