A STRONGER ECONOMY
A STRONGER AUSTRALIA

THE HOWARD GOVERNMENT
ELECTION 2004 POLICY

SECURING AUSTRALIA’S INTERESTS
# Securing Australia’s Interests

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Australia is a liberal democracy with a proud commitment to political and economic freedom. The Coalition Government’s foreign policy rests on a clear understanding of the fundamental values of the Australian people, the role they wish us to play in international relations and what they want our country to stand for.

The Coalition’s approach to international affairs is characterised by a realistic grasp of how the world works, of the strategic circumstances that define our times, and of Australia’s place in the international system.

Australia has a strong and unique identity and a distinctive culture. We respond confidently to the challenges and opportunities of globalisation.

Australia’s interests are global in nature and not always defined by geography. We are a Western country located in the Asia-Pacific region, with close ties and affinities with North America and Europe and active engagement throughout Asia. Under the Coalition Government, Australia is playing a forward-looking role in world affairs while ensuring national security and prosperity.

Australia faces an uncertain world. The threat of terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and failed and failing states are the key foreign policy challenges of our time. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the United States and 12 October 2002 in Bali were defining events for Australia and the world. These events changed Australia’s security environment in significant ways.

At the same time, traditional security concerns remain. The Asia-Pacific region is still home to eight of the world’s ten largest armies and, after the Middle East, the world’s three most volatile flashpoints - the Taiwan Strait, the Korean peninsula and Kashmir.

SECURING THE FUTURE

The challenges Australia faces demand a coherent and effective foreign policy. The Government has responded resolutely to these challenges and focuses on practical outcomes to secure Australia’s future.
We are well placed to respond to these challenges. Our international standing is high, a result of the Coalition Government’s strong and principled foreign policy. The respect Australia commands can be attributed to:

- Our consistently strong economic performance and major trade and investment links with Asia, the United States, Western Europe, New Zealand and the Middle East;
- Our leadership in East Timor;
- Our strong and cooperative stand against terrorism;
- The highly professional contribution that our military personnel made to the war in Afghanistan and in Iraq;
- Benefits from our close defence alliance with the United States and important intelligence links with key partners;
- Our creative and decisive intervention in the Solomon Islands to halt its slide towards a failed state;
- Recognition of our willingness to pull our weight internationally; and
- Our strong people-to-people links extending throughout the Asia-Pacific and around the world.

The Coalition Government has taken the tough but necessary decisions to protect Australia’s borders and enhance Australians’ security at home and abroad. We will continue this work. At this critical time, Australia cannot afford the Labor Party’s empty rhetoric, its posturing, or its retreat into the past.

**PART 1  SECURITY FOR AUSTRALIANS**

Australia must pursue its national interests in a fluid and uncertain international environment. While Australia’s alliance relationships remain fundamental to our security, the challenges they must address have become more complex. The Coalition will continue to confront the threat of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction with action and resolve. Australia and its partners in the wider international community have made substantial progress in the war on terror, but there is no room for complacency.
PART 2  FORGING STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS WITH ASIA

Close engagement with the countries of Asia is an abiding priority in the Coalition’s foreign and trade policy. The Coalition will continue to emphasise important economic and trade links, valuable diplomatic and security relationships, and growing people to people links in our engagement with Asia. The Government has secured ASEAN agreement to the first summit meeting and to commence negotiations for an FTA.

PART 3  MAINTAINING OUR STRONG ALLIANCE WITH THE US

Australia’s security, economic and political ties with the United States are fundamental to our future. The Coalition Government will work to strengthen our ties with the world’s richest and most powerful country. The most recent example of the Coalition’s commitment to the US alliance was the passage of the Australia US Free Trade Agreement (FTA), a development which will benefit this and future generations.

PART 4  OUR PACIFIC NEIGHBOURS

The Coalition Government has accepted a particular responsibility to help South Pacific countries manage their serious and endemic problems, many of which have been exacerbated by poor governance. Our more interventionist policy will help these states deliver better governance. The Coalition will continue to work closely with New Zealand, an important partner in the region and beyond.

PART 5  RELATIONS WITH OTHER KEY REGIONS

The Coalition Government continues to seek closer dialogue and cooperation with the European Union (EU). Strong bilateral links with EU member states, particularly the United Kingdom, complement our dealings with the EU. The Coalition will continue to strengthen Australia’s relationships with the countries of the Middle East. Trade and economic ties have grown strongly, reinforced by Australia’s commitment to the region’s security through Coalition action in Iraq and peace keeping operations.
PART 6  GLOBAL CHALLENGES

The Coalition Government will continue our active involvement in multilateral forums to advance our national interest in key areas. Efforts to promote human rights will continue to be practically focussed, eschewing megaphone diplomacy, driven by action and genuine dialogue. We will continue to respond to the challenges of transnational crime through international co-operation and the greater integration of diplomatic, law enforcement, aid, trade and defence policies. Building on the success of its decisive action to protect Australia’s borders, the Coalition will maintain its vigorous campaign against the crimes of people smuggling and people trafficking.

PART 7  IMPROVED AID TO SECURE A BETTER FUTURE

Australia’s aid programme will continue as an integral part of our broader efforts to promote regional development and stability. It will retain a strong focus on alleviating poverty and encouraging good governance. Our aid programme helps build more prosperous and secure countries, which is in the interests of all Australians.

PART 8  LOOKING AFTER AUSTRALIANS ABROAD

In an uncertain international environment, the welfare of Australians travelling abroad will remain the highest priority for the Coalition Government.
PART 1 SECURITY FOR AUSTRALIANS

(i) The War on Terror

Australia is a target of transnational extremist-Muslim terrorism. This was demonstrated with the 11 September 2001 attacks in the United States, the Bali bombings of 12 October 2002 and, most recently, the Jakarta bombing of 9 September 2004. In these events 98 Australians were killed.

