

# 2024 ASSESSMENT REPORT

## AAP315116 AUSTRALIA IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

### General Comments

The 2024 AAP exam demonstrated students' developing appreciation and respect for the social, cultural and geographical diversity of the Australia, Asia and Pacific region. High-achieving students substantiated general observations with subject-specific terminology and specialised examples from selected case studies. Weaker responses tended to rely on general knowledge or a few obscure facts recalled from class participation. Teachers are encouraged to focus on analysing issues from past, present and future perspectives and identify practical policy solutions to problems.

### Written Component

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

##### General comments

The purpose of this section is to assess the physical and human geography of Asian and Pacific nations, not describe their attractive elements to potential tourists.

##### Question 1 – Physical Geography Characteristics

Candidates selected Fiji (30), Papua New Guinea (10), Solomon Islands (6), Samoa (3), Vanuatu (2), New Caledonia (1), Japan (1), East Timor (1) and Indonesia (1). As per Appendix A in the Course Guide, Japan and Indonesia are considered Asian countries.

Answers needed to correctly identify a Pacific nation and demonstrate detailed knowledge of aspects of landforms (mountains, rivers, and so on) and other elements of geography (climatic features, flora, etc.) in the identified nation. Answers should demonstrate that these geographical features are diverse. Better answers will address the term 'assess'. This may lead students to consider reasons behind the diversity (or lack thereof) of the physical geography, including location, (changing) climate, volcanic activity and so on. Students could consider the range and scale of the diversity of physical geography; this may also vary from area to area within the nation.

##### Question 2 – Human Geography Characteristics

Candidates discussed Japan (16), Indonesia (7), China (5), Vietnam (5), India (4), Nepal (4), Bangladesh (3), Taiwan (2), Pakistan (1), Mongolia (1), Bhutan (1), Singapore (1), Cambodia (1) and Laos (1).

Answers needed to correctly identify the Asian nation and address the diversity of the population and ethnic structure of the nation. Areas of diversity that could have been considered were the spread of population across the nation, demographic elements, the range and size of ethnic

groups, and so on. An assessment should have been made according to the range and scale of the diversity and suggest reasons behind this: history, migration, domestic and international policies and so on. Some reference to change and continuity could be considered. Diversity should also have been considered across the area of the nation; that is, higher concentrations of a particular ethnic group, and the reasons behind this. Examiners would like to see discussion of the specific indigenous peoples of each nation.

## Section B – Australia’s Changing Roles in the Region: Partnerships or Immigration

### General comments

Candidates were only required to answer one (1) question in this section.

### Question 3 – Partnerships (Trade, Security and Aid)

21 candidates answered this question selecting Indonesia as the case study. This question marks something of a departure from previous structures to this question; that is, the use of a stimulus to direct the discussion in a more specific direction. It asks students to form opinions about the quotation in the light of their knowledge and understanding of the partnership(s) they have studied. Answers therefore should attempt to address the quotation in some way or another.

The first part of the question is asking students to consider the history of the partnership (up to the present. They will demonstrate opinions on the quality of the relationship and how ‘transparent’ (open, honest) the relationship has been and if it is built on ‘trust’ (how fair, equitable), using data and evidence to support their views.

Part b) is the ‘what if’ aspect of the exam. Here students may consider improvements to the kinds of aspects raised in part (a); better diplomatic ties, greater accountability and vigilance of the partnership, stronger commitments to the international arrangements/agreements/treaties/declarations that are already in place, and so on.

Discussing all three topics (trade, security and aid) did not allow candidates to discuss issues in appropriate depth. At least 4-5 examples for each topic should be provided. Responses should not be too optimistic about partnerships and avoid phrases like “one of the best partnerships in the world” and “friends”.

### Question 4 – Immigration

34 candidates answered this question. Countries selected included Vietnam (13), India (6), China (5), Nepal (5) Japan (3), Vanuatu (1) and Fiji (1).

This question marks something of a departure from previous structures to this question; that is, the use of a stimulus to direct the discussion in a more specific direction. It asks students to form opinions about the quotation in the light of their knowledge and understanding of the relationship though immigration that has been forged between Australia and their chosen nation they have studied. A timeline for this answer is not provided and so students have the freedom to consider key events over their chosen time frame. However, answers should address the relevant history and significant events between the two nations. Answers should attempt to show an

understanding of the basic tenets of the quotation: ‘gain’ (economic, cultural, demographic, and so on) and ‘opportunity’ (economic, benefits, family unification, safety, etc). Part (b) of the essay needs to address the ‘what it’ aspect of the exam, taking into consideration issues such as: greater clarity and commitment to the goals of immigration for both nations; greater scrutiny of policies and practices regarding racism/discrimination, etc., further education of the community regarding the role and purpose of immigration; greater funding commitment to catering for differentiated needs in schooling, adult education and so on.

