

Public diplomacy in an Australian context:
A policy-based framework to enhance
understanding and practice

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To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis entitled: *Public diplomacy in an Australian context: A policy-based framework to enhance understanding and practice*, represents my own work and contains no material which has been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at this University or any other institution, except where due acknowledgement is made.

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SUMMARY

The Australian Government's Joint Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade observed in 2007 that, when it comes to Australia's program of public diplomacy, 'perhaps the whole is not as great as the sum of its parts'.¹ Such a compelling observation is the central hypothesis for this thesis. It comes at a time of increasing international discussion around the emerging role of modern public diplomacy as an important tool for nations in advancing foreign policy priorities, a discussion from which Australian foreign policy practitioners and academics have been noticeably absent.

Public diplomacy recently defined for the Australian context as, 'work or activities undertaken to understand, engage and inform individuals and organisations in other countries in order to shape their perceptions in ways that will promote Australia's foreign policy goals'² is a contested and evolving concept. Closer examination of Australia's output-focussed public diplomacy program, coordinated by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) reveals that public diplomacy is generally not well understood or supported within Australia's political, bureaucratic and academic circles; is lacking in strategic leadership and coordination, and is consistently under-resourced. When considered together, these issues point to an underlying systemic failure in Australia's public diplomacy program, that is, a fundamental lack of connection between public diplomacy and strategic foreign policy priorities. Without such strategic alignment, public diplomacy floats around the fringe of foreign policy, appearing only at a superficial level in rhetoric and symbolic gestures, one-off or randomly planned events and activities, and crisis media management. This significant

¹ Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Committee Hansard*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 15 March 2007, p.9.

² The Senate Committee definition of public diplomacy was presented to the Australian Senate on 16 August 2007 upon the conclusion of the Inquiry and delivery of the Committee's Final report. Australian Senate, *Hansard*, 16 August 2007, p.42.

gap raises concerns about Australia's ability to leverage international image, reputation and soft power to deliver on current foreign policy priorities and future challenges.

The overall lag in Australia's take up and understanding of public diplomacy is the central issue of concern for this thesis. Taking the 2007 Senate Inquiry into Australia's public diplomacy program as the launching point, the responsibility of this thesis in broad terms is twofold:

- i) to extend the contemporary body of Australian knowledge in the field of public diplomacy, with the aim of bridging a gap between theory and practice; and
- ii) to suggest a policy-based framework that might facilitate coherent and consistent consideration of public diplomacy as a strategic instrument of Australian foreign policy.

The thesis explores the current role and structure of public diplomacy in Australia's foreign policy, to better understand why the Senate Inquiry concluded that the whole of Australia's program of current diplomacy is less than the sum of its parts. In doing so, the thesis moves beyond existing literature to establish a policy-based framework to support better understanding and utilisation of public diplomacy in a way that might contribute to the achievement of strategic foreign policy objectives.

ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
AICC	Australian International Cultural Council
AIS	Australian Information Service
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
AIPRD	Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
ASIO	Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation
ASIS	Australian Secret Intelligence Service
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AYAD	Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FCI	Foundations, Councils and Institutes
FCO	British Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
G7	Group of Seven (7) traditionally refers to the meeting of the finance ministers from a group of seven industrialized nations: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, and United States.
G20	Group of Twenty (20) traditionally refers to the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors is the group of finance ministers and central bank governors from the following economies: South Africa, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Mexico, Canada, United States, China, Japan, South Korea, India, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, United Kingdom, and European Union. More recently, the G20 has provided a mechanism for heads of states of these economies to meet to discuss issues of global significance.
GAO	United States Government Accountability Office
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organisation
INTERFET	International Force in East Timor
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NTER	Northern Territory National Emergency Response
ONA	Office of National Assessments
PACER	Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations
PM&C	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
Senate Committee	Senate Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Senate Inquiry	Senate Joint Standing Committee Inquiry into the Nature and Conduct of Australian Public Diplomacy Program (2007)
Senate Report	Final Report of the Senate Committee on the Inquiry into the Nature and Conduct of Australian Public Diplomacy Program
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
VCCR	Vienna Convention on Consular Relations 1963
VCDR	Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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