



The Global Foundation

Together, we strive for the global common good

“Australia’s longer-term national
strategy in a global context”



The Canberra Roundtable

14 May 2021

Report of the Meeting

The Board, Advisory Council and Members of the Global Foundation express their sincere gratitude to Their Excellencies, General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Mrs Linda Hurley, in graciously hosting the *Canberra Roundtable* at Government House, Yarralumla

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14 May 2021

An Australian Transformation



Participants in the Global Foundation's Canberra Roundtable meeting,
Government House, Yarralumla, 14 May 2021

AUSTRALIA'S LONGER-TERM STRATEGY IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

*'As a nation, we need
to have the courage to
step through the other
side of the wardrobe'¹*

At the invitation of Their Excellencies, General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Mrs Linda Hurley, the Global Foundation convened its *Canberra Roundtable* at Government House, Yarralumla, on Friday 14th May, 2021, involving 40 invitees, drawn from diverse backgrounds. The meeting was conducted according to the Chatham House rule.

The Appendix contains the names of participants and the Program. Bios and photos from the roundtable may be accessed [here](#).

To set the scene for the *Canberra Roundtable*, a Welcome to Country was delivered with didgeridoo and clapsticks by Girrawah, Mr Paul House, a roundtable participant and a traditional Custodian of the lands on which the meeting took place.

Mrs Linda Hurley also led the group in a spirited rendition of *'You are My Sunshine'* prior to the luncheon break which provided a heart-felt moment of connectedness between all.

¹Quote from the meeting, paraphrasing CS Lewis' *'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'*



‘There is a gap in civic discourse about significant issues facing Australia’

– see [here](#) for the opening address by Global Foundation Chairman, Ms Louise Watson

Context

The Canberra meeting was the culminating event of The Global Foundation’s current *Australian Roundtable* series, which has taken place across the nation over the past 18 months and has involved a cross-section of Australian leaders. All have committed to address the most significant issues relating to Australia’s longer-term national strategy, in a global context.

These Australian discussions have been conducted in both face to face and online formats and have been informed by the Foundation’s ongoing *Global Roundtable* series over many years.

It was as a consequence of these global meetings, including those that preceded the Covid pandemic, that the Board of the Global Foundation formed the view that Australia was lacking a coherent national strategy and risked being left behind in a fast-changing world. The continuing pandemic has only served to accentuate some of the challenges facing Australia and the world at large.

The *Australian Roundtable* series was designed to incorporate global views and insights but also to encourage deeper considerations within Australia about its national character, about the elements that would be vital for a national strategy and some of the most important challenges and opportunities that Australia might choose to confront and embrace.

‘Australians are desperate for leadership and vision. There are positives to build upon. We have a very bright future, if only!’

‘Happy, healthy and prosperous are worthy goals.’

Australia needs a longer-range national strategy

The *Canberra Roundtable* addressed three main topics in relation to Australia’s longer-term national strategy, in a global context:

Who are we?

Can we transform to a sustainable economy?

Where in the world do we belong?

There was remarkable coherence and convergence around all three themes, considering the apparently disparate nature of the attendees at Yarralumla.



Overarching all was the view that Australia does not have a coherent, long-term national strategy; one that is understood and embraced by its citizens.

'Are we a multicultural continental island or a continent of cultural islands?'

*'Australia is still revealing itself to us. We oughtn't close off the possibilities by declaring too early what we have become.'*²

The first conclusion was that an ongoing process was necessary, to encourage all citizens, across society, to participate in this journey of 'nation-building', of shaping an agreed Australian national strategy. The Global Foundation will continue to play its part, as will those present at the roundtable, in their respective approaches, however a more concerted and joined-up national effort is required, to be fully effective.

The second conclusion was that Australia cannot know what it's national strategy ought to be and as an extension, to know what should be its place in the world, if its people do not know who they are, as Australians.

'Our culture is your culture – you just don't know it.'

'Cultural change is an issue for black and white Australians on a national scale. It needs long-term strategy. It's a mind-shift. Cultural change is what we need.'



Enshrine the Voice

In turn, it was the very clear view of the meeting that Australians cannot fully know who they are as a people, as a citizenry, until the nation as a whole comes to terms with its First Nations' peoples. This was as much a call for individual as well as institutional transformation across Australia, as evidenced in one brilliant example of land-sharing that was expressed at the roundtable.

Consequently, the meeting called for the Voice to Parliament to be enshrined in Australia's Constitution, as a vital and necessary, if early, step on a much longer journey of reconciliation and growth, for the nation to better know itself and what it could become, both at home and abroad.



