

Australia Vietnam Policy Institute Conference 2025 (AVPI25) Summary Paper

**Accelerating Australia-Vietnam economic cooperation
through smart, strong and sustainable business ties**



**28 October 2025
Brisbane, Queensland**



**Australia Vietnam
Policy Institute**



**Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

Held in Brisbane on 28 October 2025, the Australia Vietnam Policy Institute Conference 2025 (AVPI25) brought together government, industry and academic leaders to consider ways to accelerate economic cooperation between Australia and Vietnam through smart, strong, and sustainable business ties.

AVPI25 built on the momentum of the inaugural AVPI Conference in Adelaide in 2024 with a focus on practical cooperation that furthers the ambitions of the Australia–Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. As Vietnam enters its ‘era of national rise’, the conference sought to raise awareness of two-way opportunities and equip Australian and Vietnamese leaders with insights, relationships, and policy considerations to help improve bilateral engagement.

Discussions at AVPI25 underlined the shared commitment to the Australia–Vietnam partnership of both national governments, and the central role of businesses in driving economic ties that, while growing, are yet to match political ambition. The continued success of the partnerships across Australia and Vietnam will depend on how effectively both nations connect intelligence with action, align ambition with trust, and turn shared goals into tangible outcomes.



Introduction

As Vietnam's rapid development both grows and reshapes its economy, it is also helping to drive the economic dynamism of wider Southeast Asia. Australia's partnership with Vietnam and the wider region will need to evolve if it's to keep pace, with government efforts complemented by companies and other organisations that are proactive in trade and investment, prepared to navigate uncertainty, confident in their capabilities, and centre reciprocity in their relationships. The measure of success will be a bilateral partnership that reflects the shared confidence of two nations shaping their shared future together.

Fifty years after diplomatic ties were first established, Australia and Vietnam have built a partnership defined by trust, practical cooperation, and shared ambition. Since 2024, this has been underpinned by a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP), setting a clear direction for collaboration across trade, education, and innovation.

“It's more important than ever that business and government work hand in hand to strengthen partnerships.”

– Ms Caroline Linke, Assistant Secretary,
Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



That partnership has undergone rapid change. From aid-driven projects that built the first bridge across the Mekong in the mid-1990s, it evolved to a focus on capability development in the early-2000s and is increasingly a reciprocal and multi-faceted partnership. As Vietnam pursues its vision to become a high-income country by 2045, and Australia its strategy for deeper engagement in Southeast Asia, both countries are committed to free trade, regional diplomatic architecture, sustainable economic growth, skills exchange, and innovation.

Held in Brisbane on 28 October 2025, the Australia Vietnam Policy Institute (AVPI) Conference 2025 (AVPI25) brought together a wide range of stakeholders from government, business, and academia to explore '*Accelerating Australia–Vietnam economic cooperation through smart, strong and sustainable business ties*'. Speakers and informal conversations throughout the conference reflected on the critical role of enterprise, investment and people in the relationship, and the need to sustain momentum through genuine and practical partnership.

“In an increasingly uncertain global environment, the Australian–Vietnam relationship is more important than ever.”

– Mr Nghiem Xuan Hoa, Deputy Head of Mission,
Embassy of Vietnam

Three thematic pillars informed discussion: *smart collaboration* that builds business intelligence to find economic opportunities and navigate international uncertainty; reinforcing and leveraging the *strong partnership* between Australia and Vietnam for mutual benefit; and exploring *sustainable* cooperation that supports both countries' long-term prosperity in the face of structural economic change, including the transition to renewable energy.

This summary paper captures the core themes, policy questions and recommendations that emerged from the day's discussions, drawing on insights from conference speakers, panellists, and attendees.

As the leading bilateral policy institute focussed on the Australia–Vietnam partnership, AVPI provides a platform for engagement across businesses, government organisations, universities, non-profits, and think tanks. It enables and facilitates discussions on strategic and economic issues, develops and shares the latest research and insights, and works with partners to champion the bilateral relationship.

More information can be found on the AVPI website, avpi.org.au.

Charting the next chapter

The Australia-Vietnam relationship is shaped by Vietnam's domestic transformation.

Over the past year, the Government of Vietnam has embarked on one of the most far-reaching reform agendas in decades, redefining the way the country governs, invests, and integrates with the global economy.¹ These reforms are creating new momentum for Vietnam's collaboration with its international partners, including Australia, that is aligned with mutual interests in growth, innovation, sustainability, and regional resilience.

