

# 2021 ASSESSMENT REPORT

## AAP315116 - AUSTRALIA IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

### Section A

#### Diversity of the Physical and Human Geography in the Australia, Asia and Pacific Region

#### Criterion 2

##### Communicate ideas and information

Many answers for both questions revealed that students had only a superficial knowledge of the issues, having perhaps watched a video. However, these answers needed to be supported with detail, specifically examples of places, and in the best answers, some data i.e., facts and figures. When asked for specific examples many students were unable to back their assertions using these and resorted to vague generalities. Students are urged to revise specific geographical terminology and incorporate this within responses. Many answers tended to go around in circles with much repetition evident. Understanding the criteria being assessed is very important especially in relation to the word 'assess' which was in both of the questions posed in this section. Both questions asked that specific cities and countries be referred to and it was important to spell the name of the examples correctly (examples of incorrect spelling - Ho Chi Ming, Phillipines, Manilla, Figi).

#### Criterion 3

##### Describe and assess the physical and human Geography of the AAP region

Section A examined the students' understanding of the Physical and Human Geography of the region. It was obvious that many students had a good knowledge of these aspects. However, as in most examination questions, students were required to provide answers that addressed specifics. This meant that the decision to leave out learnt knowledge, while momentarily disheartening, was as important as what to include in a relevant answer. It was important in both questions to analyse what the question was asking for and to plan answers that addressed the question. Regurgitation of irrelevant data, just because it had been learnt was not only a waste of time but also a distraction from information which did address what was required. Indeed, some of this learnt data could have helped the response if it had been reworked to address the issues in the question. For example, the physical geography of Fiji helps explain why the issue of sea level change affects a relatively small coastal area but is still very important as this is increasingly where the population is based (Human Geography).

#### Question 1

**Assess at least two (2) problems associated with urbanisation for cities/a city in one (1) Asian nation in the AAP region.**

It was important that students identify the two problems selected and name the city or cities they intended to discuss. Without these details, answers became generalised and often vague. Problems could include

the following: any form of pollution, traffic congestion, lack of health and education infrastructure, loss of productive land and other problems related to urban sprawl, water and electricity problem, unemployment and the continuing importance of the informal sector, crime, slum/shanty town growth, and health and well-being. Better answers demonstrated specific knowledge of the problems chosen, how they occurred, why they continue and what may be the future evolution of both problem and solution. Some problems, particularly those in specific areas, are easier to discuss than others e.g., Mumbai slum dwellings or Bangkok traffic. The best answers were factual and contained examples and statistics. Many answers looked at problems such as well-being and mental illness, which were difficult to discuss in the context of different cultures. These discussions often used data gained from less authoritative and often Australian sources. The best answers considered not only the problem but suggested and assessed some solutions.

## Question 2

Students were required to assess at least two (2) problems associated with environmental degradation in one (1) Pacific nation in the AAP region.

As in Question 1, it is important for students to identify the country (only ONE) early in their answer and then the problems tended to give structure and coherence to the response. This was executed more efficiently in Question 2 than in Question 1. Some of the weaker answers identified only one problem e.g., deforestation in PNG and then ran out of steam. Better answers featuring PNG continued with a discussion on environmental problems caused by mining, often by foreign companies. Some responses were vague and generalised, often making unsubstantiated statements. For example, there were several discussions on the future of the tree kangaroo in PNG.

The range of options for discussion, and their application to a country, was potentially broad and included sea level rise, coral reef bleaching, disruption to fishing and marine industries, deforestation, mining side effects, salination of water resources and depletion of arable land. Application to a specific nation proved challenging for some, for example the fact that deforestation in PNG relates to equatorial rainforest which will never regenerate and leads to impoverished soils and decreased crop yield was not referred to. Reasons for this deforestation here and in other Pacific nations was rarely referenced although it was pleasing to see palm oil mentioned in some answers. Better answers assessed the problems and related their direct influence on environmental degradation, and some made a judgement as to their severity and perhaps considered a solution.