²Quoting Australian author, David Malouf

Transform to a prosperous & sustainable, knowledge-based economy that serves a fair and inclusive society

Australia is lacking longer-term, aspirational goals for its economy and society.

It was agreed that Australia should more firmly adopt the goal of the Global Foundation, for a world future built upon **'co-operative globalisation'**, one that is transformative, fair, inclusive and prosperous.

Whether it be in converting knowledge-based research into action, at world-class scale, as has been achieved in the past, or in making a firm and measurable commitment to a fair and sustainable Australian society, there is much to build upon but also much work to be done.

The systems and machinery of governance and collaboration that impel the economic and social future of Australia also require transformation, with boldness of thinking, encouragement of genuine innovation and stronger partnership between the public and private sectors and the wider community.

Australia must choose to be fully at home in the world

The meeting recognised that Australia has established itself as one of the most globally engaged of nations, and now needs to redouble its efforts, as a continuing champion of openness and global connectedness, even in the face of a world that risks further fracturing.

More than ever, Australia needs to step up and outwards, as a positive bridge-builder between all great nations and an active shaper of an improved international order.

For this to be fully effective, it is essential that there should be a better understanding and a clearer differentiation between Australia's national values and its national interests and, in turn, how these should be both protected and projected in the world at large, keeping a clear-eyed and longer-term focus.



³Quoting China's paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping

'We are at a hinge moment in history. Will we embrace the world as we find it now, and Australia's place in it? Or will we turn inwards?'

In terms of its place in the world, it was confirmed that Australia, having established itself as one of the most globally engaged of nations, needs to be a continuing champion of openness and global connectedness, even in the face of a world that risks further fracturing. Now, more than ever, Australia ought to step up – and outwards, as a positive bridge-builder and contributor.

'Globalisation has benefited the world and Australia more than most.'

At the same time, it is essential that there should be a better national understanding and a clearer differentiation between Australia's national values and its national interests and how these should be both protected and projected.

'Distinguish between national values and national interests. If we only dealt with those who have similar values, it would be a lonely world.'

'When war seems to be the only option, best wait for a wiser generation'³





Participants

Hosts: His Excellency, General the Honourable David **Hurley** AC, DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, and Her Excellency Mrs Linda **Hurley**

Ms Pavina **Adunratanasee**, Entrepreneur in Residence, Cleantech, Antler

Ms Leanne **Barnes** OAM, General Manager, Bega Valley Shire; Member of the Australian Advisory Council

Father Frank **Brennan** SJ AO, Rector, Newman College, University of Melbourne; Member of the Australian Advisory Council

Ms Michele **Bullock**, Assistant Governor (Financial System), Reserve Bank of Australia

Ms Kate **Burke**, Design Team Lead & Research Strategist, 12th Level

Professor Francis **Campbell**, Vice Chancellor, University of Notre Dame; Member of the Australian Advisory Council

Professor Amit **Chakma**, Vice-Chancellor, University of Western Australia

Ms Liz **Chatwin**, Country President, AstraZeneca, Australia and New Zealand

Mr Berkeley **Cox**, Chief Executive Partner, King & Wood Mallesons

Ms Adie **Dawes-Birch**, Member of the Australian Advisory Council

Mr Paul **Fennelly**, Head of Government and Corporate Affairs, Adani Australia

Mr Danny **Gilbert**, Managing Partner, Gilbert & Tobin; Member of the Australian Advisory Council

Ms Annabel **Griffin**, Partner, King & Wood Mallesons

Mr Robert **Hadler**, Member of the Australian Advisory Council

Mr Chris **Hartley**, Executive Director, Australian Future Leaders Program

“**Girawah**”, Mr Paul **House** - a Ngambri (Walgalu), Wallabalooa (Ngunnawal) and Wiradjuri (Erambie) Traditional Custodian; Senior Team Leader, ACH Strategy Community Engagement, Heritage NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet

Sr Adele **Howard** RSM, Integral Ecology Advisory Group, Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea; Member of the Australian Advisory Council

Mr Steve **Howard**, Secretary General, The Global Foundation

Mr Evan **Hughes**, Member of the Executive, The Evatt Foundation.