In his keynote address, Mr Andrew Goledzinowski AM, former Australian Ambassador to Vietnam, underlined the importance of the reforms for Vietnam's engagement with Australia. He noted that the intent of these reforms had been set out in speeches by General Secretary To Lam in 2024, and represented arguably the most significant changes in decades.²

Mr Goledzinowski AM explained that Vietnam's reforms promise to assist international engagement through simplifying administration, reducing bureaucracy, and accelerating investment. Specific initiatives include a major restructuring of local government by reducing the number of provincial units from 63 to 34, alongside tax holidays, simplified work-permit procedures, and new incentive schemes designed to attract global capital and talent.³

Additionally, the Government of Vietnam was in the process of establishing an International Financial Centre (IFC) across Ho Chi Minh City and Da Nang, in order to develop these areas as a regional financial hub for global investors, fintech, commodity and carbon markets. To deliver the IFC and strengthen Vietnam's integration into global financial systems, the Vietnam Government is providing regulatory incentives, planning new infrastructure, and supporting talent development initiatives – presenting valuable opportunities for Australia's institutional and advisory capabilities in investment, technology and governance.⁴



These structural changes are taking place alongside, and supporting, an already strong economy. Over the year to May 2025, Vietnam's exports rose 14 per cent, indicating a strong rebound in trade activity.⁵ Much of the growth was driven by investments in digital infrastructure, manufacturing and clean energy, areas where Australia's strengths in regulation, skills development and sustainable financing can add value. The trend points to Vietnam's transition from a manufacturing base to an innovation partner in regional and global markets.⁵

Australia has a significant contribution to make. There is genuine affection between our two countries. But it's more than just good vibes and warm feelings. There is enormous complementarity.

– Mr Andrew Goledzinowski AM, former Australian Ambassador to Vietnam

Mr Goledzinowski AM warned that Australian companies risked missing out on opportunities if they didn't move fast. In general, Australia has a risk averse and transactional corporate culture, and companies tend to be reluctant to enter Vietnam (or other new markets) without a level of certainty that is almost impossible to achieve without in-country experience. Companies from elsewhere, notably Japan and South Korea, often establish a representative presence in Vietnam to build market intelligence and in country networks, iteratively informing boardroom decision-making. Mr Goledzinowski AM likened this process to crossing the road in Hanoi – rather than waiting on the kerb for traffic to clear and walk across in one go, it is better to just start walking, one step at a time.



1. Nhan Dan Online, 'On the threshold of the era of national rise', accessed 29 October 2025, <https://en.nhandan.vn/on-the-threshold-of-the-era-of-national-rise-post143739.html>

2. Vietnam.VN, 'Speech by General Secretary To Lam at the National Conference', accessed 19 December 2025 <http://www.vietnam.vn/en/phat-bieu-cua-tong-bi-thu-to-lam-tai-hoi-nghi-toan-quoc>

3. Thu Vien Phap Luat, 'The Eleventh Plenum of the 13th Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam' [translated], accessed 29 October 2025, <https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Bo-may-hanh-chinh/Nghi-quyet-60-NQ-TW-2025-Hoi-nghi-lan-thu-11-Ban-chap-hanh-Trung-uong-Dang-khoa-XIII-651377.aspx>

4. Coventus Law, 'Vietnam's new international financial centre breaks the mold', accessed 29 October 2025, <https://coventuslaw.com/featured-content/vietnams-new-international-financial-center-breaks-the-mold/>

5. Reuters, 'Vietnam May exports rise 14% yr/yr, trade surplus at \$4.67 bln', accessed 29 October 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/vietnam-may-exports-rise-14-yr-yr-trade-surplus-467-bln-2025-06-04/>



Ms Caroline Linke, Assistant Secretary at Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, explained that cooperation under the CSP is helping to connect and support Vietnam's appetite for transformation with Australia's institutional expertise, regulatory experience, and technical capability. This aligns closely with Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040, which identifies Vietnam as a priority partner for investment diversification and market growth.⁶ For Australian businesses, Vietnam's liberalising policy environment, underpinned by stable governance and growing bilateral trust, presents expanding opportunities.

Education and skills partnerships remain central to the bilateral relationship. As noted by Mr Nghiem Xuan Hoa, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in Canberra, over 300 formal agreements now link Australian and Vietnamese universities and technical institutions, supporting joint research.⁷ These formal relationships complement strong and growing people-to-people ties, as demonstrated by the fact there are now over 50 flights a week between Vietnam and Australia.

