

2023 ASSESSMENT REPORT

AUSTRALIA IN ASIA & THE PACIFIC (AAP315116)

Section A: Diversity in Physical and Human Geography

In this section both short answers 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 Question 1, and a less detailed Question 2 response. The final overall ratings on Criterion 2 and Criterion 3 reflect the holistic assessment of this section.

Question 1

This question asked students to analyse (*to examine, scrutinise, explore, review, consider in detail for the purpose of finding meaning or relationships, and identifying patterns, similarities and differences*) the diversity of landforms and geographic of one Asian nation in the AAP region.

In considering physical geography, all aspects related to the environment could have been discussed. This includes, but is not exclusive to, location (longitude and latitude), configuration (size), topography (for example: shape of land, mountains, rivers, plains, etc.), climate and characteristics, vegetation and degradation of the environments – preferably in that order so that each topic can build on the explanation for the next. For example, if the country is a north/south archipelago in the Northern Hemisphere, such as Japan, the range of climates and vegetation will reflect this or, conversely, if the country is landlocked with most being 1000 metres above sea level, this will also satisfy the need to analyse the degree of diversity. There were a range of nations chosen by students and all were relevant to the Asian region. Among the most represented were Japan, Indonesia, Philippines and India. The strongest answers looked at a range of physical features and supported their descriptions with named examples, such as rivers, mountains and statistics relating to them, citing height, as well as temperatures and rainfall for climate.

Many answers were very general. Comments such as ‘climate is very diverse’ or ‘the country is very flat’ do not add a lot to the depth of the answer. Many answers repeated these general statements throughout. A significant number of responses omitted simple facts such as the height, length, etc. mentioned above. Students must be very clear what aspects are relevant to physical geography as some included population characteristics, urban areas or agriculture which are categorised human geography. This question is one which, when related to the course content, could have been anticipated and thus prepared for in detail; unfortunately, only the best answers appeared to have done this preparation.

Question 2

This question asked students to analyse the diversity in population and ethnic structure of one Pacific nation in the AAP region.

This question, despite its appearance, could have been answered more thoroughly. Answers which discussed only religion were penalised as, although ethnicity may imply religion, they are not

interchangeable as one is genetic and the other cultural. The question required a discussion of the racial identity of the population of a Pacific nation, as well as other human characteristics. The question allowed for this through 'analyse the diversity in population and ethnic structure'. A range of countries were chosen, and students attempted to analyse their diversity. Fiji was the main country chosen to focus on along with Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. Some students wrote about New Zealand but were penalised as this is not listed as a Pacific nation in the AAP course document. Some students correctly said that many Pacific countries, such as Solomon Islands, are diverse but they were unable to describe in any further detail beyond stating that the people were both Melanesian and Polynesian ethnicity. Papua New Guinea was discussed by a significant number of students, but they were unable to do much more than state that there are many tribes, with some answers mentioning the problems this has caused and will continue to do so.

A significant number of students did not attempt the question in full and were consequently penalised. Several students focussed only on the ethnic structure to the detriment of analysing diversity of other aspects of human geography that the question allowed for. Analysis of diversity could have included population characteristics such as urban rural divide, religion, as well as population structure. Strong answers that addressed ethnic structure to the exclusion of other characteristics discussed why a high concentration of a particular ethnic group exists and the reasons behind this, such as history, migration, and domestic or international policies.

Section B: Australia's Changing Roles in the Region

Question 3: Partnerships

The majority of respondents answered this question, selecting to discuss either trade, security, aid or a combination of all three. While all approaches were acceptable, responses that focussed on one topic were able to provide greater depth of analysis. Responses to this question demonstrated a very strong awareness of engagement with course content, using a wide range of accurate facts as evidence of their conceptual understanding.

The main Asian country discussed was Indonesia (31) with a range of students selecting alternate nations: Vietnam (4), Japan (3), Cambodia (3), China (2), Singapore (1), New Zealand (1), South Korea (1), India (1), Thailand (1), Sri Lanka (1), Mongolia (1), Pakistan (1). For the Pacific, Vanuatu (13) was the most popular, followed by Papua New Guinea (7), Samoa (1) and Solomon Islands (1).

