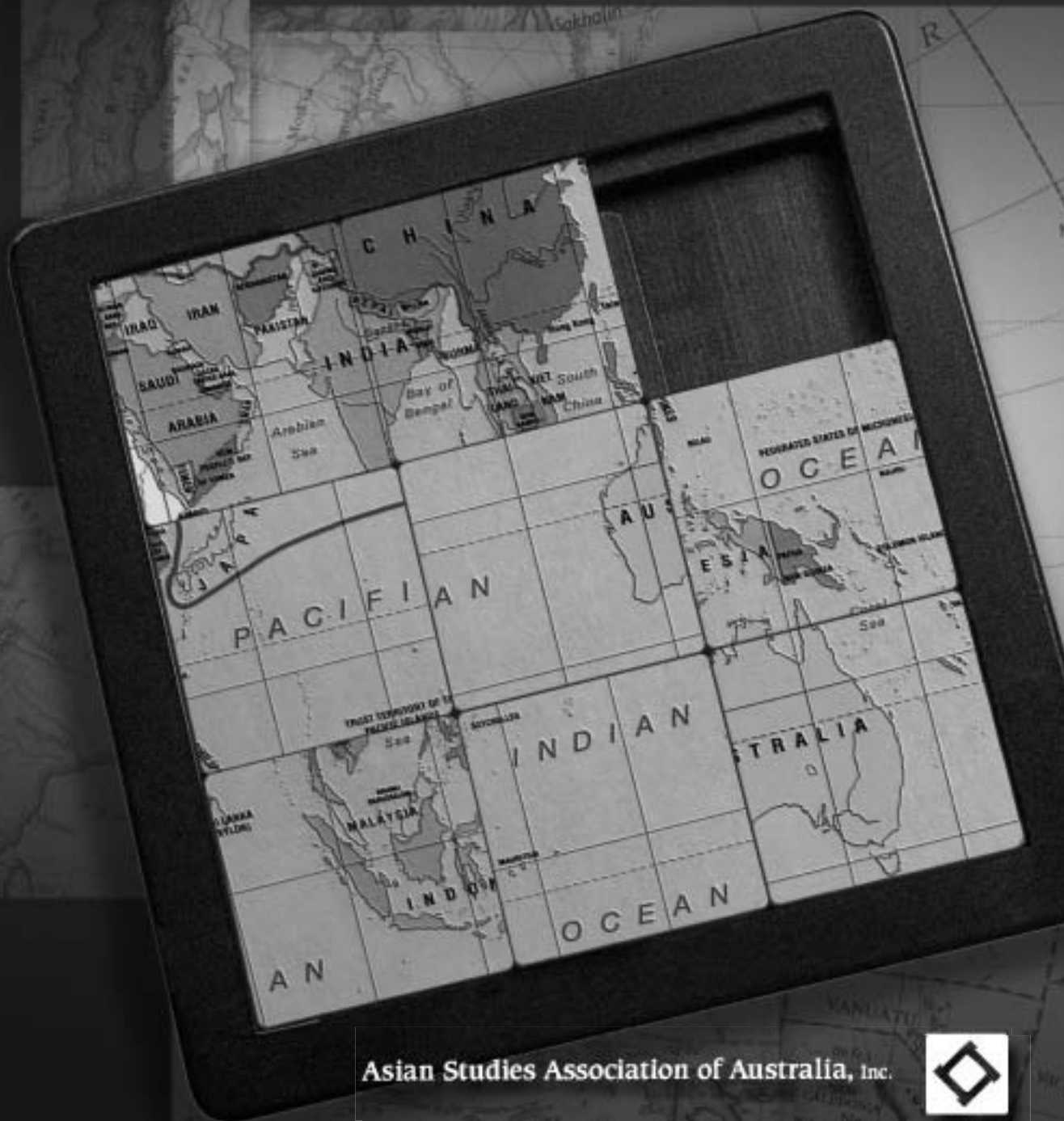


# MAXIMIZING AUSTRALIA'S ASIA KNOWLEDGE

REPOSITIONING AND RENEWAL OF A NATIONAL ASSET



Asian Studies Association of Australia, Inc.





