



# Possible Ways for Development of the Consular Service in the South Pacific

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**Abstract.** The author presents the specific elements of diplomatic and consular work in the South Pacific region from the perspective of a career diplomat. He shows the main geographical and political characteristics of Australia which influence consular activity and also the characteristics of the beneficiaries of consular services who need to be served by the consular infrastructure. The study presents several models for undertaking Hungarian consular work and for organizing the Hungarian consular network in Australia. The author also outlines current inconsistencies in the regulations applicable to consular activity in Australia under domestic, international, and Hungarian norms as well as functional issues and the possible ways to correct them. In his conclusions, the author formulates proposals for the redesign of consular organization in Australia.

**Keywords:** Australia, Hungarian diplomacy, diplomatic relations, consular relations, Vienna Convention

## 1. Introduction

Related articles<sup>1</sup> have reviewed the main stages of the establishment of the Hungarian diplomatic and consular network in the South Pacific region from a historical aspect. In this article, we are dealing with the possible ways of the developmental opportunities on the field of consular work, so focusing primarily on the present and the future. The place of our investigation is still in the South Pacific, but from a consular point of view we are also looking at the entire Pacific Basin.

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1 See: Domaniczky 2017. 44–62. For further details, see Domaniczky 2019a. 257–261 and Domaniczky 2018. 341–361.

We examine five possible models below, observing their advantages and disadvantages from a diplomatic and consular point of view and selecting the most appropriate model for Hungarian interests and Australian capabilities.

## 2. Hungarian Interests – Australian Characteristics

Above all, it is important to note that recognizing and exploiting the potential of each model requires an understanding of certain Australian characteristics and local potentials. Here only the most important ones can be mentioned.

## 3. Canberra, the Australian Capital City

Although the capital of Australia was founded more than a century ago in 1913 – the founding fathers of the young country had dared to dream something big.<sup>2</sup> Built from scratch for about half a century, the Australian capital began to find its own role only in the 1990s. It took another couple of decades to become a clear and primary political, administrative, and diplomatic<sup>3</sup> centre within the country (by the 2010s),<sup>4</sup> but as a city it has not grown into its gown yet.<sup>5</sup>

During the decades of ‘upbringing’, the role of the capital was first played by Melbourne and later, supplementing to the functions of Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne as co-players together.<sup>6</sup> Owing to the technical advancement, Canberra

2 A Swedish anthropologist, a member of the Kon-Tiki expedition of 1947, Bengt Danielsson (1921–1997) spent more time in Australia in the mid-1950s. In his book, he aptly said about Canberra: ‘The only flaw in Griffin’s plan was that it was oversized compared to Australia’s financial strength. [...] So the city of 30,000 people is like a little kid dressed in big clothes. If at some point the baby enters his dress, if this city is ever built, it will certainly not be artificial or strange ...’ See full quote: Domaniczky 2018. 411–412.

3 The capital has welcomed a growing number of diplomatic missions since the 1940s, and its weight has only slowly increased, alongside the generally older consular offices in Sydney. Currently, according to the Australian protocol, diplomatic representation can only be established in the federal capital.

4 It is important to recall here a symbolic change from 2009. Although the Australian prime ministers have maintained their official residence (The Lodge) in Canberra since 1927, with few exceptions, in 1996, Prime Minister John Howard (1996–2007) did not move to the capital but remained in Sydney after his election. Instead of the Lodge, the secondary seat in Sydney (Kirribilli House) became the primary residence of the Prime Minister during these years. Howard travelled to Canberra from here, which was a good symbol of the Prime Minister’s views on the weight and role of the Australian capital. After the Howard era, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd (2007–2010) moved permanently back to Canberra.

5 The half-million inhabitants expected to be reached in the 1960s by 1990 will probably only become a reality by 2035. See also: Brown 2014. 222.

6 See more on the connections of these three cities: Domaniczky 2019b (in press).

is getting closer and closer to Sydney, a metropolis that is heavily expanding to the west, about two hours away by road.

## **4. The Two Pillars of Australian Economy and Society: Melbourne and Sydney**

Australia's history, economy, and society are built on two pillars: the two coastal metropolises in which more than 40% of the country's population lives: Melbourne and Sydney. Sydney is the oldest European settlement on the continent, and it is currently the country's largest city and the main centre of economic life. But having got strength from the 19<sup>th</sup>-century gold rush, Melbourne has become the first capital of the federated Australia. The southern metropolis is still an administrative centre and one of the biggest transport hubs of the continent. In addition, due to its diverse programme offers and multicultural background, it is also referred to as the cultural capital of the continent.