Criterion 2

Examiners were pleased to see a range of lengthy responses, using the essay format to engage with the question. Students are encouraged to be purposeful with paragraphs, focussing on a key point with concise examples. Many paragraphs were overly long resulting in lengthy narratives. Each topic sentence needs an argument, rather than an event. Effective responses grouped incidents together (e.g., 2004 Tsunami, COVID19) as opportunities for collaboration. Throughout this topic, the use of acronyms is acceptable. The first in-text citation must include both the full name and the acronym in brackets, thereafter the acronym will suffice. Acronyms do not require full stops. Spelling of plurals (in particular, countries) needs to be addressed.

Criterion 4

Examiners were pleased to see a developing sophistication in discussion of the economic significance of trade. Successful responses provided the names of exports, the financial value of trade and investments and referred to tariffs as artificial barriers. It was pleasing to see a number of trade agreements and security partnerships identified: Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA CEPA) Papua New Guinea-Australia Comprehensive Strategic and Economic Partnership (CSEP); Australia-Vietnam Enhanced Economic Engagement Strategy; Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP); The China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) and Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA). Some attempts to describe China-Australia relations were ambitious. The significance and goals of agreements needs to be clearly articulated.

Students were able to recognise the significance of security and stability within the region, providing an effective, detailed overview of the changing phases in Australia's approach to security and defence. Students both effectively provided a historical overview alongside current developments. The role of a range of intergovernmental organisations in upholding security were effectively cited: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), ASEAN, the Quad, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). Recent examples of the Aukus submarine pact and military training exercises were more effective than 16th century connections. It was pleasing to see the recognition of the importance of maritime security through initiatives such as the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS). Discussions of the Australia-Indonesia partnership provided strong recognition that close proximity to Australia results in economic interdependence and regional security. There was effective discussion of the Balibo 5, scandals, East Timor, cattle trade, Bali, Konfrontasi, Sukarno, Suharto eras, Lombok Treaty, asylum seekers and West Papua. Alongside naming dates of signing security partnerships, an analytical approach will identify how the partnership is uneven and which side may benefit more. To address Element 3, name any threats to the partnership.

There was a strong recognition of the advantages and disadvantages of different types of aid (in particular tied aid) for both the recipient and donor country. Successful responses used Sustainable Development Goals data to measure the impact. All data must be referenced. Use of demographic indicators and the Human Development Index (HDI) effectively showed the need for specific aid programs (e.g., domestic violence) and health sector partnerships (e.g., Vanuatu Women's Centre, Policing and Justice programs). It was pleasing to see discussion of how aid programs differ in various regions within the country and industry sectors. Australia's response to the Belt & Road Initiative was identified but this was often a missed opportunity for critical analysis. While there was strong recognition of the dependency on aid programs for low-income countries, stronger responses identified the rising middle class and changing nature of aid. To evaluate, students need to show how current aid programs could be improved to promote stronger partnerships within the region. Students identified that aid to the region is not costly compared to Australia's GDP. There was a strong recognition that Australia's contribution to aid, in particular emergency relief, is not often ideal or generous.

To address Element 3, future predictions, students effectively described issues in the country such as illegal fishing, rising sea levels, the role of China and future limitations in employment. A key theme in many papers was the refocus of the United States defence to Asia. The most successful answers selected particular SDGs to determine future priorities. Students should not leave future predictions for the final

paragraph; these can be woven throughout the paper, in particular through the concluding sentences of paragraphs. Many strong responses were limited by not making any future predictions.

Question 4: Immigration

This question was answered by a small number of respondents. Three papers selected Vanuatu and three papers selected Sri Lanka.

Essay responses were generally well-structured with clear topic sentences for each paragraph. It was pleasing to see students listing the influences of immigration policy within the introduction. Students are to be reminded that an analytical essay is required and therefore they should refrain from providing a narrative overview of events.