As a Western democracy we are a target because of our beliefs and what our society represents. Our values of peace, religious freedom, liberty and tolerance put us squarely in the terrorists' sights.

However, the scourge of terrorism will not be defeated quickly or easily. It is an enduring campaign and a war we must win.

The Coalition Government understands this and remains resolute in its prosecution of the war on terror. On 15 July 2004 the Government launched Australia's first White Paper on the threat from international terrorism. The White Paper details the nature and international dimensions of the evolving terrorist threat to Australia and Australians and the action the Government has taken in Australia's counter-terrorism campaign.

The Coalition Government has introduced wide ranging and tough domestic measures. Internationally we have committed Australian forces in Afghanistan and enhanced regional police and intelligence cooperation with key partners, particularly in the Asia Pacific.

Since 11 September 2001, Australia has signed nine bilateral Counter Terrorism MOUs in our region and established high-level bilateral Counter Terrorism dialogues with the United States and Japan. In March 2003 the Coalition Government appointed an Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism, intensifying the Government's international efforts to combat terrorism.

In February 2004 Australia and Indonesia co-hosted a Ministerial Counter-Terrorism Meeting where 25 countries agreed to a series of practical measures to strengthen regional counter-terrorism in critical areas such as law enforcement, information sharing and legal frameworks. The Coalition Government also contributed $36.8 million to help establish the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Co-operation. Opened in July 2004, the Centre has both an operational and a capacity-building mandate in combating terrorism in the region.
This Ministerial Meeting built on a very successful Regional Conference on Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorist Financing co-hosted by Australia and Indonesia in December 2002.

The Coalition Government has provided counter-terrorism assistance packages to Indonesia ($10 million) and the Philippines ($5 million), and built on existing operational relations with other countries. ASIO and the AFP have dramatically expanded their relations with partner countries. AFP cooperation with Indonesia was crucial to the successful arrest and trial of the Bali bombers.

The Government recognises that the campaign against transnational extremist-terrorism involves a contest of ideas. These terrorists seek to use religion to justify their actions. Australia has strongly supported the great majority of Muslims in their efforts to draw distinctions between their faith and the rhetoric of extremists who advocate transnational terrorism. The Government has encouraged tolerance and respect for the Muslim community. All faiths must be able to participate in society without fear or prejudice.

The efforts of Australia and its regional and international partners have led to substantial progress in the war on terror, including:

- Defeat of two regimes that have supported terrorism – the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq;
- Capture or killing of 65 per cent of al-Qaeda’s leadership and the detention of over 3,000 people connected to al-Qaeda since September 11. Al-Qaeda cells have been disrupted on every continent and its remaining leadership, denied sanctuary and freedom of movement in Afghanistan, has been dispersed;
- Detention of more than 300 suspected Jemaah Islamiyah members, including such key figures as Hambali;
- Seizure or freezing of around $285 million in terrorist assets around the world since 11 September 2001; and
- Assisting Indonesia to track down and bring to justice the key perpetrators of the Bali bombing.

The Coalition Government will continue to contribute decisively towards the defeat of terrorism in the region. The Coalition will:

- Double our counter terrorism assistance to Indonesia and the Philippines providing Indonesia $20 million for counter terrorism programs over five years and the Philippines $10 million over five years. This will be met through existing programs;
• Build on the nine bilateral counter-terrorism MOUs that have been established;
• Develop initiatives under the Joint Australia-ASEAN Declaration to Combat International Terrorism signed on 1 July 2004;
• Continue to enhance regional law enforcement cooperation;
• Utilise our vital intelligence sharing relationship with the US and the UK and other key partners;
• Continue co-operation with the region including maritime and transport security; and
• Work with the Muslim community to help win the battle of ideas against the extremist-Muslim terrorists including co-host with Indonesia a regional inter-faith dialogue.

(ii) The Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a serious security challenge to the international community. Decisive action is needed to stop rogue states and middlemen engaged in the black market trade in WMD technologies and expertise. This trade, if not stopped, could put WMD into the hands of terrorists.

The Coalition Government has been at the forefront of efforts to combat the proliferation of WMD and related technology.

Our efforts in Iraq helped eliminate the threat posed by Saddam Hussein’s regime which had conclusively demonstrated, by its defiance of the international community and no fewer than 17 UN Security Council Resolutions, that it never intended to give up its WMD ambitions.

The Coalition Government has committed Australia to a key role in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). The PSI is developing practical measures to impede, disrupt and stop the illicit trade in WMD-related materials, technologies and delivery systems. It clearly demonstrates the international community’s resolve to stop WMD proliferation by rogue states.

The Coalition has taken responsible steps to reduce the threat of missile attack through Australia’s participation in ballistic missile defence. This defensive measure will deter rogue states from acquiring and developing ballistic missiles, thus making the world a safer place for us all.
Participation in the PSI and missile defence complements the Coalition Government’s commitment to multilateral disarmament and counter-proliferation treaties. Australia has taken a lead in international responses to key proliferation issues, including those relating to Iran and North Korea. We will consider further practical measures to strengthen treaties and their verification systems.

To ensure that multilateral institutions are effective in dealing with the new challenges we face, the Government will pursue new strategies for disarmament, focusing on outcomes rather than talkfests.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Continue to support and develop the Proliferation Security Initiative;
- Support Australian participation, including by local industries, in ballistic missile defence; and
- Help strengthen global counter-proliferation architecture through tighter enforcement and verification of multilateral rules on sensitive technologies, and support for practical measures to enhance development and enforcement of regional export control regimes.