The combination of Vietnam's reform drive and Australia's increased focus on Southeast Asia is both reinforcing the partnership between the two countries and presenting new opportunities for cooperation. What began as a relationship grounded in development assistance has matured into one based on co-investment, shared innovation, and complementary ambition.

6. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040*, 2023

7. Australian Embassy Vietnam, 'Australia – Vietnam Higher Education Partnerships' 2023, accessed 30 October 2025, <https://vietnam.embassy.gov.au/hanoi/MR230522.html>

Australian Ambassador to Vietnam;
AVPI Fellow

Founder, AusViet Bridge;
Founder, Ignite Her Spark;
Partnership & Community
Manager, Global Viet Women



AVPI25 Conference Program

Time	Session	Presenter(s)
8:45 am	Registration and networking	
9:15 am	Welcome remarks	Ms Alyna Pham (Master of Ceremonies) Founder, AusViet Bridge; Founder, Ignite Her Spark; Partnership & Community Manager, Global Viet Women; Australia-Vietnam Leadership Dialogue alumnus
9:20 am	Australia-Vietnam: Matching the strong partnership with economic ambition It has now been over a year since Australia and Vietnam elevated their relationship to the status of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP), building on a history of bilateral and regional cooperation across trade, development, education and security. In this session, representatives of the Australian Government and Government of Vietnam reflected on the partnership, current priorities, the contributions of non government organisations, and the opportunities presented by Vietnam's dynamic economy.	Ms Caroline Linke Assistant Secretary, Vietnam and Mekong Strategy, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Mr Nghiem Xuan Hoa Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
9:40 am	Keynote speech: 'Australia-Vietnam – Partnership as a path through uncertainty', followed by Q&A Australia's previous Ambassador to Vietnam, Mr Andrew Goledzinowski AM, helped elevate the bilateral relationship to a CSP, and he has since won a number of awards for his continued commitment to strengthening ties. In this keynote speech, Mr Goledzinowski shared his insights into the trajectory of the Australia-Vietnam relationship, and unpacked how the long-term and stable partnership between the two countries presents policy and economic opportunity, even as the Asia-Pacific trading environment becomes increasingly uncertain. The event MC facilitated questions from the audience.	The Hon Joe Szakacs MP Minister for Trade and Investment, Government of South Australia

Time	Session	Presenter(s)
10:25 am	Morning tea	
10:45 am	A local perspective on cooperation: Queensland and Vietnam Queensland and Vietnam have a multifaceted and mutually beneficial relationship, built on a strong Vietnamese diaspora, international education, investment and trade. Vietnam was Queensland's fifth largest export market by value in 2023-24. Attendees heard about the Queensland Government's priorities for engagement and how the State supported closer business ties.	Ms Michelle Matthews Global Investment Commissioner, Queensland Government
10:55 am	Trade and investment opportunities in Vietnam's era of 'National rise' The Government of Vietnam has stated its commitment to ushering in a new era of 'national rise', and Vietnam's economy continues to grow rapidly, driven by ambitious government policies, a burgeoning middle class, and the requirements of industry. Australia is benefiting from this growth, with two-way trade continuing to advance at a rapid pace. Chaired by Australia's Southeast Asia Business Champion for Vietnam, this session included three case studies in successful engagement as well as a panel discussion to unpack key insights and opportunities facing two-way trade and investment.	Ms Louise Adams CEO, Aurecon; Australia's Southeast Asia Business Champion for Vietnam; AVPI Advisory Board Member
		Mr Truong Quang Quoc Dai (Hudson Truong) Vice President Agricultural Development, AgriS; General Manager, Global Mind Australia
		Dr Binh Tran Head of Consulting, FPT Australasia
		Dr Truc Le Lead, Visitor Economy Data Analytics and Indicators Cluster, Griffith University
12:10 pm	Lunch	
1:10 pm	Navigating Nuance: Doing business better in Vietnam Vietnam is one of Southeast Asia's most dynamic and rapidly evolving markets, and it offers significant opportunities for Australian businesses. Yet success in Vietnam demands more than commercial ambition – it requires deep cultural intelligence, trusted relationships, and patient, strategic engagement. This panel explored practical strategies for localisation, partnership building, talent development, and risk navigation in the Vietnamese context.	Mr James Scullin (Chair) Society Australia
		Ms Minh Cao Senior Service Quality Adviser, Austrade; Co-Founder, Global Viet Women
		Mr Marc Slater CEO, eReflect
		Ms Janelle Casey Senior Adviser, Beanstalk

