AUSTRALIA IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
(AAP315116)

GENERAL

131 candidates attempted the exam this year. As in previous years, there was a clear distinction between those candidates who revised and studied and those who tried to ‘wing it’, with predictable results. Most candidates were able to produce answers that the examiners believed demonstrated at least some knowledge of the Australia in the Asia and Pacific region. The following comments specify more carefully some of the faults encountered, but more importantly what teachers in 2018 can concentrate on to improve outcomes.

SECTION A:

It was pleasing to note that no candidates tried to answer Questions 1 and 2 together as they had in 2016. While spelling and grammar was better, there were still some issues when spelling proper nouns, such as the names of countries. It is also important to give words such as Equator or Himalayas capital letters. Appropriate use and spelling of relevant terminology is essential to showing understanding and subsequent achievement. Those who defined terms such as altitude in general terms rather than showing their comprehension by using the terms in their correct context relative to their chosen example, jeopardised their whole answer and perhaps other sections of the examination by using time which could have been better spent elsewhere.

Depth of knowledge was an issue with significant repetition, especially in introductions and conclusions of the essay style specified. Perhaps a more thorough initial planning would have helped avoid this. Loose terms such as ‘tropical’ or a wide range of human activities added little to answers. Students need to spend time analysing what is required and what data is most relevant to each answer. The focus of each question, the describe and account for requirements are clearly crucial to satisfying Criterion 3 while appropriate spelling, grammar and essay format clearly relates to Criterion 2.

Students seemed to be aware what areas are included in the region and sub regions of the course and very few chose countries out of the sub region specified.

Question 1

Interpretation of the vocabulary used in the question was crucial to the level of success. Students were required to do TWO separate tasks (although a demonstration of the interrelationships between the two was necessary) the question required candidates to describe the climate and vegetation within their chosen Pacific country. As in 2016, most popular countries were Fiji and New Caledonia although there were significant groups who opted for Papua New Guinea or Samoa. Some answers were very general and failed to examine the range of temperatures and rainfall within the chosen country implying that there were no differences. Best answers effectively used statistics evaluating them with terms such as wide temperature range, high rainfall and wet/dry season. Poorer answers persevered with the four season model in inappropriate settings or assumed that continued use of such terms as ‘tropical’ was an adequately appropriate evaluation.

The vegetation section was not done as well as the climate. There was little description of the composition of the vegetation. Better answers described large evergreen trees in rainforests and a few discussed the layering effect. The term ‘cloud forest’ was extensively used but few explained what it meant. Again the term savannah was used but only the best answers mentioned that these were grasslands with few trees. Most discussed coral reefs where appropriate and were given credit for it.
The second part of the question was to explain why the climate and vegetation in the chosen country is as it is. The major influences on climate such as latitude, altitude, distance from the sea, the influence of mountains on rainfall and the monsoon winds were at best, only alluded to. While all of these are not relevant throughout the Pacific a mention of the influence of at least two would have improved many answers. The influence of the El Nino/La Nina was extensively discussed; this phenomenon certainly does influence climate in some years and the best answers pointed out that this was the case. The interrelationship of rainfall and vegetation had to be discussed to adequately answer the question.

Some of the best answers brought in the third variable in the climate /vegetation equation – that is soil. This can be particularly relevant in the Pacific where some soils are of rich volcanic origin, some are poor rainforest soils while other are sandy and lacking in nutrients especially in some Pacific Island environments. A few students mentioned the influence of human activity on vegetation and by extension on climate. This is obviously a well-considered and good answers made it directly relevant to the reasons for the distribution of natural vegetation.

In this question the describe and account requirements could be completed together, but in order to successfully do so very careful thought and planning had to be undertaken to ensure each was answered adequately. Those candidates who did so were rewarded.

Question 2
Generally this question was not answered as well as Question 1 although there were some very good answers. Although there were a wide range of Asian countries chosen, some were chosen more often than others. These included India, China, Vietnam and Singapore. Each of these were eminently suitable to answer the set question.

