

2022 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

In this section, both short essays were rated together to achieve the overall rating awards. Given the nature of the two questions, this often resulted in students writing a more expansive answer to Q1, and a less detailed response to Q2. The final overall ratings on C2 & C3 reflect the holistic assessment of this section.

CRITERIA 2

Communicate ideas and information

CRITERIA 3

Describe and assess physical and human geography of the Australia, Asia and Pacific region

QUESTION 1

This question asked students to consider all of the physical geography of ONE Pacific Nation in the region. In considering physical geography, all aspects related to the environment could have been discussed. This includes, but is not exclusive to, location (hemisphere, longitude & latitude, tropics), configuration (shape, size), proximity to tectonic plates, topography (for example: mountains, rivers, plains), climate range and characteristics, soils, vegetation and degradation of the environments – preferably in that order so that each topic can build on the explanation for the next. Discussion of reasons behind the diversity (or lack thereof) of the physical geography, including location, (changing) climate, volcanic activity and so on needed to be included. For example, if the country is a north/south archipelago or has high altitude, the range of climates and vegetation will reflect this and will satisfy the need to assess the degree of diversity.

There were a range of nations chosen by students and all were relevant to the Pacific region. Among the most represented were Fiji and Papua New Guinea. The best answers looked at a range of physical features and supported their descriptions with named examples, such as rivers, mountains, deserts and statistics relating to them, citing height, temperatures and rainfall.

The strongest responses identified and discussed variations within countries and referred to specific locations/islands to support this. Included data and facts such as mountain heights, length of rivers, number of islands, annual rainfall and average temperatures provided strong evidence that students

understood the physical geography of their chosen nation. The inclusion of environmental degradation (deforestation) was also discussed in stronger answers.

Some answers were very general; comments such as ‘climate is very diverse’ or ‘the country is very hilly’ do not add a lot to the depth of the answer with these general statements throughout. They should be supported with relevant examples of why they are such.

Students must be very clear what aspects are relevant to **physical** geography, as some responses included population characteristics, urban areas or agriculture, which are categorised as **human** geography.

QUESTION 2

This question was not completed with as much authority as Question 1 but nonetheless there were some very strong answers. India, Japan, Indonesia, and Vietnam were popular nations that were discussed. Some answers tended to focus on the ethnic structure and overlooked the overall population issues and urbanisation, which are listed in the course document as **human** geography characteristics. Other areas of diversity that could be considered are religion, age and gender differentials. Consideration across the area of the nation, i.e., higher concentration of a particular ethnic group, or religion, and the reasons for varied population distribution should be included.

Strong answers included discussion of all the listed characteristics supported with statistics, examples, and discussion. Answers that were of a high standard included analysis of population of the chosen country, including level of development, accurate data such as (but not exclusive to) population total, CBR, Life Expectancy, Urban/Rural percentages and other demographic data such as (but not limited to) dependency ratios and industry sector percentages. Greater evaluation could be incorporated by discussing change and continuity in demographic data over time.

Ethnic and religion data was also presented and used to examine differences. Religion was mentioned as part of many students’ assessment with a breakdown of major and minor religions within chosen countries and an explanation of such. Some students were broad in their discussion about major religions, such as Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism, without the assessment of such with breakdowns of main denominations and explanation of such present in stronger responses. The nature of the question meant that assessment of ethnicity, religion and population should have been addressed. Suggested reasons for the diversity could include history, migration, domestic and international policies.

A small number of responses included the discussion of urbanisation issues and provided examples to support this. However, discussion of an individual city detracted from the question, which was asking students to focus on an Asian Nation and to analyse the variations within the chosen nation.

Section B

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

QUESTION 3 – PARTNERSHIPS

25 students completed this question.

Countries selected included Indonesia, Kiribati, Vanuatu and Japan.

CRITERION 2

Communicate ideas and information

The use of phrases “high, middle or low income” countries to categorise development is preferable. Students are urged to organise essay paragraphs according to an argument or theme rather than a chronological narrative of events. It was pleasing to see some students divide topics into ‘uniting’ or ‘dividing’ factors. It is permissible to use the concluding sentences of each paragraph to make future predictions rather than leaving all analysis to one final concluding paragraph.

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 appeared to answer the question on all three topics – **trade, security or aid** yet did not have sufficient content to discuss all three aspects in depth. Some students gave a historical overview of events defining the security relationship. Other students discussed aid programs and trade agreements. Few students appeared to approach the topic from an integrated perspective – that is, “Aid for Security and Trade”. An explanation of how the relationship developed historically is beneficial but students should avoid a historical narrative.