Time	Session	Presenter(s)
2:10 pm	Sustainability, supply and security: Vietnam's energy transition and its implications The Australia-Vietnam CSP recognises energy as a priority for cooperation, including to support economic development, climate action and the security of energy supplies. As Vietnam continues its transition to clean energy, one of the fastest in Southeast Asia, attendees learned about some of the implications for Australia and the wider region.	Professor Adrian Panow Director, Energy Transition Network, University of Queensland
2:25 pm	Afternoon tea	
2:45 pm	Workshop: The green economy's implications for bilateral business cooperation This immersive workshop explored the future of Australia-Vietnam collaboration through the lens of the global, regional and bilateral shift to a 'greener' economy. From the energy to finance and skills, participants were supported to unpack the drivers of this shift and what these might mean for their own organisations.	Ms Catherine Mudford (Co-chair) Acting CEO, Asialink Business Mr Shiraz Engineer (Co-chair) Head, Asialink Business Academy Ms Louise Tran Head, OzHarvest Ventures
4:15 pm	Conference outcomes and the AVPI's priorities for 2026 The AVPI's strength lies in its diverse network of Australian and Vietnamese businesses, government agencies, think tanks, not-for-profits, academics and industry representatives committed to advancing the Australia-Vietnam relationship. Closing the substantive discussion, Mr Layton Pike summarised AVPI25's key outcomes and reflected on how the AVPI will use these to inform policy development and shape the AVPI's priorities into 2026.	Mr Layton Pike Co-Founder AVPI, AVPI Advisory Board member, and Interim DVC International & Engagement, RMIT University
4:30 pm	Formal close, invitation to join networking drinks	Ms Alyna Pham
4:30 pm	Networking drinks	
6:30 pm	Event close	



Smart: Trade, Investment and Market Intelligence

Economic cooperation between Australia and Vietnam is entering a more sophisticated phase.

As Vietnam advances through what its leaders have called its 'era of national rise', officials and business leaders will need to generate and apply intelligence, transform information into insight, and insight into strategy if they are to establish and maintain a competitive advantage.⁸

At the same time, Vietnam's National Digital Transformation Program and its new data and privacy frameworks are reshaping how government and industry interact. The country's ambition to become a digital economy by 2030 is driving demand for secure data infrastructure, automation, and artificial intelligence (AI).⁹ Vietnam is also investing in AI and data centres to support its continued digital transformation and economic competitiveness.



For Australia, this presents new pathways for cooperation, and opportunities to match Vietnam's pace and scale with Australia's strengths in governance and apply hard-earned expertise.

Discussion at AVPI25 showed how these dynamics are reshaping trade and investment, including by driving a more significant role for Vietnam in Southeast Asia. Vietnam is emerging as a manufacturing base with growing innovation capacity, while Australia's expertise in engineering, digital services, and sustainable agribusiness complements this shift.

Conference participants emphasised the opportunity to connect Australia's institutional transparency with Vietnam's ambition, creating commercial value grounded in trust and shared capability. They noted collaboration will need to be targeted and considered, and build and use the systems and safeguards that allow technology and innovation to deliver.

[Aurecon's] success in Vietnam is that we can embrace local specifics with international best practice. Asia-engagement isn't a 'side-hustle' – it has got to be a serious business.

– Ms Louise Adams, Chief Executive Officer, Aurecon; Australia's Southeast Asia Business Champion for Vietnam; Member of the AVPI Advisory Board



Speakers examined how data is being turned into intelligence of value through joint frameworks, traceability standards and collaboration between universities and industry. High-quality information enables governments and businesses to navigate shifting supply chains, anticipate risk and identify areas for co-investment. It supports effective partnerships that bridge policy intent with commercial reality, delivering tangible outcomes.

Ms Louise Adams, CEO of Aurecon, Australia's Southeast Asia Business Champion for Vietnam and member of the AVPI's Advisory Board, noted that progress requires leadership from both the public and private sectors. While government cannot remain on the sidelines, business must act as the link between regulatory ambition and market execution.

There is a famous Vietnamese saying: 'If you want to go quick, go alone; if you want to go far, go together'.