### Part 2 Forging Stronger Partnerships with Asia

#### (i) North Asia

North Asia, including Japan, China and the Korean Peninsula, takes almost 45 per cent of Australia’s exports and offers Australia enormous opportunities for the future. It also contains some of the most difficult diplomatic challenges confronting Australia. In North Asia the interests of key global powers, the US, Japan and China, intersect and shape the security environment. Their relationships with each other are fundamental to Australia’s security interests.

Australia has major economic and security interests at stake in Japan. The world’s second largest economy, Japan is our largest export market. Australia’s security links with Japan are becoming increasingly important as the constitutional and political constraints on Japan’s security policies are gradually loosened.

The Coalition Government will:

- Work to deepen security co-operation by building on the success of the Trilateral Security Dialogue between the US, Australia and Japan;
• Enhance our economic relationship and further benefit Australian business by expanding our Trade and Economic Framework agreement with Japan;

• Encourage Japan to take a more active role in the region, one more commensurate with its economic status; and

• Host the third round of the Australia-Japan Conference.

The rapid growth in China’s economic, political and strategic weight will be one of the most important factors shaping Asia’s future. Australia’s relationship with China has never been in better shape. The visit of President Hu Jintao, an historic LNG contract and the dramatic expansion of trade, at a peak and increasing, clearly demonstrate this. The Coalition Government has successfully managed relations in a way that makes the most of our shared interests while acknowledging our differences. Australia’s one-China policy will remain a fundamental element of our relations with China – just as it is fundamental to our considerable economic ties with Taiwan.

The Coalition Government will:

• Work to expand trade and investment ties with China, notably through the joint Free Trade Agreement Feasibility Study (to be concluded in the first half of 2005);

• Encourage the further development of defence exchanges and second-track diplomacy;

• Promote a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue; and

• Pursue further opportunities in the energy sector.

With the Korean Peninsula of considerable strategic importance to Australia, our strong relationship with the Republic of Korea (ROK), grounded firmly in economic ties and congruent security interests, is of the utmost value.

The Coalition Government has worked hard to secure access to ROK markets for Australian exporters, particularly in the energy sector.

A re-elected Coalition Government will focus our efforts on a peaceful resolution to the problems on the Korean Peninsula. We will continue to favour a strategy which presses the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) to achieve a permanent resolution of the nuclear issue. Australia would stand ready to co-operate more closely with the DPRK should it take this step.
The Coalition will:

- Continue to strengthen economic relations with South Korea, identifying and improving opportunities for Australian exports, such as LNG; and
- Continue to engage the DPRK in support of diplomatic efforts, such as the six-party talks process, to stabilise the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

(ii) South East Asia

Australia has actively pursued its bilateral and regional relationships in South East Asia and has vigorously supported the interests of a wide range of Australian business interests.

Australia has a fundamental national interest in Indonesia’s stability. The Coalition Government strongly supports Indonesian unity and territorial integrity.

The Coalition Government has played a constructive role supporting Indonesia during its transition to democracy, its pursuit of economic reform and in its efforts to combat Islamic extremist terrorist groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah. The Coalition will continue to support the development of a robust democratic system in Indonesia.

Our political relationship with Indonesia has moved on considerably since 1999 when Australia led the INTERFET operation in East Timor. Australia, Indonesia and East Timor now participate in an annual Trilateral dialogue on issues of mutual interest.

The Coalition Government has pursued a high level of dialogue and reciprocal visits with the Indonesian Government. The June 2001 visit by President Wahid was the first visit to Australia by an Indonesian President since 1973. Australia and Indonesia have co-hosted a regional ministerial meeting on people smuggling, and a regional counter-terrorism summit. The last Australia Indonesia Ministerial Forum, attended by 7 Australian ministers and 13 Indonesian ministers, is a testament to the diversity and strength of the relationship.

The Coalition will:

- Continue to develop law enforcement cooperation with Indonesia on counter-terrorism and people smuggling;
- Engage the Muslim community and support their role in promoting pluralism and democracy in Indonesia and as a voice of moderation against extremist-Muslim terrorists;
• Co-host with Indonesia an inter-faith dialogue involving religious leaders from the region to share perspectives and increase understanding among the faiths about key issues of concern in the region, such as terrorism;
• Continue high level dialogue with Indonesia to advance mutual interests, including through the Australia Indonesia Ministerial Forum;
• Continue to support respect for democracy and human rights within Indonesia;
• Further assist Indonesia with its economic reform and recovery efforts following the impacts of the Asian financial crisis, SARS and the Bali bombings; and
• Continue to support Indonesia’s unity and territorial integrity.

The Coalition Government has built a strong and wide ranging bilateral relationship with Malaysia, in areas such as education, tourism and science and technology. Bilateral cooperation has also been expanded to include counter-terrorism and people smuggling.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

• Work with the new Malaysian Government to further develop stronger bilateral cooperation;
• Convene the first senior officials political and security dialogue;
• Conduct a parallel scoping study of an FTA between Australia and Malaysia; and
• Establish an Australia-Malaysia Institute to build knowledge and understanding between the people and institutions of Australia and Malaysia. This will be met through existing programs.

Under the Coalition Government, Australia and Singapore have co-operated and shared views on many regional and international issues. A major achievement has been signature of the Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement in February 2003.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

• Maintain regular high level dialogue with Singapore; and
• Continue to strengthen commercial and political ties.

Australia and Thailand enjoy strong bilateral and regional cooperation including as partners in the war on terror. The Free Trade Agreement cemented the foundation of our economic relations.
The Coalition Government will:

- Continue to strengthen and broaden the bilateral relationship; and
- Establish an Australia-Thailand Institute to enhance and promote bilateral relations. This will be met through existing programs.