Many candidates demonstrated recollection of interesting facts rather than providing specific examples relevant to the topic. Discussion should focus on the impact of the Paris Peace Conference and Hughes’ opposition of Japan’s position on racial equality rather than making general statements regarding the inadequacy of the Treaty of Versailles. Detailed recount of Japan’s movements during World War 2 or British colonisation of India in the 1700s is not relevant. The bombing of Darwin should not be confused with the bombing of Pearl Harbour. Focussing on the past in too much detail meant that opportunities to discuss immigration patterns from the 1980s onwards were not taken. It is permissible to provide a short overview of why groups such as Nepalese did not migrate earlier and then to focus on current data pattern in depth. Candidates do not need to cover every timeline event of migration since Australia’s settlement if information does not enable adequate discussion.

While most candidates effectively acknowledge the shift in attitudes to migrants post-1901, a lot of irrelevant discussion was made regarding general changes in immigration policies. Changes in policies such as the *Immigration Restriction Act* were a result of growing pressure to change the approach to immigration, not a direct cause of future developments. The term “waves of immigration” should be used to show patterns over time. Candidates who discussed current affairs and policies were rewarded. China is not a Less Developed Country. To ensure consistency of data, refer to government sources such as ABS or Department of Home Affairs.

## Section C – Tourism in the Australia, Asia and Pacific Region

### General comments

Students demonstrated the most success in this section. Destinations chosen by students included Bali, Phuket, Kyoto, Singapore, Uluru, the Great Barrier Reef, New Caledonia, Vanuatu and the Tasman Peninsula. An introductory paragraph on general tourism trends is not required. Discussing both destinations for part b and c limited the ability of candidates to analyse in required depth.

### Question 5

Answers needed to compare two specific tourist destinations in terms of why tourists would choose to visit them. The basis for the comparison might lie in areas such as leisure, eco-tourism, adventure tourism, volunteer tourism, sports tourism, as well considerations to do with cost, distance from home, accessibility, ease of travel and so on. There may also be personal considerations such as age, past experience, cultural ties, wealth, etc. Issues of comparison might be the growth in popularity of certain kinds of tourism (environmental tourism, extreme sports, philanthropic tourism, etc). The key skill here is to ‘compare’, and by finding effective ways, most students could do this to varying degrees.

Students needed to focus on society and culture in the second part of the question, choosing one of the destinations referred to in the first part of the question and exploring how the cultural/social status of the destination has been affected. This means more than just a description of effects (both positive and negative), but an analysis of these effects. Consideration could be given to the promotion/disintegration of culture and art, a re-awakening/diminution of culture and social custom, a greater need to protect culture and social customs/a loss of focus on culture, language, etc. The analysis could investigate causes of the effects, what it is about the nature of the tourism that is making the most marked effects, (globalisation, conspicuous consumption, FOMO, and so on).

The third part of the question asks about the kinds of measures that could address the negative effects on the culture and society of tourism. This could have included greater regulation within the country (restrictions to temple entry, dress regulations, restricting numbers of tourists to certain areas, enforcing codes of conduct) and attempting to work with the governments of the countries from which the tourists are coming (emphasis on pre-visit education/advice, more information on tourism sites, greater work with tourist bureaus/businesses, etc.).

## Section D – National Responses to Crises

### General comments

Candidates were only required to answer one (1) question in this section.

### Question 6 – Man-Made National Crisis

Answers needed to address all three parts of the question. The layout of the question allowed students to set out their report easily if they follow the three parts. The question allowed students to consider causes of the crisis such as: a military coup, aggressive intervention by a neighbouring power, internal domestic issues, ethnic tensions, climate change, an industrial accident, etc. One student ineffectively answered question 6 on a man-made disaster, inventing “one of the world’s largest nuclear disasters”, which became a disaster due to “laziness”. In some cases, these crises may have one cause or have multiple causes. Effects may include the mass movement of population, dislocation and associated trauma, health and welfare issues, fear. Better responses will show detailed knowledge of the crisis making specific reference to the data in the profile of Country A. The use of the data may include references to the location of Country A, its geographical nature, proximity to its neighbouring country, its ethnic makeup, its low GDI PPP, high rural population, etc. Note the question is asking for a brief description of the causes and effects.

As well as discussing the causes and effects of the crisis, students needed to outline the responses (both immediate and ongoing) that the Australian Government could make to address the crisis. Such responses could have taken the form of aid packages, (food, medicines), supplying expert personnel, working with media to raise awareness, arguing for a role for the UN, and so on.