Including demographic indicators as evidence for need of **aid** was beneficial. Examples of effective aid included medical locums, roads, as well as climate resilient infrastructure. Students who were able to provide examples of funding commitments to the region were rewarded. Using Australia's approach to Official Development Assistance with the Three Pillar Plan – health security, economic recovery and stability – enabled students to show how diversity in aid mutually benefits partnerships. Some students did well to link aid priorities to the Sustainable Development Goals. If discussing the Pacific, some discussion of the Seasonal Worker's Programme should have been identified.

Many students effectively identified formal agreements such as Comprehensive Strategic Partnerships, Joint Military Training programs and, in particular, the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA). Some answers were able to identify business and entrepreneurship as an opportunity for future partnership alongside political and cultural links.

Recognition of intellectual trade was a pleasing inclusion.

References should be made to the quality of the **partnership** as well as the unfolding and changing nature of the relationship. The goal of Australia's connections in the region is not simply to turn LDCs into MDCs. It was pleasing to see some answers evaluate how Australia's partnerships with other countries in the region (e.g., Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement [RAA]) will impact the future nature of the selected country. Recognition of membership of international organisations such as ASEAN and APEC is valuable; Australia's membership should not be presumed. More effective analysis will identify why particular formal relationships have not been pursued.

Devoting part of the essay to the student's prediction for change in the partnership is essential. Issues such as climate change, security issues, changes in the economy of one of the countries involved, changes in technology, domestic politics etc, could be explored. Nonetheless, discussion of **future trends** remains minimal. Analysis of the current political climate and how regional issues may be confronted by future government policies is essential. Indonesia's economic growth must be recognised. If discussing the Pacific, exploration of China's role in the region should not be avoided. Identification of developments such as the 5 Eyes intelligence sharing group contributed to a sophisticated analysis of future possibilities.

QUESTION 4 – IMMIGRATION

This question was not attempted.

Should this question have been selected, answers needed to have described and assessed how Australian immigration policies have had an impact on the immigration of a national or ethnic group within Asia or the Pacific over time. The 'assess' part of the question needed reasons behind the changes in Australian policies and how these policies have affected the number, prosperity, opportunity, outcomes, etc., for the group immigrating or wishing to immigrate. Part of the essay needed to be devoted to the student's prediction for the development of the relationship between the group and Australia into the future. Here, answers may have explored issues such as domestic attitudes, security, climate change, and so on. Answers needed to provide realistic reasons for the predicted change(s).

Section C

Tourism in the Australia, Asia and Pacific Region

QUESTION 5 – TOURISM

25 students completed this question.

CRITERION 2

Communicate ideas and information

Students are reminded that the paper must be written in essay form; incomplete sentences or dot points need to be developed. Terms such as “good and bad” should be avoided.

The majority of **destinations** selected included Phuket and Uluru. A minority of students selected Bali, Singapore, New Caledonia and the Great Barrier Reef. For the first paragraph, discussion should be evenly split between the two destinations. Students are encouraged to focus on the role of the destination within the country – that is, what significance does the destination have to national culture and economy?

Some students continue to refer to Phuket as a nation when this is a distinct region of Thailand. Students were rewarded for use of the full name Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. Facts about the destination must be accurate, for instance describing Uluru as a rock monolith rather than a “large rock”. Subject specific vocabulary such as ‘influx’ and ‘sector’ strengthened responses.

CRITERION 5

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

Students are reminded to demonstrate the difference between ‘trends’ and ‘travel’ patterns. Many students focussed on the changing **patterns in tourist arrivals** due to the COVID19 pandemic. Reference to pre-pandemic overtourism and dramatic changes in patterns of arrivals with border closures and immigration policies is essential. Students should not presume that pre-pandemic patterns in arrivals and behaviours of tourists have returned. Strong answers explained why a downward movement may not be as significant in high income countries due to government incentives and the increase in domestic tourism. It was pleasing to see recognition of the changing demographic of visitors (e.g. retirees). Students are reminded that Australians are not the dominant travellers within the region and other travellers (e.g. Europe & Americas) should be recognised. China, a key source market in the region, remains closed. Vaccinations does not mean that tourist arrivals have returned.

Growth in popularity of certain kinds of tourism (environmental tourism, extreme sports, philanthropic tourism, etc), the opening up of new areas near or around the destination, greater

disposable income of national and international travellers, social media, COVID, changing rules concerning travel, changing costs, etc could also be considered. Past course versions have included trends such as adventure tourism, medical tourism, dark tourism and ecotourism. Some students used these trends as a point of discussion. Some students effectively used the 5 As to discuss reasons for the changing trends – *affordability, accommodation, accessibility, amenities* and *activities*. Scenery or interest in an attraction alone may not be sufficient to account for growth in travel. Not all students recognised growth as harmful. Impacts on patterns (i.e., Global Financial Crisis and the pandemic) should be discussed in chronological order.