– Mr Truong Quang Quoc Dai, Vice President of Agricultural Development at AgriS; General Manager of Global Mind Australia

8. Nhan Dan Online, 'On the threshold of the era of national rise', accessed 29 October 2025, <https://en.vneconomy.vln/queensland-bets-on-vietnam-as-anchor-of-its-southeast-asia-strategy.htm>

9. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Australia-Vietnam Enhanced Economic Engagement Strategy*, 2022

Agriculture is one sector in which data and collaboration are reshaping practice. As Mr Truong Quang Quoc Dai, Vice President of Agricultural Development at AgriS and General Manager of Global Mind Australia, emphasised in his presentation, valid and accurate data is critical to generating insights for commercialisation. AgriS has used this data to generate and connect research and development with practical applications across its supply chains, and to partner effectively with through integrated digital and physical platforms. In addition to supporting profitability, this approach is helping small-scale farmers adopt technologies that would otherwise remain out of reach, showing how Australian research and development can strengthen Vietnam's food systems and contribute to global food security.



In the digital domain, Dr Binh Tran explained that FPT Australasia had found success in leveraging partnerships with Australian universities, using shared data frameworks to advance health innovation. Drawing on its regional experience, FPT has developed traceability systems that ensure authorised access to information, maintaining integrity and privacy across borders. Its collaboration with Monash University and Alfred Health had highlighted the importance of, and challenges associated with, managing sensitive health data securely to enable research.

Tourism offered a further example of the value of applied intelligence. Dr Truc Le, of Griffith University, explained how a joint project with the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism, the General Statistics Office, Tourism Research Australia and the Australian Bureau of Statistics has helped to transform disparate datasets into actionable insights. In the absence of clear, central data records of tourism in Vietnam, the project had used a number of methods and expertise generated in Australia to build a better picture of two-way tourism, including competitive advantages for Vietnam's tourism industry.



While speakers were optimistic about the role of data, including that generated or processed by AI, in enabling smart two-way collaboration and business, they noted ethical and governance considerations remained of central importance. Without standardised frameworks, it is difficult to build reliable data sets, adequately protect sensitive information, or provide clients the outcomes they seek. As Vietnam continues its reforms in digital governance, Australia's long-standing experience in privacy and security regulation could be of significant interest.

Strong: People, Culture and Trusted Partnerships

Vietnam's economic growth is creating new space for collaboration, yet success in the market still depends on strong, long-term relationships. Formal agreements and trade policy may set the frameworks in which companies engage, but trust determines outcomes.

For Australian businesses, readiness is measured less by product fit and more by commitment, adaptability and cultural understanding. In Vietnam, long-term partnerships grounded in cultural understanding and consistent presence build the credibility that sustains influence.

While the Vietnamese market presents many opportunities for Australia, the market readiness of any company begins with clarity of purpose. In a discussion led by Mr James Scullin, Director Programs, Asia Society Australia, panellists explored how successful Australian (and other international) companies in Vietnam are able to define why they are in the country and explain to partners what they can contribute, not just what they hope to gain.

Panellists underlined the importance of investing time in understanding how the market works, preparing their approaches, and building relationships. While Vietnam's economy modernises at pace, its commercial culture can reflect a historic reliance on small, family owned enterprises, where personal reputation carries great weight. For Australian firms more used to transactional models, this demands a change in pace and mindset.



Trust is a very important thing to achieve... Co-innovation and co-creation are very important to enhance the capacity of both nations.

– Mr Truong Quang Quoc Dai, Vice President of Agricultural Development at AgriS; General Manager of Global Mind Australia

A key resource in supporting understanding is Australia's vibrant Vietnamese diaspora, many members of which have experience in both corporate cultures and can provide valuable insights, cultural fluency, and trusted networks.

Readiness begins with ensuring ambition aligns with capacity. Ms Minh Cao, Senior Service Quality Adviser at Austrade and Co-Founder of Global Viet Women, outlined four questions businesses should address before entering Vietnam. Can they commit resources for the long term? Does their operating model fit local conditions? What differentiates their product? And do they have a network to support them? Developing answers to these questions is critical to preparedness.

[Vietnamese partners] want you to be there to meet with them, they want to see your commitment.

– Ms Minh Cao, Senior Adviser, Austrade; Co-Founder, Global Viet Women

Tailoring mindsets to the commercial reality was another recurring theme. Mr Marc Slater, Chief Executive Officer of edutech firm eReflect, described how his company was expanding its international focus to include Vietnam, drawn by the country's growth and digital transformation. Product-market fit and adaptability were critical; eReflect has found Vietnamese customers expect products customised to them, not simply translated from other languages. Success comes from listening to partners and customers and tailoring solutions to context.