Question 2 also came in two parts, that is describe and account for and each should have been considered, especially at the planning stage of the process. While the term diversity is used in the syllabus it does not appear to be well understood and weaker answers implied that many societies were fairly homogeneous. Typical aspects of human geography which were discussed were religious affiliation, ethnicity, urbanisation and vital rates of population change. Discussion of vital rates were to the fore in answers relating to China where ‘The One Child Policy’ and its evolution was the major consideration. Better answers looked at why the Chinese government adopted the policy and the subsequent change. Few, however, pointed out the consequences of gender imbalance and the ageing population. This was the pattern in most answers when the reasons for the diversity in the human population in relation to religion, for example, appeared to be little understood. This is a very broad question, but some mention had to be made of reasons for patterns for Criterion 3 to be satisfied. Some of the best answers on India tried to explain why there are two main groups in India, while better answers on Indonesia mentioned the ‘Transmigration Policy’ but needed to take it to the next stage by explaining why the government considered it necessary.

This is a question where credit could have been gained had the depth of knowledge of the student’s chosen country had been more extensive.

SECTION B: CHANGING ROLES- PARTNERSHIPS OR IMMIGRATION

Essays should have clear body paragraphs that state a main argument, give relevant examples and make application to the question. Use of comparative language enables greater analysis and evaluation. Essay conventions must be followed. Headings and dot points are not appropriate in this format.

To make successful future predictions, candidates must consider the current political and economic relations with selected nations. Stronger responses considered the global context and influence of Australia’s political relationship with global powers such as the US and China. It would have been good to see innovative answers that include issues such as climate refugees. Future predictions must be based on evidence rather than opinion. Candidates are required to describe what the future may be like, rather than their beliefs about what should happen.
Question 4 Partnerships
While many candidates appeared unprepared for the specific question on trade, successful responses were able to make links between trade and aid and show that aid is given to strengthen trade partnerships. Weak responses simply reverted to knowledge about Australian aid and did not apply content to the given question.

The majority of candidates discussed Papua New Guinea, China, Timor-Leste and Indonesia.

Stronger responses were able to name specific trade agreements and financial value of trade and investment relationships. Candidates who incorporated trade in resources such as iron ore and coal rather than everyday supermarket and processed goods were rewarded. Discussion of controversial issues such as the live cattle export industry and Timor Gap Treaty enabled greater analysis and evaluation.

Terminology was rarely used.

Some reasonable future predictions were made such as an increase in working visas to fulfil Australia’s labour shortages.

Question 5 Immigration
Responses were generally well-prepared and gave a comprehensive overview of events post-1945. Given the nature of the question, some account of pre-1945 policies was necessary to give the response context. However, given the selected migration group (not country as the question incorrectly nominated), more pre-1945 historical background may have been necessary, e.g. Chinese or Pacific Islanders. Candidates are, though, encouraged to move away from retelling a narrative of historical events by utilising the essay structure to form specific arguments in relation to the question. Consequently it is important to include information that demonstrates changing immigration roles, even if the question does not specifically ask for it, in order to create a persuasive, logical argument.

Terminology (e.g. bipartisanship, polarisation, dehumanisation, ideology) allows for greater precision in responses. Make sure the historical references are correct. For example, Edmund Barton was not Australian PM during or after 1945.

Stronger responses described the specific relationship between Australia and the selected nation rather than Australia’s general approach to the region. Candidates must apply the historical narrative/overview of one migration group rather than an overview of the changes in Australia’s entire immigration policy. Candidates also need to describe and analyse migration policy and patterns between 1945 and 2000, not just superficially mention some of the key elements. As this section, at least in part, is an historical account, sequencing of events is important, thus some identification of when policies changed and why and the impact that had on the whole migration regime is essential. A realisation that our currency changed from the British pound to the Australian dollar in 1966 was an issue for some responses.

Paragraphs should not be a page in length. Avoid using American spelling of words, 2 pages for an essay is really not sufficient to both describe and analyse changing roles in migration. Ensure the factual information presented is accurate. Try to avoid using first person “I” in this essay even though the implication of the phrasing of the question allows it.
SECTION C: QUESTION 6 TOURISM

Overall Comment:
This question required candidates to respond in essay format and describe either the negative environmental, social/cultural OR economic impacts of tourism for two destinations and evaluate the management policies and practices that have been implemented to address the impacts in one destination. Essays do not include sub-headings and need to include both an introductory and a concluding paragraph. Candidates were also required to predict the outcome for the destination should these policies and practices fail. The most popular destinations described were Fiji, Phuket, Bali, The Great Barrier Reef and Uluru. Other destinations described included Siem Reap, Singapore, Kyoto, Cook Islands, Vanuatu, and the Tasman Peninsula. Most candidates chose to describe environmental and social/cultural impacts.