The relationships between the two metropolises, which had once been quarrelling, are close and complex, and the development and operation of each city can only be properly understood in the knowledge of the other. The 'third sister', the largest inland city and the current capital, Canberra, is closely linked to both cities, but via its location is increasingly connected to Sydney, so it is worth considering the two cities together as Sydney-Canberra.

So, the expression 'two pillars' actually covers three cities: Melbourne, the southern metropolis, and Sydney-Canberra, which are relatively close together. From a diplomatic point of view, it is not enough to be present in Canberra alone, but it is also necessary to continuously monitor and evaluate the events of the two metropolises in order to get a full picture of Australian possibilities and potentials. However, from a consular point of view, the number of potential clients and cases, the composition of the diaspora have regional differences, and these should be carefully examined before making a decision on the development of the consular network.<sup>7</sup>

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7 In Sydney, where there was a Consulate General between 1968 and 2009, the Hungarian diaspora was well-surveyed from a consular aspect, with a large majority of clients already having consular affairs. Currently, it requires only 'follow-up' to recent events. By contrast, Melbourne is hardly known from a consular point of view since a permanent professional consulate has only been in operation in the city since 2013. There, with the right methods, the customer base could be significantly expanded with new customers. Owing to big constructional works in the 1950s and 1970s around Canberra, more than a thousand Hungarians lived in organized structures at one time: they had Hungarian clubs, associations, and regular weekly events. By the turn of the millennium, the organized community had completely disappeared, and although there are still a thousand people who claim to be Hungarians in the Canberra area, they are mostly of different generations living scattered in the vicinity of the capital city.

## 5. The Coercive Power of Distances

Australia is the sixth largest country on Earth. It is the only country that covers an entire continent. Australia has been trying to increase its population since the end of the Second World War with its planned immigration policy, but the population density is still around 3 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>8</sup> The majority of the population lives in the two metropolises (Sydney and Melbourne) and Canberra,<sup>9</sup> the state capitals<sup>10</sup> and the East Coast. More than 80% of the country is sparsely populated or uninhabited,<sup>11</sup> while transport is – except for airplanes and cars – difficult, costly, and time consuming. Air traffic between the six state capitals is continuous, giving the impression that these settlements are situated close to each other. But in reality, without the airplane, big cities are at least a thousand kilometres apart;<sup>12</sup> for example, the dynamically developing Perth is 2,700 km from the nearest Adelaide and 4,300 km from Brisbane.<sup>13</sup>

All these features should be taken into account in the planning of consular work. Because of distances and high costs, one-stop-shop business and the widest possible use of electronic solutions should be sought and preferred.

## 6. The Scattered Hungarian Diaspora

In this vast country, most Hungarians live in the state capitals, including Melbourne and Sydney, but a minority is scattered throughout the continent – from the homesteads on the rims of deserts in South Australia to the tiny villages of Tasmania. There are minor differences in the composition of urban communities (regarding who, when, and where they came from and what their destination was), but, more importantly, the first generations, who originally lived in Hungary, are found in every community. The distribution of the Hungarian diaspora in Australia should be taken into account when determining consular districts. Due to the dispersion of the first generations, who usually have the most Hungarian affairs, the greatest contribution to the Hungarian community would be to increase the role of electronic services.<sup>14</sup>

8 The density is 105 persons/km<sup>2</sup> in Hungary and 84 persons/km<sup>2</sup> in Romania.

9 Half of the country's population lives in these three cities.

10 Sydney (New South Wales), Melbourne (Victoria), Brisbane (Queensland), Perth (Western Australia), Adelaide (South Australia), Hobart (Tasmania).

11 This is the region of the so-called Outback. See for map: Domaniczky 2018. 369.

12 For example: Brisbane from Sydney, Sydney from Melbourne, Melbourne from Adelaide.

13 For comparison: Budapest (Hungary) is 1,700 km from London (United Kingdom) on road, 2,700 km from Aberdeen (UK), 4,200 km from Kuwait City (Kuwait), and 4,500 km from Omsk (Russia).