The Coalition Government is committed to achieving progress towards democracy in Burma. The Coalition Government will:

- Maintain the suspension of human rights workshops pending the release from house arrest of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and evidence of Burmese commitment to the roadmap for democracy;
- Continue to work with the international and regional community to encourage Burmese commitment to democracy and human rights; and
- Continue to address the basic needs of the Burmese people through the delivery of humanitarian programmes.

The Philippines continues to be an important partner bilaterally and regionally. In March 2003 Australia and the Philippines signed a bilateral MOU to Combat International Terrorism. The Prime Minister committed $5 million to assist counter-terrorism activities. This package is already providing practical assistance to the Philippines in important areas including port and immigration security.

East Timor is a young nation facing a challenging future. The Coalition Government will continue to provide substantial aid and assistance to help East Timor meet these challenges. Following a meeting of Foreign Ministers in August, Australia and East Timor are hopeful that negotiations concerning the maritime boundaries can be completed by the end of this year.

This year Australia celebrates 20 years of diplomatic relations with Brunei Darussalam. Trade and investment ties continue to be an important part of the bilateral relationship. Australia and Brunei have commenced work towards a bilateral Counter-Terrorism MOU.

Australia enjoys good bilateral relations with Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, with reciprocal high level visits, broad ranging bilateral agendas, strong people to people links and cooperation on transnational issues such as counter-terrorism and people-smuggling. A re-elected Coalition Government will build on these achievements.
South Asia

The ongoing liberalisation of India’s economy presents Australia with important opportunities. India is now our ninth largest export market.

The Coalition moved quickly to rectify Labor’s neglect of the bilateral relationship with India establishing regular ministerial consultations, senior officials talks and joint working groups.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Continue to build the political and strategic relationship;
- Further strengthen our economic partnership;
- Continue to hold annual ministerial level talks; and
- Assist Australian businesses to pursue the growing economic opportunities offered by India.

The Coalition supports Pakistan’s moves towards full restoration of constitutional democracy and its critical contribution in the war on terror. Recognising the importance of resolving tensions between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan, the Coalition Government strongly supports efforts towards the peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue.

Australia has supported Afghanistan’s reconstruction following the end of Taliban rule. Since September 2001, we have committed more than $110 million in humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan – one of the largest single humanitarian contributions in Australia’s history. Australia recognises the importance of ensuring the successful transition to democracy in Afghanistan, ensuring its people can enjoy peace and prosperity after decades of war and misrule.

Asia Pacific Regional Institutions

The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC) aims to enhance economic cooperation and strengthen business interaction in our region, thereby contributing to our common security. It is valuable to our interests in Asia and the Pacific and complements our bilateral relationships in the region.

APEC has played an important role in the war on terror. The APEC Leaders’ Summit in October 2003 endorsed a range of Counter-Terrorism initiatives, including addressing the threat posed by MANPADs (a class of weapons that can be used against aircraft), an Australian-led aviation passenger information system and an Asian Development Bank fund to assist APEC countries build CT capacity.
The Coalition will:

- Continue to work with APEC to advance Australia’s economic and strategic interests;
- Help develop APEC’s capacity to enhance security across the Asia Pacific region;
- Advance the APEC structural reform process; and
- Ensure Australia successfully hosts APEC in 2007.

Our security, stability and prosperity, and that of our neighbours, depends on how well we work together to advance our mutual interests. The Government has secured the first summit meeting with ASEAN leaders to be held in Laos this November. The Government has secured also ASEAN agreement to begin negotiations on an FTA.

The **ASEAN Regional Forum** (ARF) is the principal forum for security dialogue in Asia. It has made modest gains in building a sense of strategic community and has contributed to the region’s counter-terrorism work.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Work to strengthen the ARF as the region’s principal multilateral security forum;
- Promote greater cooperation on CT issues through further capacity-building and collaborative arrangements;
- Support development of ARF preventive diplomacy mechanisms;
- Help strengthen the linkages between first and second-track processes; and
- Support efforts to enhance the role of ARF Chair.

The **ASEAN PMC** provides a forum for practical cooperation and engagement with ASEAN countries. Australia has proven itself a reliable and constructive neighbour.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Continue to promote the ASEAN PMC process as a means to promote greater regional cooperation and practical engagement on issues of concern, including counter-terrorism, people smuggling, Avian Influenza, SARS, people trafficking, and landmine clearance;
- Encourage deeper economic integration, including through commitment to the AFTA-CER Closer Economic Partnership; and
Increase people-to-people links in partnership with ASEAN – through business, education, migration and tourism.

PART 3 MAINTAINING AND BUILDING OUR STRONG ALLIANCE WITH THE UNITED STATES

Australia’s longstanding partnership with the United States is fundamentally important. Strong security, economic and political ties with the United States are vital to Australia’s future security and prosperity. The United States will remain the pre-eminent global power for the foreseeable future, with no other country able to match its global reach. The Coalition Government has done much to strengthen Australia’s influence and work with the United States.

Australia and the United States share values and ideals. We both have deep democratic traditions, elements of a common heritage and a lasting record of cooperation and shared sacrifice. The Coalition Government will continue to stand up for our interests when our views differ from those of the United States. But the extent of our shared interests offers great scope for our two countries to work together, bilaterally and internationally, to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

Our security alliance is a practical manifestation of our shared values and has particular significance in an era of global terrorist threats, WMD proliferation and failed states. Access to intelligence, leading defence technology and other support is vital in meeting these challenges.