While the majority of candidates did respond in essay format, a large number still failed to include a clear introduction, body and conclusion with well linked, cohesive paragraphs. Spelling, punctuation and grammar were also of a generally poor standard. Time allocation is an important examination technique and candidates need to ensure they maximise the full 45 minutes allocated to this section. Many answers were less than two pages which meant candidates did not address all elements of the question or provide evaluation and analysis.

Although not specifically asked for in the question, it was appropriate to provide a brief general overview of tourism in the destinations discussed, as long as the growth/trends/ geographical information were then linked to the impacts of tourism. Many candidates spent far too long discussing the 5 A’s and the causes of tourism growth in the world/AAP region rather than what the question was asking.

Positive Comments:
The best responses clearly described specific examples of impacts in each destination and detailed how tourism and/or tourism activities were directly contributing to these impacts.

Negative environmental impacts described included:

- Erosion of walking tracks or beaches
- Damage to coral reefs through anchoring of boats or souveniring by tourists
- Trampling of vegetation
- Water pollution/contamination
- Air pollution
- Land clearance for tourism developments
- Disturbance or exploitation of wildlife

Whilst litter is a negative environmental impact in many tourist areas, it was disappointing when this was the only example used.

Many candidates also referred to coral bleaching as an impact of tourism. Whilst coral bleaching can occur as a result of increased pollutants in the water over an extended period of time, it is not likely that sunscreen from tourists swimming or diving would cause an event such as this, as some candidates suggested.

Negative social/cultural impacts described included:

- Commodification and commercialisation
- Exploitation
- Rising costs of living
• Westernisation/loss of traditional culture
• Staged authenticity
• Congestion/overcrowding
• Increased alcohol and drug use
• Begging
• Inappropriate/offensive behaviour/dress

Negative economic impacts described included:
• Economic leakage
• Corruption
• Low wages
• Investments directed towards tourist areas as opposed to non-tourist areas.
• Seasonal/casual employment

Well prepared students were also able to incorporate key tourism related terminology, relevant and accurate data and numerous examples of specific tourism developments and attractions.

The best introductions addressed all parts of the question.

Things to work on:
Most essays were very short (1 – 2 pages). For a question allocated 45 minutes, students should be aiming to write at least 3-4 pages.

Some candidates struggled with the required essay format. Frequent issues included:

• The inclusion of headings
• The absence of a clear structure including an introduction, body and conclusion.
• The absence of clearly structured and linked paragraphs.

Several candidates referred to Bali as a ‘nation’. It is an island region within the country of Indonesia.

Poor handwriting and spelling continues to be an issue, with accommodation, vegetation, negative and benefits frequently misspelt. American spelling should be avoided.

Many candidates spent too much time describing the attractions at each destination including lengthy paragraphs referring to ‘tropical weather’, ‘beautiful, sandy, white beaches’ and ‘family friendly activities’.

Too many ‘wild generalisations’ e.g. ‘no’ housing availability’, ‘no’ species left’ and ‘all’ habitat would be destroyed’. Avoid using definitive words that allow no exception.

Too many candidates used the term ‘amount of tourists’ instead of ‘number of tourists’.

Candidates need to ensure any statistics being used are both accurate and relevant. The number of tourist arrivals stated to be arriving in Fiji annually, ranged from 1 million to 114 million! Important that the year of the statistic is included; a statistic from 1995 for example, is less relevant than one from 2016.

When discussing policies and practices, many candidates were not able to name them. Management practices such as codes of conduct, ethics and legislation along with rubbish removal, recycling, training of staff, increased
awareness of tourists, ecotourism/sustainable tourism practices and building restrictions (e.g. coastal set-backs) were discussed.

Many candidates did not address the final part of the question which asked what the outcome would be for the chosen destination if these policies and practices were to fail. While this was not a major element of the unit, it was an important component for this essay for analysing and evaluating the long-term consequences of tourism in this destination and analysing the effectiveness of the policies and practices in addressing the negative impacts present, so it needed to be addressed specifically.

SECTION D:

Candidates need to be mindful of the formatting requirements for this section and it is designed to allow them to write as someone else, so role-play would have advantaged final outcomes. Best answers were able to personalise their country, giving it a name, including some mention of specific places/features/aspects, even graphic details enhanced this appearance.