14 Given a simple practical example: first-generation clients regularly apply for Hungarian police clearance certificates to extend their Australian visas or to obtain Australian citizenship. The length of the process has been reduced from 8 weeks to 2 to 3 days in recent years, but personal

## **7. Possible Models for Diplomatic and Consular Work in the Region**

### **7.1. A Multi-Centred Diplomatic and Multi-Centred Consular Network**

This can also be called a historical model.<sup>15</sup> Since the opening (1975) of the Canberra Embassy, there were two Hungarian missions in Australia – although hierarchically organized by the law, they were practically equivalent: the Embassy of Canberra and the Consulate General of Sydney.<sup>16</sup> The period of dual representation lasted for nearly four decades (1975–2009), and, although diplomatic work was primarily for Canberra and consular work for Sydney during this period, there were overlaps between the two representations.

At the diplomatic level, the ‘disturbing interferences’ were only partly due to the decisions of the Hungarian side. The ambiguity also existed on the Australian side due to the different weight and role of the two cities, Sydney and Canberra, as we have already mentioned above in the Australian context.

Given the changes taking place on the Australian side, the Consulate General of Sydney was quickly closed by Hungary at the best possible time (2009). Making the Embassy of Canberra an exclusive actor coincided with the strengthening of the Australian capital. By the way, the processes in Australia have confirmed the ‘historical’ nature of this model: due to the Australian tensions to strengthen Canberra as the capital city, this dual representation model could not be restored even if Hungary was to reopen the Consulate General in Sydney.<sup>17</sup>

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identification is still requested. Therefore, some clients have to travel a whole day to lodge an application although they could apply for it using electronic applications through the client gate if the programs allowed delivery of papers abroad. In other words, there are great opportunities in the development of electronic administration (especially since the introduction of electronic personal identification card), which could facilitate the administration for the diaspora, which is scattered throughout such a large area.

15 See: Domaniczky 2019a. 257–261.

16 The previously strong position of the Consulate General in Sydney was also due to the circumstances of the establishment. Although between two states diplomatic relations are usually established at first, and this implicitly includes consular contacts too (this is why the Vienna Consular Convention states that ‘Unless otherwise stated, the agreement between the two States on the establishment of diplomatic relations shall include’ [Art. 2 (2) of the VCC], in this case consular relations were first established between Australia and Hungary, and a consulate was opened (instead of an embassy), which was followed years later by diplomatic contacts. The Consulate General in Sydney therefore carried out diplomatic duties for a longer period on the basis of customary law, as it is otherwise possible under Article 17 of the Vienna Consular Convention.

17 The diplomatic weight and role of a re-opened Consulate General would not have been closer to that of former Consulate General even if the intentions of Hungary had been directed to do so. Canberra as a diplomatic centre has a strong ‘attractive effect’ due to the proximity of the two cities: although more foreign missions are in Sydney than in Melbourne, according to the

What seemed to be precisely timed on the field of diplomacy, however, it has caused long-term disruption and uncertainty in consular work. The position and role of the Consulate General at one of Australia's largest transport hubs<sup>18</sup> – easily accessible not only within the Sydney area but also from various parts of the country – could not be taken over<sup>19</sup> by a foreign mission in a less accessible<sup>20</sup> area like Canberra.

## 7.2. Unified Diplomatic and Consular Centre

It was the era of one-stop shop with a unified diplomatic and consular representation from the closure of the Sydney Consulate General until the opening of the Melbourne Consular Office (2009–2013).<sup>21</sup> This meant that the existing embassy building – built mainly for representative purposes but also with a consular department in the suburb of Deakin of the Australian capital – was considered the centre of diplomatic and consular work during this period.

From the point of view of diplomatic work, this solution, which channels all the relevant information in the closest location to the political centre, will undoubtedly enable effective work. However, the relationship between the capital and the two metropolises is complex, not only in the past but also in the present. The strengthening of Canberra does not mean that events in the two largest cities, Sydney or Melbourne, can be ignored by the diplomats based in the Australian capital. On the contrary, Australia's structure is not centred, so diplomatic work in this model cannot be conducted from a single centre.<sup>22</sup> In addition to the Canberra centre of gravity, the Canberra diplomats must be present in both metropolises. The task cannot be outsourced if it is to be carried out to the right standard: in order to understand the full political picture, diplomats residing at Canberra must act in three places at a time.