In part (c) students should have made an assessment of the effectiveness of the Australian Government’s response in Country A. This may include the timeliness of the response, the appropriateness of the aid, etc., cultural and political sensibilities, issues which may be hampering

the effectiveness of the response: terrain, transport issues to the islands, other international priorities.

## Question 7 – Natural National Crisis

Answers needed to address all three parts of the question. The layout of the question allowed students to set out their report easily if they followed the three parts. The question asked students to consider crises such as: an earthquake, flooding, drought, famine, etc., and what might have caused the crisis. Students may have considered volcanic, tectonic or climatic influences. In some cases, these crises may have one specific cause or have multiple causes. Effects may include the mass movement of population, dislocation and associated trauma, health and welfare issues, fear. Better responses showed detailed knowledge of the crisis making specific reference to the data in the profile of Country A. The use of the data may include references to the physical location of Country A, issues arising from the physical make up of Country A (islands and a mainland section) its low GDI PPP, high rural population, etc.

As well as discussing the causes and effects of the crisis, students needed to outline the responses (both immediate and ongoing) that the Australian Government could make to address the crisis. Such responses may take the form of aid packages, (food, medicines), supplying expert personnel, working with media to raise awareness, arguing for a role for the UN, and so on.

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## Criterion 2: Communicate ideas and information

Questions divided into part a, b and c should be answered as one complete essay; labelling each part is not required.

Subject-specific terminology was quite weak in responses that scored low on C2. Areas are not “crowded” but “dense”. Specialised terminology such as push and pull factors, service roles, labour market, remittances and liberalising economy were rewarded. The name of the course “Australia in Asia and the Pacific” seems to have confused a few candidates who claimed a destination was in the “Asia and the Pacific region” rather than the Asia-Pacific, or indeed simply “in Asia” or “in the Pacific”. Candidates should show understanding of terminology by using words in context rather than providing a formal definition.

Similarly, using key words of the question was more effective than writing out the prompt quote in full. Repeatedly including the quote will not provide extra marks. High-achieving students critically analysed the prompt quote, contending the conclusion. Incorporating comparative language (e.g., although, regardless) enables deeper analysis. Rhetorical questions should not be included within introductions and conclusions. Spelling appeared to have deteriorated with many repeated mistakes in key words such as Asia, vegetation and archipelago. Capital letters must be used for oceans and countries. Examiners would like to see candidates revise the use of possessive apostrophes.

Manipulation of essay conventions (topic sentences, concluding sentences, thesis statements) enabled candidates to provide greater analysis of questions. Paragraphs should be used in all sections. Clear topic sentences introducing the purpose of a paragraph are useful to achieve logical flow. Topic sentences should state an argument or reason rather than a definition. The final sentence of each paragraph should provide an evaluation of the topic sentence; do not link to the next paragraph. To progress across the criteria standards, “analysing and explaining” involves giving reasons why trends exist or events occur. There was an overreliance on a narrative structure to describe what happened in the past. Organising paragraphs by patterns rather than events enabled an analytical evaluation of the issues.

Examiners were pleased to see many candidates incorporate in-text referencing. While Britannica was a common source, data sets from multilateral organisations such as the United Nations, World Bank, World Tourism Organisation may be more credible.

### Criterion 3: Describe and assess physical and human geography of the Australia, Asia and Pacific region

While synonyms are encouraged, there is no need to define the term diversity. India and China are not less developed countries; recognition must be made of wealth disparity, emerging middle class and income inequality within countries.

Stronger physical geography responses provided specific data such as the amount of volcanoes and percentage that are active. Naming of specific islands, regions, soil types, vegetation zones, river systems and tectonic plates strengthened responses. Stronger responses included terms such as equatorial location, height above sea level (not “tall” mountains). It was pleasing to see many candidates describe how human activity and climate change alters the environment (for instance rainforest coverage). Higher achieving students were able to describe the purpose of features such as mangroves and identify management practices to maintain physical diversity. Weaker responses listed physical geography without considering the impact upon culture. Generalisations must be supported with specific examples. Fiji is a country but not a single island.

Common human geography themes discussed were urbanisation, ageing population, ethnic structure and religion. Examiners were pleased to see indicators such as ethnic fractionalisation score used to measure diversity. The significance of indicators such as the Happiness Index and the patterns within population pyramids must be explained. The ethnic diversity in Japan (e.g., Ainu, Brazilians, Koreans) was often ignored. Spelling of ethnic groups must be correct (for instance, Indonesia Sundanese not Sudanese). Marks are not given for listing groups from other countries that have recently migrated to the country. More effective responses will suggest solutions to overcoming issues and project future population and urbanisation trends (see Element 4).

