

Australia in World Affairs 2016–2020

A Return to Great-Power Rivalry

Between 2016 and 2020 Australia's foreign and security policies were significantly affected by profound changes in geopolitics and geoeconomics, particularly as great-power competition re-emerged between the United States and China. *Australia in World Affairs 2016–2020: A Return to Great-Power Rivalry* examines Australia's engagement on the international stage in light of these events.

The 13th volume in the *Australia in World Affairs* series, this text builds on the history of Australia's foreign policy covered in other volumes to identify patterns of continuity and change. It catalogues the key developments in this period of world history from an Australian perspective. Organised thematically, chapters cover Australia's foreign policy response to climate change, Australia's strengthened ties to the Indo-Pacific region, and its security interests in South-East Asia. Australia's increasing security dependence on the United States in an age of great-power rivalry is evident throughout.

Written by a team of highly respected Australian experts, *Australia in World Affairs 2016–2020* offers clear coverage of Australia's contribution to world affairs in this five-year period and will appeal to specialists, researchers and students alike.

The **Australian Institute of International Affairs** was established in 1933 as an independent non-political body to promote interest in and understanding of international affairs.

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Edited by Baogang He , David Hundt , Danielle Chubb
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**EDITED BY BAOGANG HE, DAVID HUNDT AND
DANIELLE CHUBB**



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Preface

This volume builds on a venerable tradition, the *Australia in World Affairs* (AiWA) series, which the Australian Institute for International Affairs has sponsored since 1955. In keeping with that tradition, the book's primary goal is to provide a definitive account of Australia's engagement in world affairs during the five years from 2016 to 2020. It does so by cataloguing and analysing the key developments in this momentous period in world history, which began with the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom, Australia's deepening of its ties to the Indo-Pacific region through the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and the election of Donald Trump in the United States, and which ended with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Australia's embroilment in a trade war with China, and Trump's replacement as US president by Joe Biden.

The chapters in this volume speak primarily to the past five years while simultaneously drawing on past volumes to identify patterns of continuity and change. When taken in their entirety, one clear theme stands out: Australia's increasing security dependence on the United States in an age of great-power rivalry. This volume dissects Australian responses to and perspectives on these events and others in the five years under review, focusing on Canberra's response to the continuing rise of China. It analyses the domestic politics of foreign policy-making in Australia and the factors that influence it before proceeding to analyse Australian engagement into various subfields, such as security, economy and politics, at the global and regional (Asia/Indo-Pacific) levels.

It was always going to be a challenge to do justice to all these events and processes in sufficient breadth and depth, so one of our tasks as editors was to decide which topics would and would not be covered. We had intended to include stand-alone chapters on such topics as Australia's involvement in debates about human rights, its engagement with the United Nations more broadly, and the politics of international and regional trade agreements, but it was not possible to include such chapters, in part due to the very real constraints that the COVID-19 pandemic placed on the ability of some would-be contributors to complete their work. While some absences can therefore be explained by forces beyond our control, others were due to decisions by the editors. Readers of previous volumes of *Australia in World Affairs* will, for instance, notice that there are no chapters devoted to specific bilateral relationships, such as with the United States and China. In keeping with our commitment to a thematic structure, we have ensured that all these important topics are covered to some degree in the 13 chapters that follow.

The editors are grateful to the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Deakin University for its support for our work on this project. We also wish to thank the Australian Institute for International Affairs for its support for the production of the volume. We owe special thanks to Tom Barber for providing literature reviews and summaries of previous volumes for each chapter. The editors are grateful to the three anonymous peer reviewers, each of whom provided tremendously valuable feedback on an earlier version of the manuscript. Finally, we are immensely grateful to all the contributors for producing such fine work under extremely trying conditions during

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2020 and 2021. Despite the many and varied challenges of the COVID-19 era, especially, delaying the publication for two to three years, we believe this volume is something that will be valuable to all students of Australia’s engagement with the world.

David Hundt

Danielle Chubb

Baogang He

Deakin University, Melbourne, 2024

About the AIIA

The Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA) is an independent, non-profit organisation promoting interest in and understanding of international affairs in Australia. It provides a forum for discussion and debate but does not develop or promote its own institutional views. Each year, the AIIA stages more than 200 public and specialist lectures, seminars and other events around Australia. It also sponsors leading research and publications, including the *Australian Journal of International Affairs* and the blog *Australian Outlook*. Established in New South Wales in 1924, and in Victoria in 1925 as branches of London's Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), the AIIA is the only nationwide organisation of its kind in Australia and has been recognised as one of the leading think tanks in South-East Asia. It is financed by members' contributions, a small government subvention and tax-deductible donations from individuals and businesses. For further information, contact (02) 6282 2133 or visit internationalaffairs.org.au.

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international interdisciplinary project on population movements across Asia and the Pacific Islands with a focus on migration estimation in instances where data are inadequate or missing.

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Abbreviations

ADF	Australian Defence Force
AES	Australian Election Study
AI	artificial intelligence
AIFFP	Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand and United States
APc	Asia-Pacific community
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APS	Australian Public Service
APSC	Australian Public Service Commission
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
ASIO	Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
ASPI	Australian Strategic Policy Institute
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
ChAFTA	China-Australia Free Trade Agreement
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CoP	Conference of the Parties
CPC	Communist Party of China
CPTPP	Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership
CSP	Comprehensive Strategic Partnership
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DSUFSP	Defence Strategic Update and Force Structure Plan
DWP	Defence White Paper
EIDs	emerging infectious diseases
FITS	<i>Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018</i> (Cth)
FOIP	Free and Open Indo-Pacific
FONOPs	Freedom of Navigation Operations
FPDA	Five Power Defence Arrangements
FPWP	Foreign Policy White Paper
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
ICBM	Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IONS	Indian Ocean Naval Symposium
IORA	Indian Ocean Regional Association
MOU	memorandum of understanding
NAP	national action plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEG	National Energy Guarantee

Abbreviations

NGO	non-government organisation
NSC	National Security Committee of Cabinet
PCA	Permanent Court of Arbitration
PCR	polymerase chain reaction
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
PMO	Prime Minister’s Office
PPE	personal protective equipment
PRC	People’s Republic of China
‘Quad, the’	Quadrilateral Dialogue/Quadrilateral Security Initiative
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
SAFTA	Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USSC	University of Sydney United States Studies Centre
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization
WIL	Women in Leadership
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
WTO	World Trade Organization