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Australian Department of Foreign Affairs' website, the consular corps of the southern metropolis is more characteristic with its own features and activities than the Sydney one.

18 This major city – Sydney – is home to one of the country's largest Hungarian communities, which is politically most active as well (both towards Hungary and Australia).

19 The development of optimal solutions (system of consular reception days, selection of the proper locations, and communication of these provisions) took longer, and, by the time a new system could be consolidated, Hungary moved towards other solutions.

20 The 'hard to reach' expression for Canberra only makes sense relative to Sydney. A seaside port city of 5.5 million inhabitants is obviously busier and easier accessible than the mainland capital Canberra, which has 350,000 dwellers, with an airport that only accepts international flights since 2010. Despite its relatively small size and location, Canberra is easily accessible by road, rail (from Sydney), and by plane (primarily from Sydney and Melbourne).

21 Almost exactly four years passed between the closure of the Hungarian Consulate General in Sydney and the opening of the Hungarian Consulate in Melbourne (30.09.2009–23.10.2013).

22 This requires an assessment of existing buildings, the consideration of whether existing spaces would be sufficient for more business or client traffic, or whether a new, separate building would be required for the consular work.

The only limit to the establishment of a unified diplomatic centre based on the Hungarian decision is, therefore, Australian conditions, which allow for centralization only to a certain extent.

The organization of a single diplomatic and consular centre also has significant consular advantages and disadvantages. Establishing such a centre usually entails serious, long-term return on investment. Concentrated administration requires a high level of consular (professional and infrastructural) background, but procedures at one-stop consular days and the consular work generally can be streamlined and standardized. That is, the Canberra-based Hungarian consulate would need a larger, duly trained staff and a modern purpose-built consular department to handle a large number of cases, meeting both security and technical requirements. It is not a prerequisite, but such centres are usually established in settlements with a significant Hungarian community.<sup>23</sup>

### **7.3. Single Diplomatic Centre – Decentralized Consular Network**

With two consular offices opened between 2013 and 2018, Hungary has now decided to implement this solution. In addition, the Embassy's consular section also continues to operate between the two organizationally satellite offices in Melbourne (2013) and Sydney (2018). Although there is a unified diplomatic centre in Canberra, there is still a three-point consular network (Canberra–Melbourne–Sydney). Though there are differences in the legal status,<sup>24</sup>

23 From a consular point of view, administration starts with gathering information, and potential clients are most easily reached at Hungarian events such as club meetings and dinners. Canberra, on the other hand, has a relatively small and unorganized Hungarian community, so larger Hungarian communities need to be visited on longer trips travelling from Canberra. If we are thinking of a single consular centre, good accessibility is worth keeping in mind: the consulate should be located in an easily accessible public transport location, which would require a different central location in Canberra than the current suburban one.

24 In terms of legal status, Hungarian and international law and the practices of the two countries are different. With respect to the Hungarian regulations, Act LXXIII of 2016 on Long-term External Service (abbreviated henceforth as LES), the law clearly states: 'As part of the Hungarian mission... there may be a consulate and a vice-consulate. The consulate and the consular office shall not have their own budget and management' (Article 3, session 2). In contrast, according to the Vienna Diplomatic Convention (ratified by Hungary in 1965 and by Australia in 1968, abbreviated henceforth as VDC), 'The sending State may not, without the prior express consent of the receiving State, establish offices forming part of the mission in localities other than those in which the mission itself is established' (Article 12). Hungary has introduced a specific hybrid form (on the name of 'consular office') in its own national law, primarily to simplify the organizational framework and to expedite the managerial matters, but which is clashing with the articles of the two Vienna Conventions, classing the foreign missions into diplomatic and consular representations (Article 3 VDC, Article 3 VCC). Australia, as the receiving state, defines its protocol on foreign missions on the basis of the Vienna Conventions: thus, under Hungarian law, the satellite missions like consular offices on the Australian side appear independently, in accordance with the Vienna Consular Convention, each headed by one 'senior' diplomat. Otherwise, the differences in the legal status are caused by the Hungarian statutory regulation (being

staffing,<sup>25</sup> and tasks<sup>26</sup> of consular centres, they must work under the same rules in their established consular district.<sup>27</sup> Because of the above, the elements of the network are only seemingly equal,<sup>28</sup> but the consular section of the embassy<sup>29</sup> stands out both structurally and conceptually. This distinction should be consistently enforced: either centralized (i.e.: returning to the pre-existing model of a unified diplomatic and consular centre) or moving forward on the path started by setting up the two consular offices, and the embassy itself should be completely exempted from consular work.<sup>30</sup> In Canberra, a diplomat commissioned with a secondary consular role seems sufficient to deal with urgent and diplomatically sensible consular matters, and the current Canberra consular staff could be distributed between Melbourne and Sydney (see two models below). Only after this clean-up in profile targeting a purely diplomatic mission

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contrary to the Vienna Conventions) (i.e. the national law should have used other methods to achieve the goals on the field of legal simplification).