## Criterion 4: Describe and assess Australia's changing relations with nations in the Asia-Pacific region in the areas of partnerships or migration

For Question 3, examiners were looking for answers that included defence/security agreements, treaties, multilateral organisations (e.g., ASEAN) as well as statistics for the value of aid/trade.

Discussions of the Australia-Indonesia partnership provided strong recognition of the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA CEPA). Acknowledgement should be made that the Lombok Treaty was signed in 2006 and updated by Joint Understanding in 2014. The significance of this treaty (that is, to refrain from interference with territorial disputes) should be discussed. Some reference was made to the Balibo 5, scandals, cattle trade, Bali, Konfrontasi, AUKUS, phone tapping scandals, Timor Gap Treaty, and e-commerce. When discussing, trade, industries and commodities should be named and statistics of dollar value for exports/imports provided.

A range of security responses recognised the role of military exercises and described Australia's involvement with East Timor. It was pleasing to see candidates make use of frameworks such as Aid Investment Plans to evaluate whether or not Australia achieves their objectives. Future issues such as manufacturing working conditions and climate ethics were appropriately discussed.

In regards to immigration, responses that examined push and pull drivers from an original perspective (e.g., restrictions within Asian countries that may prevent migration) were rewarded. Stronger answers acknowledged the autonomy of migrants to contribute over time to Australia's economic development in industries such as agriculture, mining, construction, and, more recently, IT, aged care, engineering and health. It was pleasing to see some candidates consider the impact upon Australia when groups of migrants returned home and address topical issues such as housing and the cost of living crisis. Insightful discussion was provided on underemployment of migrants with tertiary qualifications and wage theft. In regards to Australia's birth rate, a few candidates did well to recognise that the notion of "populate or perish" may be just as true in 2024 as in 1945.

Stronger candidates organised paragraphs by patterns such as skilled migrants, restrictive laws, education, wars and crises and supported observations with specific statistical data. Examiners would like to see candidates providing a figure of immigration trends over time and explaining how policy decisions impacted peaks and troughs. It was pleasing to see comments on how these policy decisions either benefitted or harmed regional partnerships. Candidates were rewarded for identifying the social, economic and cultural gains of immigration as well as recognising flaws in government policies. Discussion of the impact of visa policies (e.g., 476 visas, MATES, Pacific Engagement Visa) provided opportunities to make logical, reasoned predictions about Australia's future role in the region. Strong answers provided practical recommendations to improve Australia's immigration policy.

## Criterion 5: Describe and assess tourism and its impact in the Australia, Asia and Pacific region

This section should not read like travel journalism/advertisements. Amenities don't "draw the eye of tourists", but "attract them" to the destination. Candidates must state the pattern of tourism trends and support with examples. Having concise vocabulary/terms to identify trends through terms such as "cultural tourism", "eco-tourism", etc., or identifying broader demographic groups who are attracted in terms of age, nationality, and income is useful. Some explanations for different reasons why tourists might travel to two different destinations became long-winded and bogged down in minutia of tea ceremonies versus craft workshops, rather than demonstrating awareness of larger trends. Some candidates seemed unprepared to draw distinctions when comparing reasons why tourists visit two different destinations.

A comparison was asked for within the question, and an ideal comparison involves identifying differences as well as similarities. "People come here because it is cheaper than Europe" may be true, and world-wide trends can be mentioned, but comparisons identifying some level of diversity within the Asia-Pacific region are particularly appropriate for this course and this year's given question.

The term "rich culture" is vague, and when not followed by further explanation, claims that a nation has a "rich" culture did not prove knowledge. Phuket is not a "wondrous yet small nation", it is a city and capital of Thailand's "Phuket province". At the same time, cultural "stuff" is an inappropriate term to describe what a country has to offer tourists. More detail than that is necessary.

Statistics used to provide evidence for a trend – demonstrating to the extent to which a trend is significant and real – are rewarded. Statistics were used very effectively when destinations were compared on the same metric (to highlight differences between two destinations), or when statistics were used to show changes in one destination across time. This effectively avoids the wondering "is that really a big/significant number?" to demonstrate trends and illuminate meaningful comparison.

Some candidates did not follow part b of the question and attempted discussion on both destinations and in some cases, three destinations (one from each list). In addition some students chose to discuss the environmental and economic impacts to the detriment of the social/cultural aspect asked of them. This judgement demonstrated that some students wrote prepared responses ignoring the nature of the question.