Some students continued to discuss both destinations for **Part B**. Other students confused “environmental” for “economic”, discussing both terms interchangeably. Describing tourism as an industry may allow students to focus on the economic significance.

Some **positive impacts** included recovery of some areas due to restricted numbers, as a result of restricted travel (COVID for example), domestic and international efforts and programs to restrict access to places which are considered vulnerable, raising awareness in domestic populations of the need to protect habitats, etc., so that tourism is sustainable. Harmful impacts could have included over burdening sewerage and water systems, damage to nature species, landforms etc., and pollution of various kinds (air, water, landscape, etc.,).

When analysing the **environmental impacts**, students were commended for discussing the exploitation of natural resources and how demand for services such as electricity and water contributed to desertification. Analysis of rubbish alone limited responses. Showing the impact on significant geographical features (e.g., waterways) gave greater credibility to the issue of pollution. Identifying the need to eliminate privately owned companies in waste management was beneficial.

Discussion needed to cover **management practices** that could improve the negative impacts of travel on the environment of the host country (for instance, community or governmental restrictions on physical access, more effective infrastructure, specially targeted protection programs and so on). It was pleasing to see names of companies involved in conservation (e.g., Phuket Hotel’s Association commitment to use of greywater). Rather than referring simply to the use of rubbish bins, the most effective management strategies are specific government policies that inform legislation, rules and regulations. Strategies such as electric buses and skytop greenery implemented by the Singapore Tourism Board were relevant. Some students effectively recognised how national priorities such as reconciliation influenced management strategies (i.e., self-government of Uluru by the Anangu). It was pleasing to see discussions of how varying arrivals impact conservation funding priorities (that is, when tourists stay away, conservation policies decrease). Economic growth enables funding of environmental protective policies such as marine and national parks. Strong answers recognised changing attitudes of tourists and how expectations influence management policies.

Section D

National Responses to Crises

Students are reminded that, as the report is to be composed from the perspective of DFAT, a discussion of Australia's direct role in the crisis, compared to other nations, was needed. When analysing the effectiveness of national and international responses, suggestions for amendments to Australia's aid policy are advisable.

QUESTION 6 - MAN-MADE NATIONAL CRISIS

Five students attempted this question. All students chose to discuss the impacts of a terrorist attack on a nightclub district in Country A. The terrorist attack was linked to religious differences.

The standard of the answers to this question was generally good. It was clear that most students had studied and prepared for this section by using information from the case studies from the course outline. However, suggestions for further improvement are provided below.

CRITERIA 2

Communicate ideas and information

Answers need to address all three parts of the question. The layout of the question allows students to set out their report easily if they follow the three parts.

Report format should be used. This means headings, subheadings, dot points and/or a numbering system. Some students did not use any of these features. The report format is outlined on page 8 of the [AAP315116 course document](#) and should be followed closely.

CRITERIA 4

Describe cause and effect of national crises in the Asia and Pacific region, and assess effectiveness of responses

Students must refer to the relevant information from the given blurb about Country A in their answers. A short introduction is recommended, but this should not be so long that it detracts from the discussion of the chosen crisis.

Crises may have one or multiple causes. The terrorist attack arose in all responses from ideological differences between the ethnic composition of Country A or religious ideology. Data was used from the table on Page 7 of the exam to assist in framing the context of these differences.

Information provided must be relevant and likely given Country A's location and data. The use of the data should include references to Country A's archipelagic nature, proximity to other nations, ethnic

makeup, high rural population, etc. Better answers were able to relate Country A's low GNI PPP and the relevance of relatively new independence and past relationships with countries in the AAP region as well as the USA as a reason for the terrorist attacks. All responses had tourists as the targets for the attacks.

Students were specific about the impacts of their crisis. Responses included the number of deceased and injured victims. Some responses had the identical figures from the 2002 Bali Bombings, including the same number of total deaths (202) and total Australian deaths (88) – this indicates a pre-planned response and does show knowledge of the case study listed in the course document. Impacts discussed included: to the economy and the sociocultural elements including religious groups. Discerning students also discussed the political fall-out between Country A and its neighbours.

Responses to the crisis could have included military intervention/support, aid packages, changes to domestic or international rules/laws, and so on. In reference to the national and international responses to the crisis of the civil war, some students discussed the Australian Defence Force's involvement and taking sides with the Government of Country A. Such a response would require discussion around why the ADF would be involved and the political links that would require them to intervene. This was done with Country A being a hotspot for Australian and international tourists including, New Zealanders, Chinese and Japanese.