## Section B

### Australia's Changing Roles in the Region: Partnerships or Immigration

Answers showed an increasing emphasis on discussing the changing future role of Australia within the region. It was pleasing to see a greater number of students explicitly incorporate this analysis within their response. Consideration was given to the impact of climate change and the pandemic. To effectively address Part B of the question (What issues may have an impact on changing this partnership in the future?), students should devote several sentences to making logical predictions about future trends. This analysis may be included as a separate final paragraph however more sophisticated responses will weave this evaluation within issues-based paragraphs. Please note: Criterion 4, Element 3 of the Criterion

Standards is devoted to this speculative thinking and should not be omitted from answers. Many responses considered issues such as overpopulation, housing and skills shortage as relevant issues. Students were rewarded for the originality in their predictions and ability to speculate realistic issues that may arise in the future. These issues are likely to be considered global trends (e.g., pandemics, climate change, economic crisis, immigration, technology, domestic policies, security concerns) and may cover both political as well as interpersonal relations.

### Question 3

#### Partnerships

Students were required to describe and analyse the areas of trade, partnership or aid between an Asian and Pacific nation. Most students elected to discuss Australia and Indonesia, while some students embraced the Australian and Chinese relationship. Only a few students discussed Pacific nations such as Kiribati.

### Criterion 2

#### Communicate ideas and information

When discussing the nature of the relationship, many students adopted a chronological discussion of significant drivers. Although this did provide a comprehensive overview, such organisation of a response limits the capacity for analysis, explanation and evaluation of drivers. Future discussions of bilateral relations may be more effectively organised by the concepts outlined on DFAT's Indonesia Country Brief:

- Strategic and security cooperation
- Trade and investment
- Development cooperation
- Education
- People-to-people links

When discussing China, DFAT has confined these concepts to trade and investment, people-to-people links and high-level visits and meetings.

Names of security partnerships (e.g., ANZUS), trade agreements, regions and intergovernmental organisations (e.g., ASEAN) are considered appropriate terminology for this section.

### Criterion 4

#### Describe and assess Australia's changing relations with nations in the Asia-Pacific region in the areas of partnerships or migration

Responses reflected a strong understanding of the changing economic relations between Australia and the region, adopting a broad, holistic perspective that acknowledged a range of diverse patterns and drivers. Students gave thought to changing ideological differences over time within political and public opinion. It was most pleasing to see students discuss specific trade agreements such as the Indonesia-

Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA) and China–Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA); relying on current information from DFAT to inform their response.

To effectively analyse, students should consider the purpose of the partnership and its meaning and importance to both countries. How have changing government policies (both Australian and Asian/Pacific) redefined the partnership (e.g., Cultural Revolution vs Keating era)? Students able to discuss changing government policies of Asia-Pacific countries (e.g., boycotting of Australian goods) were rewarded. Students are also encouraged to consider changing public perception and the way that aid, security and trade can form cultural connections between the Australian people and the region. Trade links resulting from tourism and international students may also be relevant.

#### Question 4

##### Immigration

Most responses focused on Vietnam, with some discussions on China and India. While South Sea Islanders may allow for an innovative response to consider immigration through the economic lens of labour, very few Pacific Islands were mentioned.

#### Criterion 2

##### Communicate ideas and information

Students are strongly urged to avoid a chronological narrative retelling of historical events. Many responses relied on a story-telling approach without any discussion or evaluation of the significance of events. Such organisation of ideas does not invite full discussion of the question and restricts the ability to identify the main thematic drivers of the partnership. Responses with a thematic organisation (e.g., strengths and barriers to relationships) tended to provide a more sophisticated analysis.

#### Criterion 4

##### Describe and assess Australia's changing relations with nations in the Asia-Pacific region in the areas of partnerships or migration

Many students understood the significant shifts in Australia's immigration policy, moving from exclusion to inclusion. It was pleasing to see the changing nature of the Colombo Plan feature more frequently in discussions. Students are encouraged to select events of historical significance to these ideological and political changes. While some past historical incidents may be interesting (e.g., Agent Orange), events should be selected based on the scale of their impact. When discussing Vietnam, discussion should be made to the significance of both Operation Babylift (April 1975) and the Kein Giang (Darwin Harbour, 26 April 1976) as well as the boat arrivals to neighbouring South East Asian countries. Excessive description of the White Australia Policy and Immigration Restriction Act (Dictation Test) is not necessary; focus should be on the repercussions of, and responses to, these policies. Students could consider the shifting emphasis on migration from populate or perish to business and skills. A reminder that numbers of arrivals and dates of key events need to be accurate.

