



**United Nations
Association
of Australia**

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO AUSTRALIA

The United Nations plays vital and beneficial role in Australia. We rely on the UN when we do simple tasks like make an international phone call, send a letter overseas, listen to a weather forecast, or travel by air or sea. At a broader level, Australia benefits from the UN system of international law, international treaties, and international institutions which allows us to have a voice in a global forum to influence the affairs of the world. Through our UN membership we have access to UN branches that assist in building global peace and security, uphold international rule and order, and address global challenges such as climate change.

> PEACE AND SECURITY

The UN Security Council is responsible for maintaining international peace and security worldwide and plays a major role in the Asia-Pacific Region. As the most powerful body of the UN, the Security Council is vested with the authority to work with states involved in international disputes to assist them in upholding their responsibilities under International Law. Australia's recent role on the Security Council has benefited our national security and foreign policy interests by strengthening the effectiveness of the UN system and promoting trust, cooperation and collective global security. Our success in the role over 2013-14 has enhanced Australia's reputation as a good international citizen and increased our influence in world affairs.

> INTERNATIONAL LAW

The UN provides international legal framework for states by defining their international responsibilities in their conduct with each other, and their domestic responsibilities with their treatment of individuals. The UN also provides access to international courts to address international law violations and hold states accountable. Adherence to UN international law is vital in preventing conflict and restoring peace and security. Australia continues to benefit from international treaties regarding trade, transport, and communications. The UN also plays a major role in improving human rights in Australia by holding us accountable to our international responsibilities regarding the treatment of individuals.

> ENVIRONMENT

Climate change is a complex global issue that requires a global community response. The UN facilitates international solutions through climate change treaties and forums for discussing sustainable development, such as the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Australia must work in cooperation with other nations through this international framework to ensure we implement the coherent forward agenda, such as that agreed upon at the Rio+20 conference in 2012. The UN also helps Australia in protecting the environment through its agency UNESCO, which safeguards our World Heritage sites such as the Great Barrier Reef and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park.



Being a UN member also grants Australia access to specialised agencies of the UN which provide important governance structures for international markets and industries to operate effectively and profitably. These agencies are largely concerned with setting standards and regulating activity in areas of their specialty. Without these agencies and their global regulation, Australia would be spending substantial amounts of time and money negotiating treaties with other members individually. These agencies which provide invaluable assistance to Australia include the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the Universal Postal Union (UPU), and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

> INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO)

ICAO is the global standards and regulatory body for international air navigation. The ICAO Council provides the framework for airlines to operate between all countries to facilitate the transport of international trade and to ensure flights operate safely, efficiently and securely. In addition, the ICAO defines the protocols for air accident investigation followed by transport safety authorities in countries signatory to the Convention on International Civil Aviation. Without ICAO, Australia would be continually negotiating bilateral air service agreements with each nation.

> WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION (WIPO)

WIPO promotes international intellectual property administration, services and policy development, and administers international treaties that involve IP rights and protection. WIPO's responsibilities include administering the 1996 Agreement between WIPO and the World Trade Organization that provides for cooperation concerning the implementation of the WTO's Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS). TRIPS includes regulations regarding notification of IP laws and regulations, legal-technical assistance, and technical cooperation in favour of developing countries. As a trading nation with a strong research tradition and a need for access to new technologies, Australia has a strong interest in the agreed international standards on the protection and exploitation of intellectual property rights.

> UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION (UPU)

The UPU co-ordinates postal policies among UN member nations and manages the worldwide postal system. The UPU Standards Board implements international standards to improve the exchange of postal-related information. Prior to the USU, Australia had to prepare a separate postal treaty with each country to carry international mail to or from each nation.

> FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO)

The FAO serves both developed and developing nations as a neutral forum where members meet as equals to negotiate agreements and debate policy regarding food and agriculture. Australia was a founding member of FAO in 1945 and has participated actively collecting statistical data and exchanging information on agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries since. As a major world food producer and agricultural trading nation, Australia has a strong interest in the codification of agricultural and food standards, the facilitation of international trade, the sustainable management of fisheries and forestry resources, and in monitoring surplus disposals and food aid transactions.



United Nations Association of Australia

United Nations Association of Australia
Suite 206, Griffin Centre
20 Genge St, Canberra City, ACT 2601
(02) 6247 4499
admin@unaa.org.au | www.unaa.org.au