



# A U S T R A L I A   A N D

# R U S S I A

## Key engagement

Shared membership of important global and regional multilateral forums including the G20, APEC and the EAS.

## Bilateral relations

Australia has a mature relationship with Russia that allows us to confront our differences directly when necessary but work constructively where our interests intersect. Bilateral contact has been limited since Russia annexed Crimea in March 2014, and the July 2014 downing of flight MH17. We continue to press Russia for justice on behalf of the 298 victims and their next of kin.

Despite our differences, we work with Russia where it is in our interest to do so. For example, our two countries share an interest in preserving the multilateral trading system, and we engage pragmatically in international security forums.

Equally, we work with our partners to resist Russia's conduct when it is inimical to our interests. Australia introduced targeted autonomous sanctions in 2014 (and in 2019) over Russian threats to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, expelled two undeclared intelligence officers in 2018 in response to Russia's role in the Salisbury nerve agent attack, and have called out its aggressive cyber activities.

For more information on Australia's broader foreign policy settings, see the Foreign Policy White Paper (<https://www.fpwhitepaper.gov.au>).

## Foreign policy

Russia, as the main successor to the Soviet Union, aims to consolidate its role as one of the centres of a multipolar global order. Russia's self-image as a great power is based mostly upon military strength, arms sales, its permanent seat on the UN Security Council (UNSC) and geography.

In addition to its permanent seat on the UNSC, Russia is an influential member of BRICS, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Australia and Russia share membership of key multilateral forums including the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), ASEAN Regional Forum, East Asia Summit (EAS) and the Group of 20 (G20).

## FAST FACTS



Russian short-term visitor arrivals in Australia (financial year 18/19) **16,910**



Australian short-term visits to Russia (financial year 18/19) **25,980**



Resident Australian population born in Russia (2016 census) **20,429**



Australian residents of Russian descent (2016 census) **85,650**



Russian students in Australia (2019) **995**

## High level engagement

- 2016 Sep – Prime Minister Turnbull and President Putin spoke at the G20 Summit (Hangzhou).
- 2015 Nov – Prime Minister Turnbull and President Putin spoke at the APEC Summit (Manila) and the G20 Summit (Antalya).
- 2014 Nov – President Putin spoke with then Prime Minister Abbott while visiting Australia for the G20 Summit in Brisbane.
- 2013 Sep – then Foreign Minister Carr represented Australia at the G20 Summit (St Petersburg).



## Agreements with Russia

- Nuclear Energy Cooperation
- Exploration and Use of Space Cooperation
- Double Taxation
- Air Services
- Humanitarian Cooperation
- Agriculture Cooperation
- Environmental Cooperation
- Medical Science and Health Cooperation
- Cultural Cooperation
- Scientific-Technical Cooperation

## Public diplomacy

Around 20,000 Australian fans visited Russia in 2018 for the FIFA World Cup, at which Australia's Socceroos competed. The Australian Embassy in Moscow commissioned a film festival to engage with cinema audiences about Australian life and culture. The Embassy has again organised a *Short & Sweet* film festival in May 2019, with screenings in Moscow, St Petersburg, Kazan, Ekaterinburg, Novosibirsk and Vladivostok. The COVID-19 pandemic has limited the opportunities for traditional public diplomacy activities in 2020; in response, Australia has increased social media promotion targeting Russian audiences.

The Australian Embassy has also partnered with key educational institutions, such as the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), to encourage student exchange and research collaboration with Australian universities. The Embassy organised a travelling exhibition of Aboriginal artworks from the National Museum of Australia, 'Yiwarra Kuju: The Canning Stock Route', which has travelled around the country since 2016.

The Russian and Russian-speaking community in Australia greatly enriches our multicultural life, including through the annual National Multicultural Festival in Canberra, and the Fashion of Multicultural Australia festival in Sydney. The Art Gallery of NSW hosted the 'Masters of modern art from the Hermitage' exhibition from October 2018 to March 2019. This followed the National Gallery of Victoria's hosting of the 'Masterpieces from the Hermitage: The legacy of Catherine the Great' exhibition in 2015. The Russian Ministry of Culture supports the annual Russian Resurrection Film Festival across Australia, which celebrated its 15<sup>th</sup> year in 2018.

## Economic diplomacy

The Australian Embassy in Moscow works to pursue Australia's economic diplomacy agenda, focussing on priority industries (agribusiness and premium food, infrastructure and urban development, education, resources). The Embassy supports Australian and Russian universities in building collaboration, especially those operating in the science, technology and innovation sectors.

Business engagement in some sectors is limited by targeted autonomous sanctions imposed by Australia in response to Russia's annexation of the Ukrainian territory of Crimea and support of pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine, as well as Russian imposed 'counter-sanctions' on Australian agricultural goods.

Russia was Australia's 46th largest trading partner in 2019, with the trade balance strongly favouring Australia. There is a modest level of two-way investment.

Australian companies are active in the Russian resources sector, both as investors and as suppliers of advanced mining equipment. Australian companies are generally positive about their Russian operations and relationships.

For further Russia economic and trade information, see the Russia Country Fact Sheet:

<http://dfat.gov.au/geo/russia/Pages/russia.aspx>

## Travel



See Smartraveller for Information on travelling to Russia:  
[smartraveller.gov.au](http://smartraveller.gov.au)


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