By discussing two countries when answering the management section of the question they did not have time to provide sufficient depth. References to specific initiatives, such as the "Phuket Sandbox Campaign" to mitigate the effect of COVID-19 on the tourism industry were rewarded as part of answers to the second and third part of the question. Focus on policies and trends of the last 10 years are more relevant to this course than discussing the history of destinations. In some cases, time was spent explaining travel to the destination more than 100 years ago.

## Criterion 6: Describe cause and effect of national crises in the Asia and Pacific region, and assess effectiveness of responses

Report writing format is required to complete this section of the exam and overall students successfully adhered to the format as listed in the “Written Text Formats” within the course guide, including diagrams and tables to assist discussion. Weaker responses are still not providing a title or using subheadings. Do not begin a report by writing “I am writing a report”, “I have been asked to write a report”, or “a report will be written”. This is a formal report, not a narrative or opinion piece where “I” is appropriate, and future tense is also not appropriate for a report which has been written by the time a candidate has finished writing. It was generally not helpful for students to draw maps of the disaster zone, as most did not contain new information not already present in the provided map. Graphs are most effective if both axes are labelled. While dot pointing is part of report writing, the whole report should not appear as dot points.

Reference must be made to the development level of the country (high, middle and low income) and how the level of development may impact assistance required. Good use of the data included references to the physical location of Country A including neighbouring countries with Indonesia being identified, issues arising from the physical make up of Country A (islands and a mainland section) its low GDI PPP, high rural population with effects of the crisis on employment in the primary industry and impact on food supply, etc. Repeating information from the table provided without adding evaluation or indicating why the data is significant or links to a trend is not productive. Adding “extremely”, “completely destroyed” or “devastating” to every descriptive sentence is neither formal nor productive. Avoiding vague descriptive words that don’t have an objective meaning is best. Making sweeping statements about effects is also not recommended, and nuance is rewarded. “Affecting” or “impacting” is more appropriate than “devastating”.

Better responses included discussion around both direct and indirect effects/impacts of the crisis. Effects included the mass movement of population, dislocation and associated trauma, health and welfare issues, fear. Better responses showed detailed knowledge of the crisis making specific reference to the data in the profile of Country A and having a proportionate event taking place. A few responses referred to categories of cyclones/typhoons, magnitude of earthquake and where applicable, size of tsunami waves. Some responses showed a lack of understanding of a link between the size of an earthquake and the height of tsunami waves without qualifying why a low magnitude earthquake would cause significant tsunami wave height and subsequent destruction.

There is little benefit of placing a disaster 20 years in the past if not providing evaluation of long-term effects. While analysing a crisis that occurred 20 years ago provides valuable insight into long-term effects, in an exam situation the date of the crisis should only be set 3-4 years maximum in the past. Very few responses considered effects beyond one year on from the disaster, including those who chose to set a disaster 20 years in the past.

Geopolitical implications of receiving aid were relevant when included. Some students included the DRR acronym in their introduction but did not provide evaluation or recommendations to show a deeper understanding of the principles of risk reduction beyond the acronym. Simply recommending “be better prepared” does not show understanding.

As well as discussing the causes and effects of the crisis, students outlined the responses (both immediate and ongoing) that the Australian Government (or incorrectly, the UN and other countries contributions to the detriment of discussing Australia's role as the question asked) made to address the crisis. Responses ranged in taking the form of aid packages, (water, food, medicines etc), supplying expert personnel and technical assistance, working with media to raise awareness, arguing for a role for the UN or Asian Development Bank, and so on. Australia's response to the crisis must be discussed in comparison to the response of other nations within the region. Explaining a whole raft of challenges or without indicating WHY challenges were present (or in some cases, what led to success) shows shallow understanding of the course. "Good", "bad", "fast" and "slow" are also not meaningful explanations and evaluations of how a recovery effort proceeded.

Part C of the question was variable in its completion. Many responses ignored the nature of the question and discussed in detail, the social, economic and environmental effects of the crisis in a lot of detail at the expense of addressing the Australian Government's response or the assessment of the effectiveness of it. This demonstrated that some students went into this question with a prepared 'one size fits all' all response. Some students discussed the reasons impacting the effectiveness while others stated that Australia's response was great or poor without specifying why. Some other responses included an integrated response from Australia and other countries such as neighbouring Indonesia and Singapore. Ensuring that an assessment of the success/lack thereof of the response is done – at all – is essential for success against C6. Much of the successful evaluation came through recommending meaningful future actions to mitigate disaster. Ensure that recommendations for future disaster mitigation – if provided – align with addressing challenges previously described, in order to achieve whole-of-report coherence.