The metaphor of “immigration waves” was used successfully to explain changes over time, as was unpacking the mindset of “populate or perish”. Statistics were provided to demonstrate changes in immigration arrivals and visa policies. This data should always be referenced. Students effectively selected relevant examples to show the changing nature of immigration such as the Colombo Plan and Operation Sovereign Borders. It was pleasing to see how public opinion and Australia’s ageing population was discussed as influencing factors. Successful responses recognised that the question invited and allowed discussion pre-1901, allowing an effective historical context. In regard to Vanuatu, effective historical discussion was made to the significance of Blackbirding and the Pacific Island Labourers Act 1901. It is not necessary to describe in detail the experience of taking the dictation test. In regard to Sri Lanka, effective discussion was made on the impact of student visas and domestic events such as the Black July massacres of 1983 that triggered civil war until 2009.

To address Element 3 (Future Predictions), examiners were pleased to see strong connections made between past actions and current Australian policies. Successful responses recognised the 2022 merge of the Seasonal Workers Programme and the Pacific Labour Scheme to the current Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme (PALM). Strong connections were made to social issues such as the housing crisis. Interesting discussion was provided on the actions of and responses to climate change refugees. Some students did well to acknowledge possible future humanitarian crises. Overall, there was an effective recognition of the significance of immigration to Australia’s past and future economic and social development.

Section C: Tourism

Question 5

The most popular destinations discussed by students were Fiji (47), followed by Phuket (33), Great Barrier Reef (27), Singapore (23) and Bali (17). Less popular choices were Kyoto (8), Uluru (8), Vanuatu (6), Samoa (3), Tasmania (2), Siam Reap (1) and the Cook Islands (1).

Criterion 2

Students generally did well to use the essay format to structure their response and address the question. Some revision of essay conventions and purpose may be required. Consider the purpose and audience of the response. Students are reminded that they are providing an analytical response to a social issue and are

not writing a travel brochure to sell a destination to potential tourists. There is no need to provide travel advice. The question does not need to be restated in the introduction. While headings or labelling question parts are not required, respondents are encouraged to use the question to structure the essay format. Successful responses compared and contrasted destinations within a paragraph rather than splitting the paper into two sections.

It was pleasing to see the source of statistics referenced, including credible sources such as WTO vs Statista. Students need to be reminded that Phuket is not a city. While specific destinations and examples are required, examples (e.g., Gardens by the Bay) should not be repeated throughout the course of the essay. It is permissible to add a graph but without explanation of the data, students may waste time creating a diagram. Avoid phrases like “this essay will” by writing directly about the topic. Making statements rather than asking rhetorical questions will enable greater evaluation. Use the final “Linking” sentence of paragraphs to link the topic to the question and make predictions about future trends.

To write more concisely and more effectively, students should address the question and not spend time describing in depth various food dishes or activities. Providing definitions (e.g., tourism) is not necessary; terminology should be used in context to show understanding. To address Criteria 2 Element 4 (Terminology), students are encouraged to use the following terminology:

Instead of	Appropriate Terminology
Overcrowding	Overtourism
More or less developed (MDC, LDC)	High, middle and low income
Nations	Destinations
Good/bad	Benefit/harm
Money	Revenue
Jobs	Livelihoods
Fix	Mitigate
Western world	Globalisation

Criterion 5

- Element 1, 2 & 5: Changing Trends

Successful responses began with statistics & data as evidence of changing patterns over time. This data should be referenced (e.g., WTO 2022). Anecdotes are not required. It was pleasing to see students use phrases such as upwards shift to identify patterns in data and contrast differences in peak and low-peak seasons. Students were awarded for outlining patterns in specific indicators (e.g., occupancy rates). Some responses effectively outlined a historical overview of tourist booms in a destination over time and how this has contributed to a country’s development and global position.

Some responses showed a lack of understanding of correlation between data and the COVID19 pandemic, stating that a decrease in visitor numbers was caused by COVID restrictions being lifted. Students need to recognise that the pandemic caused a temporary decline in tourism numbers and those numbers are now returning to pre-Covid levels. More effective answers outlined the recovery from this temporary decline and the current return to pre-pandemic levels.