- 25 As regards staff, the Vienna Conventions distinguish between diplomats dealing with consular affairs at diplomatic missions (see articles 1 and 3 of the VDC, articles 1 and 3 of the VCC) and consular officers (articles 1 and 3 of the VCC). The Australian practice is changing accordingly: the diplomatic staff of the Embassy dealing with consular affairs is taken as diplomats, and the consular staff of the consulates are classified as consular officers.
- 26 Regarding tasks, the diplomatic missions in Canberra are in a privileged position due to legislation and the Australian protocol. Obviously, the diplomats dealing with consular matters at the embassy have to arrange the local cases or any consular matter having interference with the diplomatic matters. According to the Australian protocol, those diplomats who are responsible for consular matters and work at the embassy can operate throughout the country regardless of the consular district.
- 27 Hungarian and Australian regulations are different in this respect as well although the basic source of law is the Vienna Conventions for both countries. But in Hungary the Embassy's consular department also has its own consular district (Article 3 of the VDC states that '[c]onsular functions are ... also exercised by diplomatic missions in accordance with the provisions of the present Convention'; therefore, the embassies' consular departments are subject to the provisions of the VDC on consular districts). However, according to the Australian protocol, consular staff working at embassies can operate throughout the country, regardless of consular district (<https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/corporate/protocol-guidelines/Pages/3-Diplomatic-missions-consular-posts-and-other-representative-offices.aspx>; last accessed on: 14.07.2019).
- 28 However, several attempts have been made to standardize positions and numbers in recent years. Cf.: LES Art. 8, Sess. (2). On this basis, the heads of all three consulates were upgraded senior consuls. Efforts have also been made to establish the similar consular districts, but this is not confirmed by practical data and results. See also Footnote 43 on a possible division of the consular districts.
- 29 For the structurally and conceptually prominent position of the Embassy's consular office, see footnotes 24–27.
- 30 At the moment when consulates are opened in the cities with the two largest Hungarian communities, it is no longer necessary to maintain a consulate with a small Hungarian community which is less accessible than the two coastal transport hubs. Clients usually choose location to lodge applications based on travel times and costs, not caring with borders of consular districts. In addition, the organization of consular work deploys resources from diplomatic work, the premier task of the unified diplomatic centre, instead of organizing consular days in Canberra itself by the closest Hungarian consular mission of Sydney.



in Canberra and two consular offices of the same rank in coastal metropolises would this model be operational in the medium term.<sup>31</sup>

#### **7.4. Unified Diplomatic Centre – Peer-to-Peer Consular Network**

In fact, this model offers a solution<sup>32</sup> for all elements of regulation, with a single diplomatic centre in the capital and two independent consulates in the two coastal metropolises. Given Canberra's proximity to Sydney, the Embassy's consular section would be worth eliminating altogether. Regular consular days held by the consular staff of the Sydney consulate should be enough to handle consular issues in the capital. Extension in Sydney's status and jurisdiction could be used to launch a (Southern) Pacific Consular Centre. To this end, one of the consular posts could be upgraded to the status of a regional consular officer, similar to the current regional posts<sup>33</sup> (a regional director responsible for managing an economic region or the regional IT administrator).<sup>34</sup>

If the consular department of Canberra Embassy ceases to operate, there are two ways to divide up its responsibilities: either to develop only one of the remaining two consulates or to develop both of them at the same time.

In the first case, we are talking about a hierarchical multi-centred model where consular services could be organized in a uniform way (see the last model), whereas in the second case the tasks would be divided between Sydney and Melbourne. If the regional consular officer was to move to Sydney, where a regional administrator had already been deployed, the consular district of Melbourne would have to be expanded, and the only possible solution would be to extend the Melbourne consulate's jurisdiction to Western Australia.

