

AUSTRALIA GROUP

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Statement by the Chair of the 2025 Australia Group Plenary

1. The Australia Group (AG), founded in 1985, is celebrating its 40th Anniversary this year. To mark the occasion, representatives from 42 countries and the European Union met in Sydney from 14 to 18 July 2025.
2. Participants agreed that the AG's 40th Anniversary presented an opportune moment to reflect on the importance of countering the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons (CBW).
3. Members of the AG harmonise export controls, exchange information and discuss emerging technology with the objective of countering the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons. All AG members maintain sovereign control over their licensing and enforcement measures and determine proliferation risks for themselves. By ensuring that trade in sensitive dual-use chemical and biological material does not contribute to chemical or biological weapons programs, the AG ensures that legitimate trade for sensitive dual-use items intended for peaceful purposes is protected and sustained.
4. The AG's effectiveness at countering proliferation is borne from many factors, namely Participants' unwavering commitment to work together and share information, the strength of each Participants' national export control framework, and the transparency of the AG. All AG Common Control Lists are publicly available and have an important normative effect that helps extend the benefit of this vital common good far beyond the membership of the AG.
5. The AG is committed to increasing the awareness, confidence, trust and assurance necessary to facilitate the trade in sensitive dual-use chemical and biological material, equipment and technology. In so doing, the AG prevents proliferation of CBW and ensures that industry and academia are not unnecessarily constrained by controls. Participants work together to ensure that such items can be exported for peaceful purposes and that AG activities do not hinder essential industries that require chemicals, biological agents and related dual-use equipment.

Key Outcomes

6. AG Participants reaffirmed their commitment to working together to counter the proliferation of CBW. Participants emphasised that the use of CBW anywhere, by anyone, under any circumstances is unacceptable and prohibited under international law.
7. Participants underscored their continuing strong and unequivocal support for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) which is celebrating 50 years since its entry-into-force. Participants voiced their support for the Chair of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the BWC and encouraged progress on all items identified by the Review Conference in 2022, including on compliance and verification as well as the two mechanisms pertaining to International Cooperation & Assistance and Scientific & Technical Review.
8. Participants urged all countries to uphold their obligations under international law not to develop, produce, stockpile or use chemical weapons. Participants underscored their continuing strong and unequivocal support for the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) as cornerstones of disarmament and the elimination of chemical weapons.
9. Participants continued to express concern regarding the use of chemical warfare agents against individuals in recent years, as referenced in previous AG Chair Statements.
10. Participants strongly condemned any use of chemical weapons. In this regard, Participants deplored the confirmed use of riot control agents as a method of warfare against Ukraine, as outlined by three successive OPCW reports. Participants also expressed grave concern at the alleged use of chloropicrin, a choking agent included in Schedule 3 of the CWC, against Ukraine- an AG Participant. This gives cause for concern that chemical weapons have been used against Ukraine. Participants urged the international community to subject exports of chloropicrin and other dual-use chemicals of concern to strict and effective controls to ensure that transfers of these chemicals do not contribute to chemical weapons proliferation.
11. Participants welcomed Syria's political commitment to the elimination of the former regime's chemical weapons, underlining this historic opportunity. Participants expressed support for the OPCW's work and emphasised the importance of securing facilities and stockpiles as quickly as possible and welcomed the cooperation Syria had shown. The complete and verified elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons program is the ultimate goal, including the destruction of all stockpiles.