**MAXIMIZING AUSTRALIA'S  
ASIA KNOWLEDGE**  
REPOSITIONING AND RENEWAL OF A NATIONAL ASSET

A Report by the

**Asian Studies Association of Australia, Inc.**



with the support of Asian studies programs at La Trobe University, the Australian National University, the University of New South Wales, the Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Studies, Asialink, the South Asian Studies Association, the Chinese Studies Association of Australia and the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

2002

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication Data:

Asian Studies Association of Australia  
Maximizing Australia's Asia Knowledge:  
repositioning and renewal of a national asset: a report.

Bibliography

ISBN 0 9580837 0 3

1. Australia - Foreign relations - Asia.
2. Asia - Study and teaching - Australia. I. Title.  
327.9405

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To the memory of

**HERB FEITH**

1930-2001

An exemplar of Australia's Asia knowledge

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## PREFACE

*“the spread of useful  
knowledge of Asia  
among Australian  
university students  
is stalled”*

This review was commissioned by the Council of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, Inc. (ASAA) at its meeting in Melbourne on 28 April 2001. The working party for the report consisted of John Fitzgerald, Ruchira Ganguly-Scrase, Robin Jeffrey (coordinator), Morris Low, Jenny McGregor and Tessa Morris-Suzuki.

The need for the review grew from a sense of crisis felt throughout the Humanities and Social Sciences in Australian universities, especially among those who study and teach about the countries of Asia. More than 80 per cent of ASAA members who responded to our survey believe that Australian universities face a “crisis of renewal” in the next five years.<sup>1</sup>

The momentum for the study of Asia which built up in the late 1980s and early 1990s is at risk. While we point out a number of achievements of the 1990s, we also identify an overall sense of diminution of resources, opportunities and expertise. Other inquiries of the 1990s point in similar directions.<sup>2</sup> The key point is that the spread of useful knowledge of Asia among Australian university students is stalled.

Originating from a meeting in Canberra in January 1975, the Asian Studies Association of Australia tries to provide focus and direction for the study of Asia in Australia. It initiated the FitzGerald Report of 1980, and today publishes an international quarterly journal, four monograph series and an electronic newsletter. It has run a widely attended biennial conference since 1976. This report is, we hope, a further indication of the commitment and capacity of the Association and its members.

*Robin Jeffrey, Coordinator*

<sup>1</sup> 93 out of 113 respondents; 16 did not believe such a crisis existed; four had no opinion.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Academy of the Humanities, *Subjects of Small Enrolment in the Humanities: Enhancing their future*, Canberra: Paragon Printers, 2000; K.M. Rudd (Chair), *Asian Languages and Australia's Economic Future, A Report prepared for COAG on a Proposed National Asian Languages/Studies Strategy for Australian Schools*, February 1994.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report would not have happened without the dedication, sharp mind and endless resourcefulness of Kama Maclean, who undertook the management of the project and the day-to-day research and compilation. We acknowledge her outstanding contribution, which she made while writing a PhD and looking after a toddler. She was ably assisted, as funds allowed, by Christopher Snedden. Bob Smith provided consultations on various issues.

Robin Jeffrey, John Fitzgerald and Tessa Morris-Suzuki were the principal writers, but a great many people contributed – Bob Elson, Kathe Kirby, Jenny McGregor, Bob Smith, Kama Maclean, Christopher Snedden, Meg Gurry, Tomoko Aoyama, Kam Louie, Howard Brasted, Paul Mathews, Shahram Akbarzadeh, Krishna Sen, Maureen Welch and Andrea Whittaker.

Lyn Brooks (AVCC), Louise Edwards, Malcolm Gillies, David Hill, Beverley Hooper, John Ingleson, Richard James, Joe Lo Bianco, Tony Milner, Lyn Parker, Roger Peacock, Talis Polis, Geoff Pryor, Tony Reid, Alan Rix, Peter Rodgers, Neville Saunders, Baden Teague, Russell Trood and Marika Vicziany were particularly helpful with information, comments and suggestions.

A number of consultations took place in the compiling of this review: with CHASPA (Chairs and Heads of Asian Studies Programs in Australia) on 4 August 2001 at La Trobe University in Melbourne, with senior scholars and administrators from New South Wales and Queensland at the University of New South Wales in Sydney on 26 September, with Victorian centres and academics at the Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Studies on 23 November and at Griffith University in Brisbane on 21 March 2002. Hundreds of emails were exchanged over the eight months the inquiry was at work. We thank the many generous academics and administrators at universities around Australia and overseas who, in spite of a host of other demands, responded to our calls for help, data and advice.

