

Preface

This book is in honour of Professor Peter Drysdale. It commemorates his academic and personal contributions after a lifetime of commitment to his vision for Australia and the Asia Pacific region and to his many students and friends throughout the world.

Peter Drysdale has been a powerful force for change for nearly four decades. With his mentors, Sir John Crawford of Australia and Dr Saburo Okita of Japan, he mapped out the vision and strategies needed to mobilise the diverse economies of the Asia Pacific region as an engine of growth.

With like-minded academics from the region, he established and nurtured the cooperation mechanisms that have given the region's governments, businesses and academic communities the confidence to pursue economic integration. With his colleagues in Australia, he has shaped the policy environment under successive governments, enabling Australia to build a comprehensive economic and political relationship with the Asia Pacific region.

Relatively unheralded among Peter's many valuable contributions is his mentoring role as a teacher and advisor to his many hundreds of students and friends in Australia and the region. They have become Prime Ministers and Ministers, captains of industry, prominent academics and fellow agents of change working in many walks of life. They are armed with his academic work and his practical insights and ensure that his vision is carried forward in the decades ahead.

Peter Drysdale has pursued his mission with a special intensity of purpose and focus that will remain one of his hallmarks. Whether dealing with senior government officials, diplomats, fellow academics or potential funders, everyone knows that Peter Drysdale will not lose an opportunity to engage them on a strategic piece of the jigsaw for his vision. He is tough with those who he believes are wasting energy or departing from his journey. And he commands respect and loyalty from those who have been co-opted, not letting

them forget that they have entered a long-term contract. He keeps his band of former students and associates together through prodigious networking and a strong generosity of spirit, caring as much about their welfare as their achievements.

In his academic work, Peter Drysdale has always held a dynamic view of the world focused on growth and opportunity. This is his context of the Australia-Japan relationship that has been a central part of his research through the Australia-Japan Research Centre at the Australian National University. He saw how the emergence of Japan could provide vast opportunities for Australia if it could be a reliable supplier of raw materials. And he saw that Japanese growth depended on exports to the United States. This in turn cemented his view that engagement across the Pacific with the United States was paramount to economic prosperity as well as security for the whole region. He applied the same dynamic paradigm to the growing Northeast Asian and Southeast Asian tigers and expanded his research and networks to include them.

Ahead of the times, he has fostered engagement with an emerging China and saw how the economic might of such a large and resource and technology hungry economy could bring prosperity to Australia and the rest of the region.

But in these formative times, he knew that economic complementarity within the region was not enough to drive change. There were layers of long-standing political, cultural and historical diversity and vast differences in economic development that had to be bridged if the region was to integrate. These growing economies needed to shape and develop a shared vision and to exercise clear-headed political leadership to bring down the barriers to trade and investment. Peter's seminal 1989 work on international economic pluralism in the East Asia and the Pacific provided the insights and agenda for this.

In addressing this challenge, Peter Drysdale and his colleagues started with the region's thinkers and academics and formed the Pacific Trade and Development Conference to build a shared approach by encouraging an Asia Pacific research agenda.

In 1980, with the strong support of the Prime Ministers of Japan and Australia, he and his colleagues embarked on a bolder plan. They formed the Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference that informally brought

representatives of governments together with their counterparts from business and academia to discuss how the region should be shaped. And later, he helped bring China, Chinese Taipei and Hong Kong into this group giving all the key players of the region a seat at one table for the first time. APEC acknowledges that it could not have been formed in 1989 without these foundations.¹

Amid this broad picture, Peter Drysdale was very focused about his own research agenda and that of his students. His dynamic vision provided the backdrop for a specific view of industries, sectors and the economy as well as the political and economic linkages that brought them together.

This volume itself is testimony to the extraordinary breadth and scope of Peter Drysdale's career. It showcases the work of some of his former students who, with their own established expertise and in their own way, reflect the insights, context and forward-looking nature that Peter has always encouraged.

Typically, Peter Drysdale has not stopped his life's work despite retiring formally in 2002. He maintains an unflagging pace of public commentary, contributions to conferences, and strategic inputs to institution-building, always looking forward.

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Christopher Findlay and David Parsons

1 See Chairman's Summary statement from the first APEC Ministerial Meeting, Canberra, November 1989. Text available at http://www.apec.org/apec/ministerial_statements/annual_ministerial/1989_1st_apec_ministerial/chair_summary.html.