

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Australia's relationship with our region is a complex interaction of trade, investment, migration, education, research & development, security and defence links.

In the early 1990s, our government put particular effort into building ties with the Asia-Pacific region.

More recently the government has primarily pursued Australia's alliance with the USA, at times in preference to creating regional links.

The Australian Government formally promotes peace in the Asia-Pacific, but there are few controls over Australian companies operating in the region, and many complaints that the actions of these companies are seriously detrimental for local communities. (Oxfam)

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade states that its aim is 'advancing the national interest'.

AusAID, the Federal government's aid program, says we give aid to help those less fortunate and 'because it improves our regional security'.

Both Labor and Liberal governments over the past 20 years have been accused of funding Asian militaries (esp. Indonesia) while ignoring their human rights abuses.

The 2007-08 Budget allocated \$21,999 million to Defence, which is 9.3% of Government expenditure and 2% of GDP. (ADF)