



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

PREVENTING CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS PROLIFERATION: THE AUSTRALIA GROUP

The 25th Asian Export Control Seminar
Tokyo, 27 February – 1 March 2018

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WHAT IS THE AUSTRALIA GROUP?

- The Australia Group (AG) is an informal forum of now 43 participants with India joining the AG in January 2018.
- The harmonisation of AG participants export controls seeks to ensure their exports do not contribute to the development of chemical or biological weapons.
- Supports UN Member States to meet their international obligations:
 - Chemical Weapons Convention
 - Biological Weapons Convention
 - United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540.

AUSTRALIA GROUP ORIGINS

- In 1984 the world discovered Iraq had produced and used chemical weapons.
- Australia Group was created in 1985 to stop legitimate trade being diverted to chemical weapons production.
- In the early 1990s UN investigations discovered that Iraq had a biological weapons program
- Consequently, export controls were expanded to include biological weapons.



REGRETTABLY CHEMICAL WEAPONS USE IS STILL A REALITY

- Examples:
 - Syria
 - Da'esh



AUSTRALIA GROUP STATEMENT ON THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CWC ENTRY INTO FORCE

- Australia Group participants share the deep concerns of the international community at the re-emergence of the use of CW, a dangerous and inhumane weapon of mass destruction.
- The Group issued a consensus based statement at the Australia Group June 2017 Plenary.
- Important to uphold the norms enshrined in the CWC, and support the work of the OPCW.

AUSTRALIA GROUP OPERATIONS

- Regular meetings
 - Information Exchange
 - Implementation Exchange
 - Enforcement Exchange
 - New and Emerging Technologies Technical Experts Meeting
 - Plenary
- Consensus based



AG Plenary, Perth June 2015

AUSTRALIA GROUP CONTROLS

- Guidelines
- Control Lists and Dual-use Items Lists
 - Chemical weapons precursors
 - Human and Animal pathogens and toxins
 - Plant pathogens
 - Dual-use chemical manufacturing equipment and related technology
 - Dual-use biological equipment and related technology.

PROMOTE EXPORT CONTROLS

- The Australia Group encourages all countries to implement measures similar to AG controls to limit the spread of CBW.



HARMONISING CONTROLS AND ENFORCEMENT

- Each AG Country has national controls:
 - Legislation (includes “catch-all”)
 - Implementation (e.g. licences)
 - Enforcement (e.g. customs inspections).

AUSTRALIA GROUP ENGAGEMENT

- Engagement with:
 - non-members countries
 - industry
 - academia
 - civil society.
- Highlighting the threat of state and non-state actors acquiring chemical/biological weapons.



Statement by the Chair of the 2017 Australia Group Plenary

30 June 2017

The 41 Member Countries of the Australia Group and the European Union met for the 32nd plenary meeting in Paris this week. The Australia Group was established after the use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq war. The work of its members aims to ensure that legitimate trade in sensitive dual-use goods and technology is not diverted to the production of chemical or biological weapons, through coordinated export controls, information sharing and outreach.

Key outcomes

Australia Group participants reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening chemical and biological weapons-related counter-proliferation efforts. Among the measures agreed by the Group at the 32nd Plenary were:

- issuing a statement on the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, expressing the Group's grave concerns about the resurgence in the use of chemical weapons;
- reinforcing efforts to stay ahead of potential proliferators by increasing awareness of emerging technologies, the potential exploitation of the cyber sphere, and scientific developments that could be used for chemical and biological weapons production and delivery;
- intensifying Australia Group focus on preventing the proliferation of goods, technologies and information to terrorists and non-state actors that could enable the production or delivery of chemical and biological weapons or attacks;
- sharing approaches to challenges posed by intangible technology transfers, proliferation financing, procurement, transshipment and broader proliferation networks, including through enhanced engagement with industry and academia;
- renewed commitment to work collaboratively and cooperatively, both domestically and internationally, and to share experiences in enforcing export controls, information, outcomes of investigations and operational activity; and
- agreement to enhance outreach to non-members through more regular Australia Group Dialogues and continued efforts to encourage all states to implement robust export controls and to adopt Australia Group export controls as the model for international best practice.

DENIALS

- The Australia Group aims to ensure export controls do not hinder legitimate trade and to legitimise trade in sensitive items.
- There are very few Australia Group export denials.
- Export denials:
 - are a national decision
 - based on the AG Guidelines and Control Lists
 - information shared within AG
 - “no-undercut” policy.

CHALLENGES

- Technological developments
 - Emerging biotechnology
- Investigations
- Methods of trade (e.g. internet, eBay)
- Intangible Transfers of Technology (ITT e.g. electronic transfer of knowledge)
- Terrorism
- The use of CW in Syria and Iraq

AUSTRALIA GROUP INTERSESSIONALS AND DIALOGUES

- An AG Intersessional was held in Buenos Aires in February 2017 and the key events were:
 - New and Evolving Technologies Technical Experts Meeting
 - Implementation Meeting
 - The Australia Group Dialogue with Latin American countries.
- The 2018 AG Intersessional will be held in London 7-9 March and will include the first ever Dialogue with Africa.

AUSTRALIA GROUP PLENARY

- The 2017 June AG Plenary decided to focus on:
 - emerging technologies; science and potential exploitation of cyber space;
 - preventing proliferation of CW and BW goods, technologies and information to non-state actors;
 - chemical and biological terrorism;
 - intangible technology transfers; proliferation financing; procurement, transshipment and broader proliferation networks; and
 - expand outreach to non-AG countries, industry and academia, including AG Dialogues, to encourage all states to implement robust export controls.

THE AUSTRALIA GROUP IN ASIA

- Many countries in the region already implement or are looking to implement legislation based on AG control lists or AG-type controls.
- Export Controls support UN Member States' obligations and responsibilities under UNSCR 1540 and other UNSCRs.
- Strong and well implemented export controls provide the business community with confidence and certainty.
- The AG has undertaken outreach to a number of Asian countries, and the AG Chair is very open to suggestions for outreach visits.

AUSTRALIA GROUP ADHERENTS

- The Australia Group Chair and Secretariat can assist with:
 - Providing information about the Australia Group
 - Facilitating specific requests for practical technical assistance
 - Facilitating contacts with export control experts in Australia Group countries.
- Not legally binding, requires no acceptance decision by the AG membership, just a letter of solidarity with the AG Guidelines and Control Lists and any subsequent changes to them

AUSTRALIA GROUP CONTACT

- Australia Group Secretariat
 - through any Australian Embassy
 - or Head of the Secretariat, Michael Gregory:
michael.gregory@dfat.gov.au
- Australia Group website
 - www.australiagroup.net
 - in English, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Russian and Spanish



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