The passage of the Australia US FTA, an achievement of historic and strategic significance, will benefit current and future generations. The US economy accounts for about one-third of today’s global GDP, and its flexible economy and youthful demographics will help it set the agenda in terms of advanced technology and other key areas of the world’s economic future. The FTA will provide Australia access to a rich market and an extraordinary source of goods, investment and ideas.

The Coalition Government will further strengthen this pivotal bilateral relationship by:

- Bringing into force our Free Trade Agreement and building on the economic opportunities it offers;
- Working with our closest ally in the fight against international terrorism;
• Implementing activities under the MOU with the US on Missile Defence which will support US efforts to protect its population, defence personnel and allied personnel from the threat of ballistic missiles;
• Pursuing further defence cooperation in key areas such as the Joint Strike Fighter project;
• Continuing to work behind the scenes to strengthen the institutional framework of our intelligence partnership;
• Continuing discussions in relation to the US force structure review so as to take advantage of opportunities for Australia, including enhancing ADF capabilities;
• Concluding an Australia-US Science and Technology Agreement;
• Ensuring the US remains engaged in our region, promoting future stability and prosperity in East Asia; and
• Building on the Climate Action Partnership.

PART 4 OUR PACIFIC NEIGHBOURS

Australia has a major interest in the security and good governance of the countries of the South Pacific. The Australian people, the international community and the people of the Pacific themselves believe that we have special responsibilities in this region. Accordingly, the Coalition Government has sought to play a constructive role in the region, with much achieved since 1996.

Australia’s role in the South Pacific Islands has changed. As the threats to Australia from poor governance and declining law and order in the Pacific have become clearer, the Coalition has moved to play a more hands on role. Australia is determined to make a difference, increasingly working through the placement of Australian officials and police to work side by side with local counterparts.

Australia’s leading role in the Regional Mission to Restore Peace and Stability (RAMSI) in the Solomon Islands demonstrates our determination to pursue a constructive, higher level of engagement. In an operation welcomed by the people of the Solomon Islands, and hailed throughout the region, Australian Federal Police, supported by the Australian Defence Force, have helped restore law and order – a vital first step towards the restoration of good governance.
The Coalition places a strong emphasis on good governance, countering corruption, strengthening regional institutions and encouraging the pooling of regional resources. The election of an Australian in 2003 as Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum was a recognition of the qualities of the Australian candidate and an endorsement of Australia’s approach to the region.

An investment in the economic viability, political stability and good governance of neighbouring states is an investment in Australian security. The costs and potential threats to Australia of ignoring the problems confronting the region are immense.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Make every effort to bring peace, stability and development to the island states of the Pacific;
- Ensure a measured transition in the Solomon Islands from security stabilisation to economic and governance reform;
- Encourage the sustainable economic growth of all nations in the Pacific;
- Promote the pooling of scarce regional resources in areas such as transport and police training in line with the pooling of aviation resources announced at the recent meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum in Apia;
- Work closely with the region’s police forces and immigration services to boost the capacity of local law enforcement and border security agencies; and
- Promote reform of the Pacific Islands Forum and its secretariat so it can more effectively pursue the interests of its membership.

The Coalition Government has taken decisive steps to ensure the more sustainable development of Papua New Guinea. The largest recipient of Australian aid, Papua New Guinea continues to face major economic, social and political challenges.

In December 2003 agreement was reached with Papua New Guinea on an Enhanced Cooperation Programme designed to help address its pressing law and order, economic management and governance problems.

One of the most important achievements in Australia’s foreign policy over the last decade has been our role in ending the long and bitter civil war on Bougainville. This was reflected in the comprehensive Bougainville Peace Agreement of August 2001.
The Coalition Government will:

- Maintain its efforts to help Papua New Guinea address its long term development needs;
- Work with the Papua New Guinea Government to implement a comprehensive programme of law enforcement and governance assistance; and
- Continue to play an active role in ensuring peace on Bougainville.

With a shared history, unique inter-governamental structures and strong people-to-people links, Australia and New Zealand have a special relationship as allies and close economic partners.

While we remain two sovereign nations, the Closer Economic Relations Agreement links our economies in a single market for mutual benefit. The Coalition Government has worked to deepen this economic relationship and believes Australia has a strong interest in a dynamic relationship with an outward looking and economically strong New Zealand.

The Coalition has initiated an Australia-New Zealand leadership forum, bringing together key figures in both countries with the aim of building stronger ties.

The Coalition Government will:

- Pursue further economic integration with New Zealand under the CER and explore other joint trade initiatives;
- Encourage New Zealand to play an active defence role within the region; and
- Continue to cooperate closely with New Zealand in the South Pacific.

**PART 5 RELATIONS WITH OTHER KEY REGIONS**

(i) **Europe and the United Kingdom**

Europe is undergoing great change. Its recent expansion and new constitution will have a significant impact on the international system. The EU is Australia’s largest trading partner and our second largest investment partner.
Individually the countries of Europe are important to Australia. Our bilateral ties are extensive, involving extensive economic engagement, vital security cooperation and strong people-to-people links.

The Coalition has paid considerable attention to our relationship with the United Kingdom, a relationship based on vibrant trade and investment links, closely aligned security interests and shared values and history. The establishment of the Australia-UK Leadership Dialogue in 2003 reflects this.

NATO is a crucial component of the security dynamic in Europe and is increasingly involved in security efforts outside of Europe. The Coalition has therefore broadened Australia’s interaction with NATO.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Reaffirm the importance of Australia’s relationship with the EU, recognising and making the most of our important cultural, economic and strategic links;
- Promote a regular dialogue with the EU President and the Commission President, including at the leadership level;
- Continue to work on a bilateral level with European countries to deepen our economic and political linkages;
- Further enhance the already strong relationship between Australia and the United Kingdom, including our defence and intelligence cooperation in the war against terrorism; and
- Pursue closer links and cooperation with NATO.