12. Participants discussed concerns about CBW proliferation activities in and by several countries including the Russian Federation, Iran and North Korea.
13. AG Participants progressed revisions to key AG policies to ensure the forum remained responsive to emerging threats and technological challenges. Participants discussed and agreed to update and make additions to the publicly available Common Control Lists.
14. Participants supported a cooperative approach to strengthening existing counter-proliferation arrangements while continuing to facilitate legitimate trade. Participants agreed that multilateral export control regimes provided the confidence and assurance necessary to facilitate the legitimate trade of sensitive dual-use items and help countries fulfil their relevant international obligations. Participants reaffirmed their strong commitment to promote the value of the AG in all relevant interactions with countries outside the AG membership.
15. Participants welcomed the valuable work of other non-proliferation groups such as the G7-led Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction and the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons. Participants noted the Global Partnership played an important role to coordinate international efforts to combat the proliferation of WMD including through exchanging information, coordinating action, fighting WMD related disinformation and delivering capacity building assistance to deter, prevent, detect and respond to CBW threats.
16. Participants reiterated the importance of the OPCW's role in monitoring compliance with the CWC and commended its professional and impartial work in this regard. Where there is credible evidence of possible breaches of the CWC, the OPCW should act as mandated by the CWC and provide assistance as requested.

Technical issues

17. AG licensing and enforcement experts exchanged experiences, case studies and information on enforcement best practices to prevent the proliferation of sensitive dual-use chemicals, biological materials and related equipment and technology. Discussions highlighted the value of sharing challenges, learning, and enhancements across the export controls enforcement community. Participants also discussed the importance of enforcement capability and effective controls governing Intangible Technology Transfer (ITT).

18. Participants shared approaches for keeping pace with rapidly evolving dual-use technologies and discussed the relevance of these technologies for non-proliferation and export controls. Participants discussed chemical and biological convergence, novel production of chemicals, case studies of dual-use research of concern and ways to mitigate risks, including the misuse of emerging technologies. Participants also discussed emerging technology including artificial intelligence, and noted both its benefits and risks.
19. Noting the AG's Common Control Lists serve as a benchmark for global best practice, Participants continued their work to refine controls applied to the chemical and biological items on these lists. This included updates and the addition of new items to the AG's Common Control Lists in response to emerging threats. Updated Common Control Lists and the AG Guidelines for Transfers of Sensitive Chemical or Biological Items are available at australiagroup.net

Outreach

20. Participants agreed to strengthen outreach with the intention of enhancing global efforts to prevent the spread of chemical and biological weapons. Engagement with countries outside the Australia Group was acknowledged to be central to efforts to counter the proliferation of CBW. The AG Chair and AG Participants agreed to increase individual and joint outreach.
21. Participants recognised the importance of effective implementation of export licensing measures on chemical weapons precursors and biological materials, including by source/ supplier or transshipment countries.
22. Participants thanked the Indian Chemical Council's Director General Sothi Selvam for his presentation on the best practices and initiatives of Indian industry on the safety and security of chemicals. Participants thanked Mr Kolja Brockmann from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) for his presentation on options to enhance the AG's work, and Dr Debbie Eagles from Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation for her presentation on emerging biotoxin threats. Participants also thanked Ms Whitney Bowman-Zatzkin from the Bioeconomy Information Sharing and Analysis Center (BIO-ISAC) for her presentation on emerging cyber-biosecurity threats and challenges.
23. Participants welcomed Singapore's participation in the Plenary outreach session that included a discussion on sovereign export control regimes and best practice for controls on chemical weapons precursors, biological materials and enabling technology. Participants thanked AG members India and the Republic of Korea for sharing their own best practices during the session.

24. Participants discussed priorities and opportunities to continue outreach to countries outside the Australia Group, including regional outreach.

Adherence and Membership

25. The AG Chair announced Albania's declaration of unilateral adherence to the AG on 20 May 2025. Participants welcomed Albania's declaration and noted it underlined the AG's role as the international benchmark for export controls governing chemical and biological materials.
26. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to encourage further declarations of unilateral adherence and the importance of advocacy and capacity building to encourage broad adoption of AG Common Control Lists and Guidelines.
27. Participants noted their ongoing interest in engagement with countries interested in AG membership.

Next Intersessional and Plenary

28. Participants thanked Romania for its generous hosting of the AG Intersessional meeting in Bucharest in January 2025.
29. Participants looked forward to the next AG Intersessional in Prague and thanked the Czech Republic for its generous offer to host the meeting.
30. Participants welcomed and accepted France's offer to host the AG Plenary in Paris in mid-2026.
31. Further information on the Australia Group is available at australiagroup.net