

# PERFORMANCE ARCHITECT

**GO ON ...**

**GET OUT THERE!**





# GO ON ... GET OUT THERE

BY ANDREW SIMON

## The world seems to be getting harder to understand.

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*Australia's economic, security and general well-being is in many ways contingent on what happens in many other places of the world.*

Yet the need to understand it, (well, some of it at least, and to the extent that it actually can be understood), is getting even more important and necessary.

Australia's economic, security and general well-being is in many ways contingent on what happens in many other places of the world.

We don't have to go too far back into history to find a range of examples of how events and decisions made overseas have actually had a material impact on Australia in profound ways. The recent difficulties with Indonesia, the Global Financial Crisis, the rise and fall of the mining boom, falls in national revenue, the rise of China, globalisation, the Bali bombings, 9/11 and wars from Iraq to Gallipoli are all poignant examples of how Australia has been vulnerable to events that happen and decisions that are taken elsewhere.

Despite our geographic remoteness or perhaps because of it, we are acutely aware of our vulnerabilities. This may understandably cause us to turn inwards, to focus on our day to day, to pay exclusive attention to the decreasing number of things that we think we can control and to perhaps take comfort in the security that everyday busyness might bring.

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Understandable as this is however, turning away from our vulnerabilities could mean that we may be avoiding risks and disengaging with matters that may have an impact on us. Leaders have a critical, albeit difficult role in challenging and encouraging people to lift their gaze from the day to day, to also pay attention to what is going on elsewhere. Having a sensible sense of what is happening elsewhere and how this might impact on our local contexts will help us to better understand what we may have to do here and how we might better ready ourselves for the shocks and opportunities that may arise.

We are not just living in an economically interdependent world. We live in a world where national and domestic public policy interdependencies with other countries are growing. Trade, the environment, tax evasion, crime prevention, anti-terrorism, IP protection, child protection, consumer protection and even domestic monetary policy are all topical examples of how national and domestic policy is both in part shaped and seeks to shape policies in other interdependent countries. Trade policy for example, manifested in bilateral free trade agreements and trans-lateral arrangements like the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) are after all, exercises in shifting domestic policies in partner countries, for potentially mutual or advantageous benefit.

To understand and actively shape what our national and local economic, business, government and social contexts will look like into the future therefore, we will increasingly need to better understand the national and local policy contexts of our neighbours, our allies and our trading partners. We need to understand what shapes and drives these societies, their world views, their politics, their governments and their resultant policy settings as these countries matter in some way to Australia's economic, security and social wellbeing.

This means getting out there to better understand countries like China, the USA, India and Indonesia. We all have an interest in learning how these countries see themselves in the world since what they do will have an impact on Australia. In order to understand the national policy settings of these countries and how these can potentially impact us and how we might potentially influence this proactively, Australian leaders across government, business and community sectors really need to understand the complex domestic contexts of these countries. This means learning about these places, their geography, history and cultural contexts and even investing focused time in these countries, conversing with their peoples and their leaders.

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Informed, purposeful and learning based travel to these countries is not a luxury. It is a necessity in a globalised, interdependent world. It must be part of how we grow and nurture leaders who are worldly, comfortable with difference and ambiguity, are able to navigate complexity, have strategic perspective and can influence strongly because of their high degree of empathy for others.

Effective leaders across all sectors of the economy must demonstrate strong interests in finding ways to encourage this outward orientation and the building of global leadership capabilities within their organisations if we are to be better positioned to both absorb the shocks and seize the opportunities that come with leading and living in a globally connected country.

There is no better time like the present for leaders to 'think globally and act locally'.

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***Andrew is Chief Executive of Yellow Edge a company focused on inspiring individuals, teams and organisations to greater levels of performance.***