(ii) Middle East

The Coalition Government has strengthened Australia’s relationships with the countries of the Middle East. Trade and economic ties have developed very well, reinforced by Australia’s commitment to the region’s security through coalition action in Iraq and peace keeping operations. Community ties have grown stronger through the Australian Government’s Council of Australian-Arab Relations. The Coalition’s support for the Middle East peace process is steadfast. We support Israel’s right to self-defence against terrorist attacks. We will continue to work towards a fairer and more responsible treatment of the Middle East peace process in the UN and other multilateral bodies. The Coalition will continue to support the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians for an independent homeland.
The Coalition Government was right to support a military response to Saddam Hussein’s persistent defiance of mandatory UN Security Council resolutions requiring him to disarm his WMD and related capabilities. All we have learnt since the war about Saddam’s WMD ambitions shows that this was the only way to ensure his compliance. And it has given Iraqis an historic opportunity to secure a prosperous future, free from oppression, torture and murder. Under the Coalition Government, Australia will continue to support the Iraqi people. The Government commitment of Australian Defence Force personnel to help train Iraq’s army is a clear demonstration that we will not abandon the Iraqis to terrorists.

The Coalition Government will continue to promote Australian interests in the Middle East by:

- Supporting the Middle East peace process;
- Maintaining support for Iraq’s transition to a democratic and prosperous nation; and
- Promoting closer links with the Gulf States, through economic engagement and the Council of Australian-Arab Relations.

**PART 6  GLOBAL CHALLENGES**

(i) *Multilateralism and the United Nations*

The Coalition Government is pragmatic in advancing Australia’s interests in the world. Multilateral organisations have been important to our interests and Australia has made a significant contribution to their effectiveness over many years. However, not all multilateral institutions are important to Australian interests and we must continue to target our multilateral effort at those bodies most relevant to our needs and objectives.

The United Nations is an important part of the machinery of global cooperation. The UN requires reform if it is to provide a multilateral system that best serves the interests of its members, enabling them to work in practical cooperation to meet contemporary challenges. Australia has worked hard to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations. We will continue this work.

Under the Coalition Government, Australia:

- Led the UN operation to bring peace to East Timor;
- Successfully gained UN General Assembly passage of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT);
• Proposed a comprehensive reform of the human rights treaty bodies to make them more effective and better focused;
• Played a leading role in the development of the International Criminal Court (ICC) statute; and
• Serves as the current Chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:
• Support the UN Secretary-General’s efforts to reform the UN;
• Support reform of the Security Council so that it better reflects contemporary international realities; and
• Promote reform of the antiquated UN electoral group system.

(ii) The Commonwealth

Spanning one third of the globe, the Commonwealth unites people of different races, creeds and continents around a shared history and common values.

The Coalition Government is committed to the Commonwealth, as demonstrated by our very successful hosting of CHOGM in 2002.

The Coalition Government has used the Commonwealth to maximise pressure on President Mugabe to stop grotesque abuses of the rule of law and human rights in Zimbabwe.

The Coalition Government will:
• Continue Australia’s engagement with the Commonwealth to promote the principles of democracy, respect for the rule of law and economic reform among member states.

(iii) Human Rights

The Coalition has always believed that Australian foreign policy should reflect the beliefs and values of the Australian community, and that accordingly the promotion of human rights should form a fundamental part of that policy. The Coalition Government’s efforts to promote human rights abroad have been practical and distinctive. They have focused on mechanisms and measures that can make a difference to the lives of individuals.
The Australian Government holds regular senior-level discussions with China on human rights issues and has provided significant technical assistance. We have established similar human rights dialogues with Vietnam and Iran.

The Coalition Government was instrumental in the establishment of the International Criminal Court, a body intended to bring to justice those individuals guilty of crimes against humanity. The Coalition Government has also been instrumental in establishing and funding the Asia-Pacific Forum for National Human Rights Institutions, as well as the Centre for Democratic Institutions in Australia which assists parliaments and judiciaries to function more effectively. More generally, the Coalition Government has ensured that good governance and the rule of law are among the key objectives of Australia's aid programme.

The Coalition Government has demonstrated a willingness to intervene throughout the region to protect human rights – in East Timor, in the Solomon Islands and in Bougainville. We supported the restoration of democracy in Fiji following the coup of 2000. We have contributed to the toppling of two of the most odious and systematic abusers of human rights of our age – Saddam Hussein in Iraq and the Taliban in Afghanistan. And we have used our influence in the Commonwealth to pressure the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe to respect basic human rights.

Since being elected Chair of the Commission of Human Rights in February 2003, Australia has sought to enhance the effectiveness of multilateral action on human rights through reform of the human rights treaty machinery.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Continue to take practical steps to encourage respect for human rights throughout the region;
- Use our position as Chair of the Commission of Human Rights to improve the Commission's effectiveness and to promote further treaty body reform;
- Expand our programme of bilateral human rights dialogues; and
- Use Australia's aid programme to promote human rights and good governance throughout the region.
Globalisation, with its vastly expanded flows of trade, finance and people, has created more opportunities for transnational crime, including the illegal movement of drugs, people and arms. The scale of these flows is immense. It is estimated that four million people are smuggled across borders each year, earning people smugglers between $14 and $20 billion.

The Coalition Government has worked to combat these modern criminal networks through greater international cooperation in law enforcement, intelligence, and border and financial controls.

And the Coalition Government has shown that resolute action can yield results.

The Coalition Government oversees one of the most generous migration programmes in the world. We are also among the most generous nations to genuine refugees – we are the third largest resettlement country of refugees worldwide.

