

# Building the infrastructure to deepen Australia-Africa literacy

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## The need to deepen 'Australia-Africa literacy'

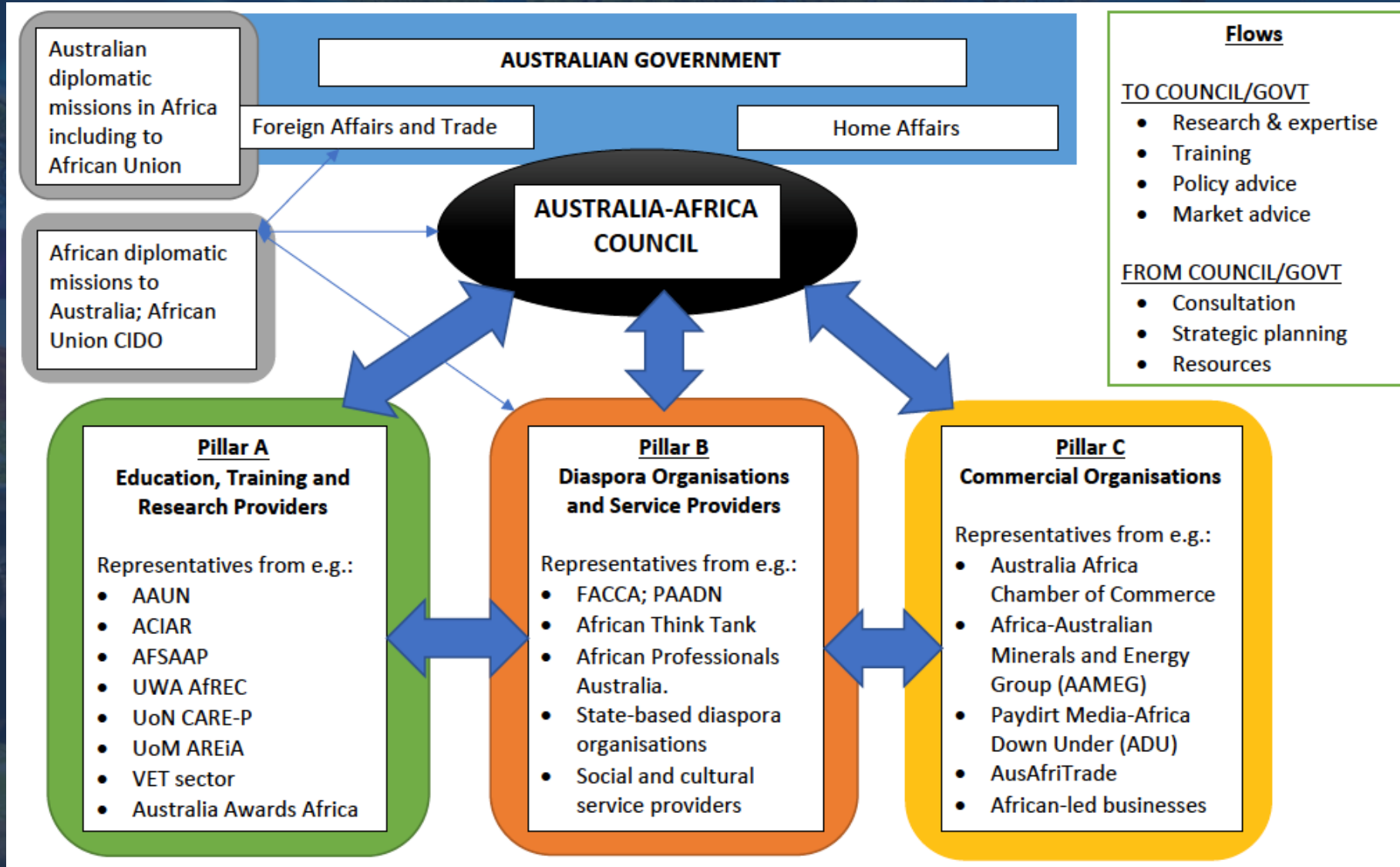
- ❖ Cultural literacy is critical to building and sustaining peaceful multicultural societies; better knowledge about 'the other' is also fundamental to widening and deepening Australia-Africa partnerships
- ❖ Yet such 'Australia-Africa literacy' is currently limited: people in Australia and Africa on average know very little about each other or rely on stereotypes
- ❖ In Australia, Africa has been a low strategic priority for both governments and most universities relative to their other international relations: the 'constituency' for Africa is not strong and needs to be built through knowledge and engagement
- ❖ Consider the instruments and results of Australia's 40-year national project to engage and integrate with Asia and to make Australians 'Asia literate'
- ❖ Have we yet commenced a similar long-term Australia-Africa process? The education sector can lead it by developing the infrastructure to deepen 'Australia-Africa literacy'

## Deepening 'Australia-Africa literacy': Education instruments

- 1) Australian universities should create dedicated *Africa engagement strategies*
- 2) Create more *African content* in the Australian curriculum (all levels) including Africa-focused units/modules and perhaps, at some point, an 'African Studies' major
- 3) Create more/dedicated opportunities for *reciprocal* student and academic staff exchanges between Australia-Africa: scholarships and fellowships, travel funding, collaborative short courses, joint degrees
- 4) Create opportunities for the *general public* to learn about and engage with Africa: public lectures, short courses on Africa for the media, business, government; promote African languages and cultures

## Deepening 'Australia-Africa literacy': Education instruments

- 5) Create *career pathways and incentives* for Australia-based academics to become African regional/country specialists
- 6) Deepen and institutionalise *triangular relationships* between Australian governments, universities and African-Australian diaspora communities
- 7) Better *support and resource existing Australia-Africa networks*: AAUN, AFSAAP, African Think Tank, PAADN, ELAAD etc
- 8) Create and resource *new national institutions*:
  - National Centre for Australia-Africa Relations (proposed at Curtin University)
  - Australia-Africa Council
  - Australian Research & Education Hub in Africa





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