It was positive to see an awareness of the interconnectedness of the region (for instance, demonstrating how school holidays in neighbouring countries increased arrivals). Students were awarded for describing trends of travel within the region (e.g., increase of Indian tourists) and recognising that Australians are not the largest tourist market to these destinations. Successful responses recognised the need for destinations with the region to compete for new markets.

The 5 As continue to be an effective way to justify changing patterns in trends. Successful responses identified how diversity in attractions, accommodation, amenities, affordability and accessibility (e.g., Sarasin Bridge to Phuket) impacted data patterns. If Singapore is selected, its role as a transit destination must also be acknowledged.

- Element 4: Economic Impacts

Students are reminded to ensure their response reflects the topic of the question. Economic impacts were required. Social impacts such as a loss of traditional culture and traffic congestion were not relevant. Any financial burdens from harming or economic benefits from protecting the environment must be specifically stated.

Stronger topics discussed were the impact on employment; cost of living and house prices; inflation; impact of leakage on GDP; economic stability; infrastructure spending and development; small business opportunities; exchange rates; tourism receipts; wage rate (especially increase in wages for specialist skills post-pandemic); economic sectors; seasonal employment; multiplier effect. Providing data regarding lost revenue strengthened responses. It was pleasing to see the specific currency of destinations named.

Even stronger responses recognised the range of employment created from tourism and the reliance of a migrant workforce to fill roles. Students could provide an average income level over time as evidence of a positive impact of employment. It was pleasing to see students provide data on the decline in revenue in specific destinations and cite figures regarding cruise ship arrivals.

The relevance of gambling and Staged Authenticity was not adequately explained. Support groups for gamblers was not relevant. Responses should consider examining the drain on resources (such as public transport) rather than personal difficulties for locals (e.g., cars have to drive slowly). Any information that provides a more specific response (e.g., hotel chains), place names (e.g., Kallang River) and ethnic groups and cultures (e.g., Singapore Peranakans) will advantage a student.

- Element 3: Management Practices

A range of effective management practices were identified: applying for UNESCO heritage listing allows for charges to entry fees; increasing tax on landowners; land ownership laws; tourist specific tariffs and incentives for non-tourism-based businesses.

Successful responses provided solutions based on federal government policies (e.g., restrictions of foreign ownership) rather than business practices (e.g., customer brochures, altering signage, less invasive footwear). Local government policies such as incentives for entrepreneurs who use local products should also be considered.

While examples such as Fijian government allowing early access to superannuation were commendable, policies needed to be broader than simply a response to the COVID19 pandemic. Discussions regarding the Phuket Sandbox program provided an interesting approach to short-term actions to boost arrivals. Marketing strategies to encourage tourists to return after COVID restrictions (e.g., Discover Singapore Campaign) did not recognise the role that tourism plays in the economy. Controlling the spread of the virus is not an economic management strategy. Similarly, investing in new activities and attractions is not a solution for tourism dependency. Responses to the pandemic need to be effectively coupled with long-term policies such as reduction in tour group sizes.

Initiatives discussed such as the Thai We Travel Together subsidy recognised that governments needed to invest in tourism rather than relying on overseas investors. Similarly, strong responses investigated government policies to retain domestic employment and overcome reliance on migrant labour. Other answers effectively outlined shifts in government policy to promote ecotourism. If discussing the implementation of a Code of Conduct, reasons why this is valuable need to be provided.

Overall, there was a strong awareness of the reliance on tourism for economic growth. Students are urged to conclude their responses with stronger evaluation on the destination's dependency on tourism and how level of development enables economic resilience. Stronger responses took reliance on tourism revenue as a theme and recognised that tourism revenue can assist governments to diversify and invest in a range of other industries (e.g., establishing Marine Protected Areas to preserve fishing). Students should comment on the issue rather than providing a summary of the essay.