Question 7
For Question 7 nearly all candidates chose to discuss climate change while nuclear contamination and a political coups and civil war were also chosen.

The standard of the answers to this question was generally good and some were excellent. It was clear that most candidates had studied and prepared for this section.

Report format should be used. This means headings, sub headings, dot points and/or a numbering system. Some candidates did not use any of these features and consequently were penalised.

Candidates must refer to the relevant information from the given blurb about Country A in their answers. A short introduction is recommended, but this should not be so long that it detracts from the discussion of the chosen crisis. Some candidates wrote more on their introduction than they did addressing parts a), b) and c).

Some introductions also did not take into account the location of Country A. Some characteristics included the land averaging a height of 3.7 m.a.s.l. and a mountain range at a height of 146 m.a.s.l. Given the size of Country A, it would be expected that altitude would be above the mentioned heights. Nuclear contamination via power plants is unlikely for a country at the level of development Country A. It would be highly unlikely that Country A would be nuclear energy ready given the economic status and with a low GNI and high rural population – it would be difficult to argue the case for this. The use of a political coup or civil war as a national crisis is plausible, but would need to include a discussion about the conflicting parties. This was somewhat overlooked in responses.

It is recommended that candidates refer to the major effects of the crisis that they have provided in part a) when analysing the responses and their effectiveness in part b) and c). In several cases these impacts were not referred to again.

Information provided must be relevant and credible given Country A’s location and data. Better answers were able to relate Country A’s low GNI PPP and the high % of people in the primary sector, many most likely subsistence farmers, to its inability to fix most of the issues themselves without the assistance of foreign aid and assistance. Candidates must be specific about the impacts of their crisis.

Some candidates wrote a generic report about the causes of climate change without referring to Country A’s response but did however discuss Australia’s response. When writing about the responses to the crisis candidates need to be specific. Other candidates focused too much on re-educating the population to enable them to live in other countries without looking at more immediate strategies such as moving villages to higher ground, building sea walls and combatting increasing salinity of the water supply. Better answers considered a range of immediate and long term environmental and social impacts and solutions and were able to effectively evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each.
Candidates should use data to enhance their descriptions of the impacts of the crisis on Country A, and in their evaluations of the various responses; e.g. the % of the land which is now inundated during storms, the height, length and location of sea walls being constructed, the number of wells which have been destroyed by increasing salinity, the number of people who will need to be relocated etc.

In reference to Australia’s response to the crisis of the civil war and political coup, some candidates discussed the Australian Defence Force (ADF) involvement and taking sides with the Government of Country A. Such a response would require discussion around why the ADF would be involved and the political links that would require them to intervene. It is unlikely that the ADF would be involved in such a response to a political crisis of Country A.

**Question 8**

There were some good responses to this question, many answers demonstrated a general knowledge and understanding of Country A and its crisis. Most candidates chose to write about a flooding, cyclones, an earthquake or a tsunami as the natural national crisis. Several candidates chose monsoons, but looked at them as inherently a crisis rather than a regularly recurring feature of Country A’s climate. It should be clear that an unseasonably heavy monsoon is being discussed. Some students choose to address sea level rises relating to CO2 emissions but this was more appropriate for Q7.

The question requires students to use report format. The report format is outlined on page 8 of the AAP315116 course document and should be followed closely. Some students did not write in report format and instead choose to write a narrative or a TV news report about the crisis and simply retelling the story of a specific crisis does not meet the requirements of C2. Strongly written reports included the use of dot points or tables to list the effects on the social, environmental and economic impacts of the natural crisis. Another point of note was the change in timing of the crisis. Stronger candidates often had the event and subsequent crisis occurring long enough in the past to give themselves opportunities to write about the short and long term effects of the crisis while some candidates had the event recently occurring and subsequently adopted a ‘too early to tell’ position assessing the effectiveness of the national and international responses.

Using nearly a full page to regurgitate the entire blurb is a waste of time. This information should be used to make inferences about the level of development and associated response. Most students were able to identify Country A as a developing country. Some students gave Country A an appropriate name while some used already existing place names such as Palau and Honiara – this is discouraged.

The introduction should set the scene for the reader and candidates generally did this by including a name of Country A, describing its location and proximity to neighbouring countries and surrounding seas (sometimes incorrectly) and then describing the event that has occurred to cause the crisis.