The Coalition Government remains firmly of the view that Australia has the right to control its own migration and refugee programmes. It should be Australians who decide who comes to Australia, not people smugglers. A re-elected Coalition Government will continue being generous to those migrants and genuine refugees who make their claims through the proper and regularized channels. But we will remain unashamedly tough on unauthorized arrivals and the people smugglers who profit from them.

Deterrence works. Excision, offshore processing, increased patrolling of our maritime approaches and improved regional cooperation arrangements have seen the number of unauthorized arrivals dry up. The extradition, prosecution and sentencing of numerous high-profile people-smugglers have sent a powerful signal to the industry. Only one boat of unauthorized arrivals has reached the Australian mainland since the end of 2001.

The Coalition Government has moved to address other transnational issues which threaten the security of nations, including in Australia’s region. These include environmental threats, communicable diseases, the depletion of maritime resources and access to clean water.
The Coalition Government will:

- Maintain its resolute attitude to border protection and Australian sovereignty, including the rigorous patrolling of our maritime approaches;
- Retain the policies of excision, offshore processing and mandatory detention that have acted as a powerful deterrent to illegal migration;
- Further improve regional cooperation arrangements to put people-smugglers out of business; and
- Continue working cooperatively with countries in the region, by sharing evidence and utilising extradition arrangements, to bring transnational criminal networks to justice.

(v) **The Environment**

The Coalition Government recognises the importance of the environment including as a key determinant of quality of life. The challenges posed by global warming and other environmental threats demand a global response. The Government is realistic enough to realise that Kyoto, an agreement which excludes the US and other major emitters such as developing countries, will not be effective in reducing global greenhouse gas emissions. The Coalition Government looks beyond the Kyoto Protocol to a more comprehensive, effective and long term response to climate change. We will work actively in the international community to develop such a response, ensuring that such an agreement does not unfairly compromise the competitiveness of Australian industry.

The Government recognises the importance of international co-operation in the sustainable management of resources and has been a leading and active participant in international organisations concerned with the protection of marine resources, including the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and the International Whaling Commission (IWC). Many of our aid projects in the region promote the sustainable management of resources such as forestry and fisheries. We are an active player in the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

**PART 7  AUSTRALIAN AID: INVESTING IN GROWTH, STABILITY AND PROSPERITY**

Aid plays a crucial role in building a more secure and prosperous region. A source of support for developing countries, aid also serves Australia’s national interest by helping create the conditions essential for regional stability and growth.
In recent years the tragedy of the Bali bombings and the deterioration of law and order in the Solomon Islands have demonstrated the consequences of instability in undermining growth and hard won development gains.

In September 2002 the Coalition Government released *Australian Aid: Investing in Growth, Stability and Prosperity*. This policy reaffirmed our aid programme’s key objectives and its geographic focus on the Asia-Pacific region, while providing a new framework for aid delivery.

The Coalition Government is enhancing regional security by building capacity in law enforcement agencies in the Asia-Pacific region and by promoting growth and poverty reduction that, in turn, lessen the potential for terrorist networks to develop.

Experience has shown that improving governance and strengthening democratic process is essential to achieving better outcomes for people in developing countries.

The Coalition Government is taking a more robust, ‘hands on’ approach in the Pacific through its successful assistance mission in the Solomon Islands and its new enhanced cooperation with Papua New Guinea aimed at improving law and order and good governance.

Openness to trade and investment flows and access to new information and communication technologies are key factors in the long term economic growth essential to poverty reduction. Australia’s aid programme recognises this reality and is assisting developing countries to maximise the benefits of globalisation.

Australia has led the region in the fight against HIV-AIDS with a $600 million, ten year initiative to reduce HIV transmission and impacts, the establishment of the Asia Pacific Leadership Forum on HIV-AIDS and Development and participation in the Global Fund to Fight HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Poverty reduction can be accelerated when people in developing countries have the necessary tools to participate in growth. The Coalition Government continues to support improved access to quality, affordable basic education, health care and water and sanitation services.

Aid alone will never be the answer to the challenges confronting developing countries. But effectively targeted aid can act as a catalyst for development and growth in the region.
A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Continue to focus Australia’s aid programme on poverty reduction in the Asia Pacific region, with particular emphasis on improved governance and the transfer of the skills necessary for developing countries to participate in the global economy; and
- Enhance regional security by investing in sound development programmes that promote growth, stability and prosperity.

PART 8 LOOKING AFTER AUSTRALIANS ABROAD

Since coming to office in 1996, the Coalition Government has made the care and protection of Australians overseas a key priority for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and its network of overseas posts. The Coalition has:

- Established a 24 hour Consular Operations Centre and special Crisis Management and Contingency Planning systems to deal with major consular emergencies;
- Improved the access of Australians to passport services, while strengthening the integrity of Australian passports with new biometric security features;
- Implemented tougher passport related legislation to provide better security for all Australians;
- Strengthened consular travel advice through strong consultative processes involving Australia’s intelligence agencies;
- Encouraged greater awareness of travel advice through the smartraveller website and the associated promotional programme; and
- Placed touch-screen kiosks in a number of Australia’s international airports to give travellers direct access to the smartraveller website.

A re-elected Coalition Government will continue to regard the care and protection of Australians overseas as a key priority of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and its overseas service.
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GOVERNMENT’S ACHIEVEMENTS

The Coalition Government has raised Australia’s standing in the world. It has demonstrated that Australia is a nation with global as well as regional interests, and it has restored dignity to the way we relate to our neighbours.