There are many arguments<sup>35</sup> for the Melbourne office's expansion, all of which are negated by the local heritage regulation,<sup>36</sup> which hampers the development

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31 The existence of two satellite consular offices, which are part of the embassy but operate in different states, continues to be contrary to Art. 12 of VDC.

32 Since the network is multi-centred, the individual elements should operate at least on a consular level, making Australian and Hungarian regulations and practice compatible.

33 See Government Decree 223/2017 (VIII. 11.) on the detailed rules for the management of foreign missions of Hungary. See: articles 15–17 of the Government Decree and Art. 29, Sess. (1) of LES.

34 The main duty of this consular officer could be to assist the professional work of consular offices in the Asia-Pacific, which primarily deal with visa matters. The Sydney consulate of Hungary, as currently the most heavily trafficked mission in Australia, deals only with citizenship and other typical matters and can be easily involved in the development of uniform practice in these regions.

35 Melbourne is home to the largest and most organized Hungarian community. Several Hungarian houses and Hungarian organizations operate here. The city has a radial structure and is easy to travel to, with the most developed public transport within Australia. It is a domestic transport hub (air, rail, road), but Melbourne can also be reached by international flights from any overseas direction.

36 Not only the building itself in which the consulate is currently operating (<https://vhd.heritage-council.vic.gov.au/places/102762>; last accessed on: 16.07.2019) but the entire neighbourhood

of technical and security background needed to build up a modern consular department.

Naturally, the development of the two centres can take place from different perspectives. Consular work also involves cultural and other tasks.<sup>37</sup> With this in mind, for example, the Melbourne consulate, as a Hungarian mission in the Australian cultural capital, can be developed into a Consulate General expanded with a Hungarian Cultural Institute.<sup>38</sup>

In Sydney, a consulate with an extended jurisdiction to Canberra could be upgraded to a joint consulate or consulate general with a tourist office (a workplace for a Hungarian Tourist Representative) that would be able to organize trips to Budapest and even to the V4 capitals, precisely based on greater consular traffic.

### **7.5. Unified Diplomatic Centre – Hierarchical Multi-Centred Consular Network**

If the Melbourne consulate fails to remove into a modern, fully-fledged building,<sup>39</sup> only one of the two consular centres – the Sydney one – can be upgraded. Again, there are more options. It will be the Consulate General of Sydney as the Consulate General responsible for current affairs in Canberra, and possibly also the Regional Consular Centre of Hungarian missions in Southeast Asia and around the Pacific.<sup>40</sup> As a Consulate General, in addition to serving Canberra, it may be responsible for Melbourne as a Consulate, with a consular district enlarged with Western Australia.

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is an important part of the cityscape (called North Fitzroy Heritage Overlay Area), all of which makes external and internal conversion significantly difficult or even impossible.

37 See Art. 5 of the VCC and Art 57, Sess. (1) to (3) of the LES.

38 On the Hungarian side, the idea that Australia needs to reopen its embassy in Budapest has come up many times. This goal cannot be realistically pursued, and Australia has been steadily scrapping its Central European diplomatic network for about two decades. In the longer term, they are likely to be present only in Berlin (Germany is one of their most important European trading partners) and Belgrade (the largest Australian diaspora of Central European origin is linked to the former Yugoslav states). However, the situation is not hopeless, for example, when we approach cultural diplomacy. Highlighting the similarities between Budapest and Melbourne, the Hungarian side could encourage the setting up of an Australian cultural institute through a real estate offer. In other words, not on the diplomatic platform but on the cultural front, there might be a chance to re-establish Australia's presence in Budapest. On a reciprocal basis, Hungary could offer to open a Hungarian institution in Australia, especially in Melbourne, which it plans to open in the Southern Hemisphere, to which it can also request a plot or contribution.

39 It must obviously be considered here whether the aspects of representation or consular work are more important for Hungary. If the former, the historical suburbs of Carlton or Kew, are to be considered, if the latter takes precedence, a downtown office building lease would be the best option.

40 Outlining just one option: Jakarta (Indonesia), Singapore (Singapore), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), Manila (Philippines), Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam).