Mr David **Irvine** AO, Chair, Foreign Investment Review Board; Member of the Australian Advisory Council

Ms Sally **Irwin**, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, The Freedom Hub

Mr Rob **Knott**, Chairman, GHD;

Ms Elly **Lawson**, Head of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, East Asia Division

Ms Sheridan **Lee**, Australian Representative, Amundi; Member of the Australian Advisory Council

Ms Alice **Mahar**, Founder and Director, The Corner Store Network

Mr Thomas **Mayor**, National Indigenous Officer, NT Deputy Branch Secretary, Maritime Union of Australia

Mr John **McCarthy** AO, former senior diplomat; Senior Adviser, Asialink

Mr Jock **Murray** AO, Former Chairman of the Board, the Global Foundation; Member of the Australian Advisory Council

Mr Liam **O'Duibhir**, Co-Founder, 2pi Software

Mr Murray **Prior**, International Director & Global Head of Business, King & Wood Mallesons; Member of the Australian Advisory Council

Dr Lesley **Seebeck**, Honorary Professor, Australian National University

Mr Shaun **Treacy**, Member of the Australian Advisory Council

Ms Louise **Watson**, Chairman of the Board, The Global Foundation

Professor Paul **Wellings**, CBE, Vice Chancellor, The University of Wollongong; Member of the Board, The Global Foundation

Mr Luke **Yeaman**, Deputy Secretary, Macroeconomic Group, Treasury

Professor Peter **Yu**, Vice-President, First Nations, Australian National University

Facilitation:

Ms Karen **McLennan**, Business Strategy & Design Consultant, 12th Level

Ms Suzanne **Sequoia**, Design Research Assistant, 12th Level

Support:

Ms Fiona **Hartley**, Projects Manager, The Global Foundation

Ms Donna **Portland**, Operations Manager, The Global Foundation

Ms Susie **Parker**, Event Manager, The Global Foundation

Ms Ranj **Samrai**, Program Manager, The Global Foundation

Ms Jay **Mullins**, Volunteer, courtesy of King & Wood Mallesons

Ms Ariadne **Lopez**, Volunteer, courtesy of King & Wood Mallesons

Ms Emma **McVeigh**, Notetaker, courtesy of King & Wood Mallesons



“Australia’s longer-term national strategy in a global context”

Program

- 9.00am** **Arrival at Government House, Yarralumla**
Registration, coffee
- 9:30am** **Welcome**
Welcome to Country by “Girrawah”, Mr Paul House - a Ngambri (Walgalu), Wallabalooa (Ngunnawal) and Wiradjuri (Erambie) Traditional Custodian
Ms Louise Watson, Chairman of the Global Foundation
- 9:45am** **Outline of program, scene-setting and expectations**
Mr Steve Howard, Secretary General of the Global Foundation
Mr Marc Eames, Partner, Bain & Co
Ms Kate Burke, Design Team Lead & Research Strategist, 12th Level
- 10:10am** **Morning Tea with Their Excellencies, The Governor General and Mrs Linda Hurley**
Address by His Excellency, General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia
Vote of thanks: Mr Berkeley Cox, Chief Executive Partner, King & Wood Mallesons
- 10:30am** **Session: Who are we?**
It is sometimes said that for Australia to know its national strategy it first needs a clearer sense of who it is as a people. If so, does Australia need to have a clearer sense of its national identity and what should be done to embrace its indigenous peoples and their cultures in considerations of national identity and national strategy?
Moderators:
Mr Danny Gilbert, Managing Partner, Gilbert & Tobin; Member of the Australian Advisory Council
Professor Peter Yu, Vice-President, First Nations, Australian National University
Discussion
- 11:15am** **Session: Can we transform to a sustainable economy?**
In a world that may well be less open and interconnected in the future, does Australia need a transformational strategy to achieve more sustainable prosperity for future generations and, if so, what might be done to strengthen the value and contribution of the knowledge-based economy, while at the same time, protecting against downside risks?
Moderators:
Professor Paul Wellings, CBE, Vice Chancellor, The University of Wollongong; Member of the Board of The Global Foundation, Member of the Australian Advisory Council
Ms Leanne Barnes, OAM, General Manager, Bega Valley Shire Council, Member of the Australian Advisory Council
Discussion
- 12:00pm** **Where in the world do we belong?**
It is often said that national values and national interests are not necessarily the same thing. Is Australia still a rising middle power, capable of coherently advancing its national interests internationally and what strategic actions might be considered to make Australia more effective in advancing its national interests in the world?
Moderators:
Ms Louise Watson, Chairman of the Global Foundation
Mr Rob Knott, Chairman, GHD
Discussion
- 12:45pm** **Group photo**
- 12:50pm** **Lunch, in working groups**
- 2:00pm** **Plenary session**
Feedback from working groups and synthesis
Moderator: Mr Steve Howard, Secretary General, The Global Foundation
Facilitation: Mr Marc Eames, Partner, Bain & Company
Ms Kate Burke, Design Team Lead & Research Strategist, 12th Level
Project and program commitments
- 3.00pm** **Close of Roundtable meeting**



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