## Section C

### Tourism in the Australia, Asia and Pacific Region

#### Question 5

##### Criterion 2

##### Communicate ideas and information

The question requires students to write in extended essay form. Answers were generally strong and sought to address the three parts of the question. Some confusion did occur with the three parts. Students needed to address the changes for two destinations from the table in the exam booklet (and course document) to account for changes in the reasons people have travelled to the chosen destinations. Some students discussed impacts on the economy and society/cultures of their two chosen destinations, however the question did only ask for one to be discussed. The third part of the question required students to focus on codes of conduct to lead to more positive impacts for the destination addressed in part two of the question. Equal weight should be given to each part of the question. Specific terminology to the topic is rewarded.

##### Criterion 5

##### Describe and assess tourism and its impact in the Australia, Asia and Pacific region

Stronger responses sought to explain changes in the reasons people have travelled to the two destinations. These included, but were not limited to, the following: popularity in certain kinds of tourism (environmental tourism, adventure tourism, religious tourism, 3S [sun, surf and sand] etc.), the opening of new areas adjacent to the destination, greater disposable income, more leisure time, rise of low-cost carriers, technological advancements in transport and online bookings (including use of apps and social media) and relative political stability in the region. Better responses included the Covid-19 pandemic as part of this discussion.

As part of a strong response, students did try to evenly distribute discussion between the two destinations and identify and describe a good range of reasons for the changes in travel applicable to each of their chosen destinations.

Popular destinations for discussion by students included, Bali or Phuket from Group A, Fiji or Vanuatu from Group B and Uluru from Group C, remembering that 'the destinations must be from two (2) **different** destination groups.'

Good responses focused on both the economy and society/cultural impacts because of the changes in reasons for travel. This part of the question required students to use only one of the destinations for further discussion. Details of the economic impacts of changing tourism numbers included discussion of: (un)employment, leakage, multiplier effect, economic downturn, closure of tourism and hospitality businesses and subsequent flow-on effect to the economy of the host country. Discussion of society/cultural effects included (but were not limited to): cultural degradation, the commodification of culture, westernisation of culture, education of culture, sustainability and improvements to health care and infrastructure.

The third part of the question addressed effective codes of conduct for more positive impacts of the society/culture of the chosen destination. Students showed an understanding of codes of conduct by applying it to the destination they were discussing. Examples of codes of conduct that were discussed for a range of destinations and specific sites included, but were not limited to: reducing carrying capacity, restriction of access, greater respect for religious and cultural practices and safer environments for locals and tourists. This part of the question was not addressed as well as the other two parts with some students not mentioning the term 'codes of conduct' at all.

## Section D

### National Responses to Crises

#### Question 7

##### Criteria 2

##### **Communicate ideas and information**

The question requires students to use a report format. Guidelines for the report format is outlined under "Work Requirements" in the AAP315116 course outline on the TASC website and should be followed closely. Some students did not write in report format and instead chose to write a narrative about the crisis. Simply retelling the story of a specific crisis does not meet the requirements of Cr 2. Strongly written reports included the use of dot points or tables to list the effects on the humanitarian and economic impacts of the natural crisis. The introduction should set the scene for the reader and students generally did this by including a name of Country A, describing its location and proximity to neighbouring countries and surrounding seas (sometimes incorrectly) and then describing the event that has occurred to cause the crisis.

##### Criteria 5

##### **Describe and assess tourism and its impact in the Australia, Asia and Pacific region**

While there were some effective responses to this question, many answers relied upon general knowledge to show understanding of Country A and its crisis. Students chose to write about flooding, cyclones, an earthquake or a tsunami as the natural national crisis.