Often candidates would discuss the event causing the crisis as impacting the entire country. Strong responses gave specific locations of the event having the greatest impact. Often, tsunamis, flooding and earthquakes were devastating to the entire island country. Whilst a country would share the economic and emotional pain of such an event, such events occur in specific regions and locations of countries with particular areas more directly impacted than others.

Some candidates enriched their responses by effectively integrating information from the hypothetical country blurb into their response, such as mentioning how interethnic rivalries between Buddhists and Hindus created friction and hindered relief efforts. Others, however, inserted information from the blurb without discussing its ramifications for causes/impacts/response, or supplied seemingly contradictory detail without explaining how it was plausible. Most candidates who discussed the impacts and follow-on effects to the tourism industry did not satisfactorily explain why this would be so significant in a country with 68% of its labour force in the primary sector, and per capita GDI PPP of US$4900.

It was also clear that some students had approached this question with a ‘one size fits all approach’. Many responses were clearly prepared and students were going to use them wherever Country A was located. Responses like this did not take into account the data that was presented in the blurb and on the map of page 7 of the exam paper.

2017 Assessment Report
*Australia in Asia and the Pacific (AAP315116)*
Cause and effect
When writing about the cause and effect of natural national crisis on Country A, candidates are advised to discuss a specific crisis that has taken place, following some discussion of why Country A has experienced such a crisis (commonly the effects of a typhoon/cyclone, earthquake or tsunami). Many responses correctly identified the shifting of tectonic plates or fault lines as a cause of earthquakes and subsequent tsunamis (if applicable). Students who correctly identified adjacent tectonic plates to Country A were few and far between. Historically, earthquakes have not been prevalent in the western region of the Bay of Bengal, however it is not beyond reasonable expectation that an earthquake event could occur.

Better responses discussed environmental, economic and social effects and impacts on Country A where realistic data was included to support examples. In contrast, several candidates provided death tolls as over a million in a single disaster. Discerning candidates identified a higher death toll with reasons such as a night time event, urbanised locations and use of poor quality building materials. Lower death tolls and injuries were put down to the crisis being focused on rural and remote locations and/or preparedness of Country A. Economic impacts were discussed, as a destruction of resources, be it in primary, secondary or tertiary sectors. Stronger answers discussed a decline in tourist numbers and associated flow on effect. Secondary impacts were also present in better responses. Examples included the outbreak of disease and lack of access to fresh water and food shortages.

It is important that candidates read the questions carefully to ensure that they provide the information required by the specific question. Unfortunately some candidates did not attempt part b) at all.

Australia’s response
Responses here were mixed. As Section D was the final section for the exam, it was clear that some candidates began to run out of time and this aspect of the question was completed in a hurry without the necessary detail to address the question. Generally discussion of Australia’s response to the crises were sound, though a number of students talked about hundreds or even thousands of (unskilled) Australian volunteers on the ground – this is not what international aid responses look like! Most candidates remembered to discuss and analyse effectiveness of Australia’s aid, though weak responses only gave cursory a statement that it was effective without showing why.

Because Australia was specifically mentioned it narrowed the student focus of discussion. Responses that included the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) as the driver of the Australian response were stronger. Discussion that included neighbouring countries (India) and other developed countries (including Japan and Singapore) in addition to the Australian response showed good understanding of the nature of an international response. In addition to this the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and an array of NGOs, including the Red Cross were of assistance to Country A’s crisis. Some candidates found time to list a table with donors (both national and NGO) and their amounts to Country A.

Strong answers detailed specific roles of Country A’s response teams, with the defence forces coordinating the immediate response within 24 hours of the event and with extra assistance (depending on the size of the event) coming in the first 7 days and then longer term relief efforts over the following months and years. Candidates also had specific roles for assisting countries and aid agencies ranging from technical assistance and rebuilding efforts to food and water provisions to search and rescue. Some answers provided political differences for some neighbouring countries not assisting or providing minimal help.

Innovative candidates discussed marketing campaigns to get tourists back to Country A as soon as possible in order to begin an economic recovery.

Analysis of the effectiveness of the response
The analysis of the effectiveness was the most disappointing part of responses. Responses often provided a position of being effective without scrutinizing why it was so. Some candidates suggested reasons why the national and international response was poor and included some aspects were handled badly and why. But overall, again there was a general lack of scrutiny. Lack of coordination and communication were common themes for ineffective responses to the crisis. This part of the question was often overlooked as candidates had clearly run out of time.