Under the strong leadership of the Coalition Government, Australia has:

- Led the successful mission to restore peace and stability in the Solomon Islands;
- Participated as a key member of the Coalition of the Willing which removed Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq, ensuring he will never defy and threaten the world again;
- Helped overthrow of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan – attacking al-Qaeda at the heart of its operation;
- Coordinated comprehensive regional responses to the threat of terrorism;
- Appointed an Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism and signed nine counter-terrorism MOUs in the region;
- Launched Australia’s first White Paper on terrorism;
- Participated as a key and founding member of the Proliferation Security Initiative;
- Negotiated and signed a Free Trade Agreement deal with the United States – the world’s largest and most dynamic economy;
- Secured ASEAN agreement to the first summit meeting and to commence negotiations for an FTA;
- Completed Free Trade Agreements with Singapore and Thailand;
- Implemented a comprehensive restructuring of its Papua New Guinea aid programme to improve the security and administration of that country;
- Led the successful international operation to stabilise East Timor and support its progress towards independence;
- Played a pivotal role in bringing an end to the tragic civil war on Bougainville;
- Reformed Labor’s secretive treaty making process making foreign policy more responsive and accountable to the public through the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties process;
- Established Human Rights Dialogues with China, Vietnam and Iran;
• Completed the first and second Foreign Policy White Papers to map our future international relations;
• Focused its aid budget to deliver outcomes in poverty alleviation, improved governance and counter-terrorism;
• Delivered the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty;
• Established the Centre for Democratic Institutions;
• Dramatically improved the consular care and protection of Australians abroad;
• Promoted regional stability and growth during the East Asian financial crisis, including as one of only two countries to participate in IMF loans for Indonesia, South Korea and Thailand; and
• Launched an initiative to reform the UN human rights treaty bodies to make them more effective and credible.
LABOR’S ALTERNATIVE

DIMINISHING AUSTRALIA AND WEAK ON NATIONAL SECURITY

(i) Diminishing Australia

The Labor Party acts and talks as though Australia were a small country that has to beg to be accepted.

“Small countries are normally smarter than that. Perhaps John Howard doesn’t think that we are.” (Kevin Rudd, December 2002.)

The Labor Party wants to take us back in time, to Paul Keating’s foreign policy when Australia was a supplicant in the region. This not only demeaned Australia, it reduced our significance in regional and international affairs.

As part of its small country ethos Labor wants to pursue an isolationist approach that will reduce Australia’s influence in the world without protecting us from any terrorist threats.

(ii) Weak on the US Alliance

The Labor Party is ambivalent about the US alliance. It professes commitment, but its personal attacks on the US President, its opposition to our troops’ efforts in Iraq and its stated doubts about whether our role in Afghanistan made Australia an al-Qaeda target, demonstrate a willingness to undermine this vital relationship for domestic political gain.

Labor’s knee-jerk opposition to Missile Defence and its deep divisions over a Free Trade Agreement with the US prove that, even while the Labor leader wraps himself in the Stars and Stripes, his party’s commitment to the relationship is dangerously ambivalent.

The profound anti-Americanism of many within the Labor Party fatally compromises any undertakings the party might make with regard to this vital alliance. In the 21st century, confronted by the threat of international terrorism, we cannot afford to offend and confuse our most trusted friends and allies. Now more than ever we need a firm foreign policy articulated in clear and consistent language.
Similarly on the issue of Iraq, Labor has sent a series of confused and conflicting messages to the world. It sought to score political points at home – even if it meant keeping Saddam Hussein in power. This would have left a brutal dictator, one who had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people, in power in the Middle East. In an age of global terror, this was a risk we could not afford to take.

More recently, Labor has belittled the contribution made in Iraq by our armed forces and has constantly changed its policy, leaving Australians – and more scandalously Australian servicemen and women – in doubt as to Australia’s role in Iraq should Labor win the election given their commitment to cut and run.

Labor’s cut and run approach to our troops in Iraq will expose Australians in Iraq, compromise the efforts of Australian businesses in Iraq, and abandon the Iraqi people to terrorists and opponents of democracy and freedom.

(iii) **Weak on Counter-Proliferation of WMD**

After promising before the last election to make non-proliferation a key priority, Labor is yet to support the Proliferation Security Initiative or suggest any alternative means of tackling a problem which they described as “one of the most serious international security interests facing the world” (24 October 2001). Rather than seeking outcomes, Labor seems to prefer empty symbolism and easy rhetoric.

Australia cannot afford Labor’s indecisiveness, or its fondness for words and meaningless gestures. Since 11 September 2001, the international community has had to address the proliferation of WMD and related technology, and the dangers posed by extremist terrorist groups, with tough decisions and decisive action.

It appears the Labor Party would rather the UN craft our foreign policy than Australians. All too often Labor embraces multilateralist causes without a hard-headed examination of whether or not these serve Australia’s national interest.

(iv) **Soft on People Smuggling**

The Labor Party has been consistently soft on border protection. It wants people smugglers’ boats brought to Australia, rather than being sent back to Indonesia. Despite the excellent cooperative efforts of Australia and Indonesia on the issue of people smuggling, and despite Labor’s commitment to such cooperation before the last election, Mark Latham is on record as attacking the Indonesian Government’s approach to this issue.
The Coalition Government’s tough stance on excision and the Pacific solution is working. It has had a demonstrable deterrent effect on would-be people smugglers. Yet Labor calls it a disaster and wants to replace it with an arrangement whereby a Coastguard greets unauthorized vessels and escorts them to Australian territory and Australia’s legal system. Such a proposal would mark a return to the past, to the days when people smuggling syndicates left vulnerable people to die at sea and thousands tried to gain illegal entry to Australia.

Deterring people smugglers ensures fewer lives are put at risk, that genuine applicants who apply through the proper channels are processed more quickly, and that our courts are not gridlocked with the claims of those who are not genuine refugees.