Another point to note was the change in the timing of the crisis. Students often had the event and subsequent crisis occurring long enough in the past to give themselves opportunities to write about the short- and long-term effects of the crisis, while other students had the event occurring recently and subsequently adopted a 'too early to tell' position when assessing the effectiveness of the national and international responses. Students are again reminded to provide a realistic name for "Country A".

Often students would discuss the event causing the crisis as impacting the entire country. Stronger responses gave specific locations of the event having the greatest impact. Often, tsunamis, flooding and earthquakes were discussed as devastating to the entire country rather than localising the impact to a specific region. Whilst a country would share the economic and emotional pain of such an event, these events occur in specific regions/locations within countries, with some areas more directly impacted than others.

It was also clear that some students had approached this question with a 'one size fits all approach.' Many responses were clearly prepared beforehand, and students were going to use them wherever Country A was located. Responses like this did not take into account the data set for the country and the map of page 7 of the exam paper.

### Cause and scale

When writing about the cause and effect of a natural national crisis on Country A, students are advised to discuss a specific crisis that has taken place, with some discussion of why Country A has experienced such a crisis (commonly the effects of a cyclone, earthquake or tsunami). Many responses correctly identified the shifting of tectonic plates or fault lines as a cause of earthquakes and subsequent tsunamis (if applicable). Students who correctly identified adjacent tectonic plates to Country A were few and far between. Historically, earthquakes have not been prevalent in the eastern region of the Bay of Bengal, however, it is not beyond reasonable expectation that an earthquake (and subsequent tsunamis) event could occur.

Better responses discussed humanitarian and economic impacts on Country A where realistic data was included to support examples. In contrast, several students provided death tolls as over a million in a single disaster. More discerning responses identified a high death toll but provided reasons such as a nighttime event, urbanised locations and use of poor-quality building materials. Lower death tolls and injuries were put down to the crisis being focused on rural and remote locations and/or preparedness of Country A. Economic impacts were discussed, as were destruction of resources, be it in the primary, secondary or tertiary sectors. Stronger responses discussed a decline in tourist numbers and the associated flow-on effect. Secondary impacts were also present in better responses. Examples included the outbreak of disease and lack of access to fresh water and food shortages.

It is important that students read the questions carefully to ensure that they provide all the information required in their answer. Unfortunately, some students did not attempt (b) at all.

### Australian NGO response

Responses here were mixed. As Section D was the final section for the exam, it was clear that some students began to run out of time and this aspect of the question was completed in a hurry without the necessary detail needed to address the question.

As the question specifically mentioned an Australian NGO, it narrowed the focus of discussion for some students. Responses that discussed an Australian NGO (Red Cross, for example) were stronger. Some students referred to the NGO as 'the Australian NGO from the question in the exam paper'. Better responses included discussion of neighbouring countries (India) and other developed countries (including Japan and Singapore) in addition to the Australian NGO response and showed a good understanding of the nature of an international response. In addition to this, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and an array of other NGOs, would potentially assist in Country A's crisis. Some students found time to list a table with donors (both national and international NGOs) and their amounts to Country A.

Strong answers detailed specific roles of Country A's response teams, with the defence forces coordinating the immediate response within 24 hours of the event and with extra assistance (depending on the size of the event) coming in the first 7 days and then longer-term relief efforts over the following months and years covered by NGO agencies. Some students also described specific roles for the assisting aid agencies ranging from technical assistance and rebuilding efforts to food and water provisions to search and rescue. Some answers cited political differences as reason for some neighbouring countries not assisting or providing minimal help.

Innovative responses discussed marketing campaigns designed to get tourists back to Country A as soon as possible in order to begin an economic recovery.

### **Analysis of the difficulties**

The analysis of the effectiveness was the most disappointing part of the responses. Responses often detailed a position as being 'effective' without scrutinizing why it was so. Some students suggested reasons why the national and international agency response was poor and included some aspects that were handled badly and why. But overall, again there was a general lack of scrutiny. Lack of coordination and communication were common themes for ineffective responses to the crisis. This part of the question was often overlooked as students had clearly run out of time.