In Vietnam, relationships grow through consistency and presence. Informal meetings, gestures of courtesy and ongoing follow-up build trust over time, while attention to communication and etiquette (e.g. how one dresses, exchanges business cards or reads body language) signals respect. Language plays a similar role: fluency matters less than the willingness to engage. Even a few Vietnamese phrases can convey genuine interest in culture and demonstrate a commitment to the market.

It's a hot market, and if you walk away, then another country will walk in and potentially take your customer or partner.

– Ms Janelle Casey, Senior Adviser, Beanstalk AgTech

Ms Janelle Casey, Senior Adviser at Beanstalk AgTech and former Australian Trade Commissioner in Vietnam, emphasised the importance of follow-through. She encouraged firms to debrief with Austrade or their state's trade and investment promotion agency, thank their contacts in Vietnam and plan their next visit before returning home. In a competitive environment, continuity is a differentiator.

Australian companies tend to be risk-averse, but success in Vietnam can still be found through incremental approaches. Piloting, co-designing or testing feasibility are all excellent ways to test the environment before committing to full-scale market entry. This helps to build trust and evidence, aligning with the preference of many Vietnamese companies for staged partnership-building and allowing the adjustment of expectations as relationships mature.

Test before you invest.

– Mr Marc Slater, Chief Executive Officer, eReflect



The Queensland-Vietnam partnership: A local perspective on cooperation

Queensland's engagement with Vietnam exemplifies how state-level collaboration can complement national bilateral cooperation.

Vietnam is now Queensland's largest export market in Southeast Asia and sixth globally, with Queensland accounting for more than one-third of Australia's total exports to Vietnam.¹⁰ This trade depth drives collaboration across premium food production, energy transition, education and healthcare.

During AVPI25, Ms Michelle Mathews, Global Investment Commissioner for the Queensland Government, emphasised the critical importance of relationships to business engagement. She highlighted the success of initiatives supported by the Queensland Government, including joint ventures with TTC AgriS in agribusiness, and emerging cooperation in advanced battery technologies for Vietnam's power grid.

The week after AVPI25, the Queensland Government opened a trade and investment office in Hanoi, making it the first Australian state with dual-city offices in Vietnam. This move aims to unlock further export growth and job opportunities.¹¹

10. VN Economy, 'Queensland bets on Vietnam as anchor of its Southeast Asia Strategy', accessed 5 November 2025, <https://en.vneconomy.vn/queensland-bets-on-vietnam-as-anchor-of-its-southeast-asia-strategy.htm>
11. Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training, 'Crisafulli Government delivers strategic trade boost with new Vietnam office', accessed 5 November 2025, <https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/103867>

Sustainable: Energy, Green Growth and Climate Transition

Even as the governments of some major global economies retreat from coordinated action on the climate, sustainability and energy elements of the Sustainable Development Goals, Vietnam and others across Southeast Asia are accelerating their efforts.

In this environment, partnerships between like-minded countries can provide channels for practical cooperation even as multilateral processes appear to slow.

Prof. Adrian Panow, Director Energy Transition Network, University of Queensland, presented to the importance of understanding international dynamics to the global energy transition. While Australia and Vietnam need to chart their own courses in this context, they share challenges and have much to offer each other. Both nations are working to balance reducing emissions with sustaining economic growth, and while each is doing so from a different starting point, they are working along a converging path.

“For Vietnam, the ambition [for energy reform] is real.

– Prof. Adrian Panow, Director Energy Transition Network, University of Queensland

Vietnam has set ambitious targets to phase out coal, accelerate renewable generation and explore future nuclear options. These face steep obstacles, including the high energy intensity of current economic activity when compared to other countries. For Australia, challenges lie in managing complexity, building public confidence, and ensuring the pace of technological change is supported by efforts to ensure this is understood by both decision makers and wider society.



While there is significant promise for collaboration, Prof. Panow cautioned that Australia and Vietnam are not immune from the international and widespread use of misinformation about energy, climate and emissions. It is important, he emphasised, to combat this misinformation to maintain public confidence, and to do this Australia and Vietnam need education programs, transparent decision-making and credible data.