Section D: National Responses to Crises

Question 6: Man-Made National Crisis

This question was to be written in report format on behalf of a non-government organisation which was given access to Country A, in order to deliver help and support the government of Country A following a man-made crisis. Three parts of this report were to be followed to answer the question adequately: description of the nature of the crisis and its causes, an account of the kind of support given to Country A by the NGO, and an assessment of the difficulties faced in Country A.

Nearly all students chose to discuss the impacts of a terror attack. The standard of the answers to this question was generally good and some were excellent. 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.

Report format **MUST 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 in the AAP315116 course

document and should be followed closely. Many students did not opt to use a map or diagrams as part of report writing.

Many answers for this report were based on the crisis mirroring a terrorist attack by religious factions within Country A. A high number of students based their answers on previous terrorist attacks that have occurred. A terrorist attack that was used frequently to base responses on was the Bali bombings of 2002. Some of these responses included discussion of terrorists targeting beach nightclubs in Country A. This shows little application of knowledge and understanding of the hypothetical country being in the located area as well as it being a land locked country in an Islamic dominated area of the region. Some students even had the death toll as the same as the 2002 Bali bombings including the number of Australians killed. Many students also had stated that tourists were a target of the terrorist attacks not taking into consideration the political volatility of this area of South Asia being unreceptive to tourists en masse.

Despite the shortcomings of the man-made crises largely being focussed on terrorist attacks (which are completely plausible given the history of the location of Country A) one pleasing aspect of these answers was the response given by the NGO, the international community, and Country A. References were often made back to the data provided in the hypothetical blurb and making judgments about a response from the perspective of a less developed country such as Country A's status. Strong answers had provided some difficulties in providing an effective response and giving reasons such as political interference by Country A's government towards an external NGO. NGOs that were commonly referred to were the Red Cross or Red Crescent and there were a smattering of UN agencies also used.

Question 7: Natural National Crisis

This question was the same as Question 6. However, the application of it refers to a natural national crisis rather than a man-made crisis.

Many respondents opted for an earthquake as the natural crisis event. Surprisingly, many students opted for a natural crisis event being a cyclone or a tsunami as a result of an earthquake. Given that Country A is a landlocked nation and lack of proximity to the tropics and no possession of a coastline, it is not plausible for a cyclone or tsunami to be considered a natural hazard event in this location. This glaring error demonstrated that many students opted for a one size fits all response and highlights a distinct lack of preparation for the hypothetical to be in any location in the AAP region. The strength of this assessment task is the application of knowledge and understanding rather than regurgitation of such. A handful of students opted for floods.

The more pleasing responses to this question addressed all three parts of the question. Students considered tectonic causes or climatic influences for the causes of the crisis depicted. In some cases, students discussed one specific direct cause followed by multiple indirect causes of the crisis. The best responses used these indirect and direct causes showing detailed knowledge of the crisis with specific reference to the data in profile of Country A. References to Country A's location, proximity to other nations, ethnic makeup, it's low GDI PPP and high rural population demonstrated excellent understanding of the country and its likely response.

Generally, responses made the observation that Country A's response to the crisis was less than effective. Assistance from the international community, including neighbouring friendly countries and NGOs often came in the form of aid packages (with a table of donor, value and objectives shown in good answers), and often were focussed only on short term impacts. Stronger responses would have required not only the short-term impacts and responses but also long-term impacts and responses to those as well. Aid agencies that were referred to included the Red Cross, the Red Crescent, World Vision and a variety of UN agencies.

The assessment of the response generally followed the path of not being particularly organised and sometimes inadequate in assisting those citizens of Country A and a reliance on the international community, including Australia, Japan, India and China assisting.

Students, again this year, focussed largely on the entirety of Country A being impacted by the natural hazard event. Students in the future that opt to attempt this question and indeed Question 6 should focus on keeping the event local rather than applying all the consequences to the entire country. Obviously, there are impacts, such as economic, but in a country the size of Country A, immediate threats to human safety, infrastructure, indirect impacts and the environment should be localised.