

Overview of ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations

1. Australia became ASEAN's first Dialogue Partner in 1974 and since then the relations has evolved to cover a wide range of cooperation across the three ASEAN Community pillars. At the ASEAN-Australia Commemorative Summit to mark the 40th Anniversary of the partnership between ASEAN and Australia held in November 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, the Leaders announced the elevation of the ASEAN-Australia dialogue relations to a strategic level. In recognition of the Strategic partnership, the First ASEAN-Australia Biennial Summit was held on 7 September 2016 in Vientiane, Lao PDR.
2. The ASEAN-Australia Special Summit, including two side events, namely the Business Summit and ASEAN-Australia Counter-Terrorism Conference, was convened on 17-18 March 2018 in Sydney, Australia. At the Special Summit, the Leaders adopted the Joint Statement of the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit: The Sydney Declaration and announced a package of initiatives across the three pillars to strengthen cooperation between the two sides. In the same year, the ASEAN-Australia Informal Breakfast Summit was held on 14 November 2018 in Singapore, in which Australia announced three new initiatives, namely the Southeast Asia Economic Governance and Infrastructure Initiative, Greater Mekong Water Resource Programme and increased cooperation in maritime issues.
3. The Second ASEAN-Australia Biennial Summit was held on 14 November 2020 via videoconference. During the Summit, the Leaders agreed to the annualisation of ASEAN-Australia Summit starting from 2021 onward.
4. The cooperation between ASEAN and Australia are guided by the ASEAN-Australia Plan of Action (2020-2024), which was adopted at the Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC+1) session with Australia on 1 August 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Political-Security Cooperation

5. Australia continues to engage ASEAN in the political-security pillar through their active participation in the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), and the Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC). Australia also has a regular consultation with the Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC). To date, fifteen SOMTC + Australia Consultations have been held, most recently via videoconference in July 2021.
6. Combatting trafficking in persons is a key area of collaboration between ASEAN and Australia with the implementation of the Australia-Asia Programme to Combat Trafficking in Persons (AAPTIP) from 2013 to 2018, which was followed by a new AUD 80 million ASEAN-Australia Counter-Trafficking program beginning in 2019. On counter-terrorism, the ASEAN-Australia Joint Declaration for Cooperation

to Combat International Terrorism was signed in July 2006 in Kuala Lumpur and the renewed Declaration was adopted by the Leaders at the First ASEAN-Australia Biennial Summit. Furthermore, an ASEAN-Australia MoU on Counter Terrorism was also signed during the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit.

7. In December 2005, Australia acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), which underscored Australia's strong commitment to promoting regional peace and security.

Economic Cooperation

8. Australia remains an important trading partner of ASEAN. Preliminary data shows that ASEAN-Australia total two-way trade in 2020 reached US\$54.8 billion. Australia is also ASEAN's important source of foreign direct investment (FDI) with a total inflow amounting to US\$ 0.5 billion.¹

9. The Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) was signed by the Economic Ministers of ASEAN, Australia, and New Zealand on 27 February 2009. ASEAN Economic Ministers as well as Economic Ministers from Australia and New Zealand at the 25th AEM-CER Consultations resolved to take forward the AANZFTA upgrade negotiations with urgency to ensure that AANZFTA remains fit for purpose, and to provide a signal of AANZFTA Parties' commitment to regional integration. The first round of the upgrade negotiations was held via videoconference on 7-9 April 2021, with a second round subsequently held on 21-22 July 2021.

10. The AANZFTA Economic Cooperation Support Programme (AECSP) was established in 2010 and has contributed to enhancing the capacity of ASEAN Member States' institutions in implementing the AANZFTA. At the 25th AEM-CER Consultations, the Ministers also acknowledged the success of AECSP and welcomed Australia's and New Zealand's commitment to introduce a successor programme for economic cooperation under the AANZFTA beyond 2021.

11. Australia is one of the five Dialogue Partners of ASEAN that signed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) on 15 November 2020.

Socio-Cultural Cooperation

12. Education, youth and people-to-people exchange is a flagship area of ASEAN-Australian cooperation. Australia has supported ASEAN through 1,715 Australia Awards and Endeavour Scholarships offered to citizens of ASEAN Member States, the New Colombo Plan scholarship as well as its Mobility Programme. At the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit, Australia also announced new education initiatives, including the Australia Awards ASEAN scholarships and a New Colombo Plan ASEAN Fellowship.

¹ Preliminary ASEAN trade statistics as of April 2021 and ASEAN FDI database as of June 2021.

13. Australia is supporting regional cooperation on migration governance which supports activities under the ACMW Work Plan 2016-2020 through the Tripartite Action to Enhance the Contribution of Labour Migration to Growth and Development in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (TRIANGLE in ASEAN) from 2016-2025. On disaster management, Australia has been a key partner in providing technical assistance to ASEAN on disaster management. In 2019, Australia provided funding to the ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) Train the Trainer program (delivered through the AHA Centre), to expand the number of trainers and build the AHA Centre's capacity to respond to regional crises. Australia has announced a further funding for the AHA Centre to support a new phase of work on human-induced crisis in the region during the Second ASEAN-Australia Biennial Summit in November 2020.

Development Cooperation

14. The ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation focuses on the economic areas and social development, was established in 1974 through the ASEAN-Australia Economic Cooperation Programme (AAECP) and was followed by the AADCP (2002-2008). The AADCP II was then extended to 2015 and further extended to December 2021. The AADCP II continues to support the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community blueprint, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 and the IAI Workplan III in promoting and implementing people-oriented and people-centered projects. It also supports the ASEAN Secretariat to better perform its mandate in facilitating integration across the three Community pillars. During the Second ASEAN-Australia Biennial Summit, Australia also announced a range of initiatives, including on the areas of quality infrastructure development, marine resource development, digital technologies, Mekong programme and emerging security needs.