Ms Catherine Mudford, Acting CEO at Asialink Business, noted Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040 identifies clean energy and green finance as priority sectors for collaboration with Vietnam.¹² Partnerships are needed to combine capital, capability and policy expertise to accelerate sustainable growth. Vietnam's green transition could generate nearly one million new jobs in the country by 2040 across agriculture, manufacturing, and renewable energy. Realising this potential will depend on sustained investment, regulatory clarity and a workforce equipped with technical and managerial skills.

During an interactive workshop facilitated by Asialink Business, AVPI25 participants considered practical ways to build bilateral cooperation on the green economy, including in green finance, skills and energy. Discussion centred on the need for genuine and reciprocal partnerships, as well as establishing shared frameworks for measuring progress, improving data integrity and governance. Regulatory alignment, particularly around green finance and investment screening, was seen as essential for building investor confidence.

Amongst options for practical cooperation raised by participants were: pilot projects in renewable energy and the circular economy to pave the way for deeper engagement; developing tools to channel long-term capital into low-carbon infrastructure; facilitating skills mobility through bilateral programs in renewable energy, agritech and sustainable manufacturing; building shared, transparent datasets supported by common methods for measuring progress; and supporting locally-led, community-based innovation that aligns with Vietnam's cultural and environmental context.



Stepping forward together

In closing AVPI25, Mr Layton Pike, Co-Founder of the AVPI and Interim Deputy Vice Chancellor International and Engagement at RMIT University, reflected on how the conference has made clear the importance of connection and reciprocity to cooperation between Australia and Vietnam.

Vietnam's rapid growth represents a step change in its development, and is reshaping how Australia needs to engage if it is to remain relevant. Similarly, reciprocity is essential to sustained success; Australian government agencies, businesses and other entities need to help Vietnamese counterparts navigate Australian systems and business culture, especially while they benefit from learning from Vietnamese perspectives and expertise.

An increasingly mature bilateral partnership, supported by the CSP, is seeing collaboration become both broader and deeper. Connections across government, business and education providers are increasingly institutionalised. Bilateral partnerships are seeing more reciprocal contributions by Australian and Vietnamese entities across knowledge, investment and leadership and there is a clearer focus on turning symbolic commitments into results.

Mr Pike noted reciprocity and partnership were at the heart of the AVPI's purpose, and that the AVPI would continue to strengthen people, business, official and institutional links between Australia and Vietnam. The recent (September 2025) establishment of the AVPI's new Vietnam office in Hanoi elevated the AVPI to be a truly bilateral institute with locations, teams and activities across both countries. This development strengthens the AVPI's ability to connect across the relationship and support two-way engagement in 2026 and beyond.

Sustainability was not a matter of energy or environment alone, noted Ms Louise Tran, Head, OzHarvest Ventures and workshop co-facilitator. In her comments, she reflected on how Vietnamese companies are interpreting sustainability, including by defining corporate responsibility through connection to community, culture, and identity. In this context, sustainability extends to include how organisations care for employees, families and the places in which they operate – linking economic transition with social wellbeing.

Ms Tran reiterated that trust in Vietnamese expertise and in local decision-making is critical for projects to endure. Genuine partnership requires recognising where capability already exists and contributing in ways that complement this while strengthening ties.

As long as the vision and values remain aligned with your ultimate vision... the rest is 'the how'. The process can be adapted.

– Ms Louise Tran, Head, OzHarvest Ventures





Recommendations

Advancing smart, strong and sustainable collaboration between Australia and Vietnam

The following six recommendations build on insights from the AVPI25. They outline shared priorities for both countries as they move from dialogue to delivery, focusing on practical cooperation.

1. Establish frameworks for trusted data and digital cooperation

Developing shared frameworks for data governance and digital innovation can provide the foundation for future trade and research collaboration. Aligning privacy, cybersecurity and traceability standards under Vietnam's National Digital Transformation Program and Australia's Digital Economy Strategy would strengthen investor confidence and reduce regulatory friction. Pilot projects in health, tourism and AI governance could demonstrate how shared standards translate into measurable value.

2. Build digital literacy and evidence-based policymaking capacity

As the digital economy expands, demand for data literacy and analytical rigour will increase across government, industry and non-profits. Developing joint training programs and shared curricula through universities and policy institutes would build the leadership and governance capability required for regional digital transformation and reduce risks associated with misinformation and erosion of trust.