Some responses took the 'too early to tell line', which reduced their capacity to discuss the effectiveness of the responses. Strong answers detailed specific roles and phases of Country A's response teams, with the defence forces coordinating the immediate response within 24 hours of the event and with extra assistance coming in the first 7 days, and then longer term efforts over the following months and years. Students also mentioned specific roles for assisting countries and aid agencies ranging from forensic analysis to anti-terrorism training. Some answers outlined political differences as the reason for some neighbouring countries not assisting or providing minimal help.

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

QUESTION 7 – NATURAL NATIONAL CRISIS

There were 20 responses to this question and while there were some strong responses, many answers demonstrated a very general knowledge and understanding of Country A and its crisis. Most students chose to write about cyclones, an earthquake or a tsunami as the natural national crisis.

CRITERION 2

Communicate ideas and information

The question required students to use report format. The report format is outlined on page 8 of the [AAP315116 course document](#) and should be followed closely. Some students did not write in report format and instead chose to write a narrative or a TV news report about the crisis, simply retelling the story of a specific crisis.

Strongly written reports included the use of dot points, tables and maps to list and highlight the effects on the social, environmental and economic impacts of the natural crisis. Another point of note was the change in 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 some students had the event recently occurring and subsequently adopted a 'too early to tell' position, assessing the effectiveness of the national and international responses.

Regurgitating the entire blurb is a waste of time. Instead, this information should be used to make inferences about the level of development and associated response. Most students were able to identify Country A as a developing country but did not need to repeat the available information.

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 neighboring countries, latitude, longitude and surrounding seas (sometimes incorrectly) and then describing the event that occurred to cause the crisis.

CRITERION 4

Describe cause and effect of national crises in the Asia and Pacific region, and assess effectiveness of responses

Students needed detailed knowledge of the crisis, making specific reference to the data in the profile of Country A, including references to the location of Country A, its archipelagic nature, proximity to other nations, its ethnic makeup, its low GDI PPP, high rural population, etc.

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

Crises may have one or multiple causes. Students could explore volcanic, tectonic or climatic influences. When writing about the causes of natural national crisis on Country A, students are advised to discuss a specific crisis that has taken place, following 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.

Often students would discuss the event causing the crisis as impacting the entire country. Strong responses gave specific locations of the event having the greatest impact. Often, tsunamis, flooding and earthquakes were devastating to all of the islands of Country A. Whilst a country could share the economic and emotional pain of such an event, such events occur in specific regions and locations of countries with particular areas more directly impacted than others.

Better responses discussed environmental, economic and social effects and impacts on Country A, and realistic data was included to support examples. In contrast, several students provided death tolls as over tens of thousands in a single disaster. Discerning students identified a higher death toll with reasons such as a nighttime event, urbanized locations and use of poor-quality building materials. Lower death tolls and injuries were put down to the crisis being focussed on rural and remote locations and/or preparedness of Country A. Economic impacts were discussed, such as a destruction of resources, be it in primary, secondary or tertiary sectors. Stronger answers discussed a decline in tourist numbers and the associated flow-on effect. Secondary impacts were also present in better responses, including examples such as 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 the information required by the specific question. Unfortunately, some students did not attempt Part (b) at all.

National & international 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 to address the question. Responses to the crisis could include military support, aid packages, changes to domestic or international rules/laws, (migration, for example) and so on. Examiners expected to see analysis of the effectiveness of the national and international responses made in coping with the crisis and reasons provided for this judgment.

Because the question required students to be a part of DFAT, it narrowed the student focus of discussion. Responses that included the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) as the driver of the Australian response were stronger. Discussion that included neighbouring countries (Japan, China) and other developed countries (including New Zealand and Singapore) in addition to the Australian response showed good understanding of the nature of an international response. In addition to this the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and an array of NGOs, including the Red Cross could be of assistance to Country A's crisis. One student listed a table with donors (both national and NGO) and their amounts to Country A.

Stronger 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. Some students also referred to specific roles for assisting countries and aid agencies, ranging from technical assistance and rebuilding efforts to food and water provisions to search and rescue. Some students outlined political differences as the reason for some neighboring countries not assisting or providing minimal help.

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

The analysis of the effectiveness (of the national and international response) was the most disappointing part of student answers. Some answers stated that a particular response was effective without scrutinizing why it was so. Better answers suggested reasons why the national and international response was poor and detailed the aspects that were handled badly and why. Lack of coordination and communication were common themes for ineffective responses to the crisis.