In Western Australia, setting up an independent consulate should continue to be considered as this state offers many economic opportunities and would also make it easier for the far-flung Hungarian community to deal with consular affairs. If Hungary was to decide to set up a consulate in Perth, it would probably be best to open it as a vice-consulate under Melbourne or Sydney as this would be in line with the VCC.<sup>41</sup>

Beyond the consular distribution of tasks, Melbourne could be further developed in the cultural and Sydney could be vested in the touristic task areas mentioned above, so that both of our metropolitan offices could get a local identity that would help them to operate in the long term.

## 8. Summary

We have tried to review the possible developments of the Hungarian missions in Australia, depending on Australian capabilities and current opportunities in our diplomatic and consular network. We argued that the current situation (a single diplomatic centre – a decentralized consular network) is only a step towards the right direction but not a definitive one because it is not sustainable in the medium and long term. The diplomatic duties were grouped in Canberra a decade earlier, with good timing. However, in order to ensure the smooth running of diplomatic work, the diplomatic centre should either be upgraded to a single consular centre or completely exempted from consular work. The establishment of a consular centre in Canberra would be a step back to an earlier model which, after having consular offices in the two largest cities of Australia, Hungary has already passed; in addition, it would lead to unnecessary expenditure and capacity for diplomatic work.

However, the merger of the consular department of Canberra Embassy with the Sydney consular office would open the way for further development of the busiest local Hungarian consular representation and possibly for a regional consular centre.

In this context, the situation in Melbourne should also be considered. Here the consular office's current seat is a barrier to any further consular development. However, if the seat is relocated, the extension of Melbourne's consular district to Western Australia should be considered. Thus, both consulates could be given the rank of Consulate General, and Australia would be divided diagonally between the two consular offices.<sup>42</sup>

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41 See as a model the Vancouver Consulate of Hungary (<https://toronto.mfa.gov.hu/page/vancouveri-konszulatus>; last accessed on: 16.07.2019).

42 In this case, it would include Sydney as consular district: New South Wales, Queensland, Australian Capital Territory, and Northern Territory, while Melbourne would include Victoria, South

We also suggested considering a non-consular development in the profile of the two consulate headquarters. This could mean setting up a Hungarian cultural institute in Melbourne, the continent's cultural capital, and setting up a tourist office in Sydney, the busiest transport hub of the continent and the South Pacific. In the long term, both institutions could have a positive impact on the consular work, and the establishment of both a cultural and tourist centre fits with the objectives of the current Hungarian cultural diplomacy and the aims of the Hungarian Tourism Agency.

Finally, it is necessary to decide on a possible consulate in Perth to discover the business potential of this western state capital and to facilitate the arrangement of the consular work for the Hungarian community of that state. This consulate, if Western Australia belongs to Melbourne's consular district, would be subordinated to the Melbourne Consulate – as a vice-consulate –, or it would belong to the Consulate General in Sydney if no further development can be done in Melbourne.

In other words, we are arguing for the implementation of the latest model (a unified diplomatic centre – a hierarchical multi-centred consular network) simply because the existence of independent consulates would resolve the legal controversy currently caused by the non-autonomous satellite consular offices attached to the embassy in Canberra. Of course, the rank of Consulate General does not mean that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cannot implement the work organization and management regulations that it considers to be optimal, with lower levels of legislation.

Finally, we want to argue against a simplification that Melbourne and Sydney can only be viewed in the same way. On the contrary, although the two cities are worth being treated together, it is only worth considering the different 'styles' of the two cities.<sup>43</sup> That is why we argued for the development of the consular network to suit both Hungarian interests and Australian conditions, when we proposed to centralize diplomatic work in Canberra, cultural work in Melbourne, and tourist agency work in Sydney. Consular work could form the background and basis for all of these, and in both cases the rank of the Consul General would be needed not for the title but for the sake of legal consistency.

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Australia, Tasmania, and Western Australia. For Hungarians, this would be a roughly equal distribution: 40-40 thousand in each consular district. See also: Domaniczky 2018. 309–341.

43 The argument that each representation should have a consular section with the same number of staff and subordinates in the same rank only looks good statistically but does not provide adequate answers to the characteristics of each city. Although it sounds good that trade commissioners can cover an entire continent from an external economic point of view, it would be worth focusing on consular work first and, secondly, on cultural and scientific cooperation. At the current trade volume, it would be enough if one trade commissioner was placed in the classic diplomatic centre, Canberra. The trade commissioners at consular offices would be replaced with consular staff.

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