3. Build digital literacy and evidence-based policymaking capacity

Long-term commercial success in Vietnam depends on market intelligence, readiness and commitment. Australian companies that understand Vietnam's market dynamics, regulatory context and business culture are more likely to build sustainable operations. Continued government support for targeted readiness programs (for example, those led by Austrade) can usefully be complemented by activities delivered by non-state actors, including the AVPI and its Knowledge Partners, to connect businesses with sector experts to support understanding of the commercial opportunity and inform market entry.

4. Build cross-cultural expertise by strengthening networks that connect Vietnamese and Australian diaspora members and international alumni to organisations

Australia's significant Vietnamese diaspora is a strategic asset for bilateral cooperation, as is the Australian diaspora in Vietnam and the growing number of alumni of Australian educational institutions in Vietnam. Better leveraging the cultural fluency and cross-border networks of these groups can shorten organisations' learning curves and enhance two-way understanding and fluency. While professional networks and organisations exist, more could be done to better connect diaspora members and alumni to both each other and institutions that can use their expertise (whether as employees or in other capacities).

5. Mobilise capital for green finance and circular-economy innovation

Joint investment in low-carbon industries can accelerate transition and open new markets. Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040 identifies green finance as a driver of regional growth and stability. To attract institutional capital into renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and waste reduction, financial institutions, research organisations and government agencies should explore practical steps that build momentum and trust, including pilot projects and common standards.

6. Align workforce development with emerging green and digital industries

A skilled and mobile workforce is central to the competitiveness of both the Australian and Vietnamese economies. As technology and sustainability reshape the region, bilateral training pathways will be essential for adaptability, knowledge sharing and growth. Joint academies, exchange programs and mutual credentialing in renewable energy, agritech and advanced manufacturing can build the workforce capability needed for the greener and more digital future economy.



References

1. Nhan Dan Online, 'On the threshold of the era of national rise', accessed 29 October 2025, <https://en.nhandan.vn/on-the-threshold-of-the-era-of-national-rise-post143739.html>
2. Vietnam.VN, 'Speech by General Secretary To Lam at the National Conference', accessed 19 December 2025 <http://www.vietnam.vn/en/phat-bieu-cua-tong-bi-thu-to-lam-tai-hoi-nghi-toan-quoc>
3. Thu Vien Phap Luat, 'The Eleventh Plenum of the 13th Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam' [translated], accessed 29 October 2025, <https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Bo-may-hanh-chinh/Nghi-quyet-60-NQ-TW-2025-Hoi-nghi-lan-thu-11-Ban-chap-hanh-Trung-uong-Dang-khoa-XIII-651377.aspx>
4. Coventus Law, 'Vietnam's new international financial centre breaks the mold', accessed 29 October 2025, <https://coventuslaw.com/featured-content/vietnams-new-international-financial-center-breaks-the-mold/>
5. Reuters, 'Vietnam May exports rise 14% yr/yr, trade surplus at \$4.67 bln', accessed 29 October 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/vietnam-may-exports-rise-14-yr-yr-trade-surplus-467-bln-2025-06-04/>
6. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040*, 2023
7. Australian Embassy Vietnam, 'Australia – Vietnam Higher Education Partnerships' 2023, accessed 30 October 2025, <https://vietnam.embassy.gov.au/hanoi/MR230522.htm>
8. Nhan Dan Online, 'On the threshold of the era of national rise', accessed 29 October 2025, <https://en.vneconomy.vn/queensland-bets-on-vietnam-as-anchor-of-its-southeast-asia-strategy.htm>
9. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Australia–Vietnam Enhanced Economic Engagement Strategy*, 2022
10. VN Economy, 'Queensland bets on Vietnam as anchor of its Southeast Asia Strategy', accessed 5 November 2025, <https://en.vneconomy.vn/queensland-bets-on-vietnam-as-anchor-of-its-southeast-asia-strategy.htm>
11. Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training, 'Crisafulli Government delivers strategic trade boost with new Vietnam office', accessed 5 November 2025, <https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/103867>
12. Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040*, 2023

Images

1. All images in this summary paper feature attendees of AVPI25 on 28 October 2025.

Acknowledgements

The AVPI acknowledges the support it receives from the Australian Government, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Australian Aid.



Creative Commons Licence:

This report is published under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial NonDerivs 3.0 Unported Licence. The work in this report can be copied and redistributed in any medium or format without any further permission needing to be sought, as long as: the work is copied or redistributed for non-commercial purposes; the original authors and publishers of the work are credited; and, the work is not altered, only distributed.

The full licence terms are available at: www.creativecommons.org/licenses

RAPPORTEUR

Nicola Gibbs

Director, Pluri