John Ingleson and the University of New South Wales provided hospitality for the consultation in Sydney, as did Merle Ricklefs and the Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Studies for the consultation in Melbourne and Bob Elson at Griffith University in Brisbane. La Trobe University hosted the CHASPA meeting on 4 August.

We especially thank Bruce Petty and John Spooner who have allowed us to use their incisive drawings to make this a more vivid document.



This study was initiated by and is carried out for the Asian Studies Association of Australia, Inc. (ASAA). But it would not have been possible without financial support from a range of institutions and organisations, which we list here alphabetically:

- Asialink
- Australian National University's Faculty of Asian Studies and Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies
- Chinese Studies Association of Australia
- La Trobe University's Asian Studies Program
- La Trobe University's Politics Program (International Relations and Asian Studies)
- Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Studies
- South Asian Studies Association
- University of New South Wales

**None of the above, however, is responsible for the data or the conclusions presented here. These are the responsibility of the ASAA, Inc.**

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## ABBREVIATIONS & GLOSSARY

AAS	Association for Asian Studies, Inc. (US professional association)
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACICIS	Australian Consortium for In-Country Indonesian Studies
ACU	Australian Catholic University
ADF	Australian Defence Force
ADFA	Australian Defence Force Academy
AEF	Asia Education Foundation
AGPS	Australian Government Printing Service
ALLDs	Asian Languages of Lesser Demand
ANU	Australian National University
ARC	Australian Research Council
ASAA	Asian Studies Association of Australia, Inc.
Auchmuty Report	<i>The Teaching of Asian Languages and Cultures: Report of the Commonwealth Advisory Committee</i> (Canberra: Commonwealth Government Printing Office, 1971)
AVCC	Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
BOS	Body on Seat (actual student numbers enrolled in any given course)
CHASPA	Conference of Heads of Asian Studies Programs in Australia
C-MAAKS	Council for Maximizing Australia's Asia Knowledge and Skills
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CSAA	Chinese Studies Association of Australia
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Technology
DETYA	Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
DEFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EFTSU	Equivalent Full-Time Student Unit (see p. 71)
FitzGerald Report	<i>Asia in Australian Education: Report of the Committee on Asian Studies to the Asian Studies Association of Australia</i> (Canberra: ASAA, 1980)
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England (UK)
ICT	Information Communication Technology

Ingleson Report	<i>Asia in Australian Higher Education: Report of the Inquiry into the Teaching of Asian Studies and Languages in Higher Education</i> (Canberra: Asian Studies Council, 1989)
INTERFET	International Force East Timor
JSAA	Japan Studies Association of Australia
Leal Report	<i>Widening Our Horizons. Report of the Review of the Teaching of Modern Languages in Higher Education</i> (Canberra: Language Policy Section, International Division, DETYA, 1991)
LOTE	Languages Other Than English
LURP	Languages with a Unique Regional Provider
MIALS	Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Studies, University of Melbourne
NCSAS	National Centre for South Asian Studies
NGO	non-government organisation
NUS	National University of Singapore
NALSAS	National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools
PSAA	Philippines Studies Association of Australasia Inc.
SAR	Special Administrative Region
SARU	South Asian Research Unit, Curtin University
SASA	South Asian Studies Association
SOSE	Studies of Society and the Environment
South Asia	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
UCLA	University of California at Los Angeles
UMAP	University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific
UNE	University of New England
UQ	University of Queensland
USA	University of South Australia
VUT	Victoria University of Technology
UWA	University of Western Australia
WSU	Weighted Student Unit
WTO	World Trade Organisation

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is neither a celebration nor, to say it in Australian, a whinge. It provides a snapshot of a national asset – Australia’s Asia knowledge. It points to areas of achievement in expanding that knowledge since the last similar report in 1989. But it emphasizes that much remains to be done for Australians to acquire the understanding of their immediate neighbourhood that is essential for cultural, economic and strategic well-being. It argues that major systemic changes in higher education, plus the ageing of a cohort of specialists, create conditions in which the Asia-knowledge investment could evaporate – at a time when globalisation makes it more relevant and important than ever before. Repositioning and renewal are essential to ensure that the existing base is used strategically to adapt to new conditions. The report suggests ways to reposition and renew Australia’s Asia knowledge and to extend it more widely and beneficially to Australians.

Australia’s capacity to understand its nearest neighbours and largest trading partners is stagnant or declining at a time when pressures of globalisation impel us to interact effectively and sensitively with the countries of Asia.

This is a national concern. Australians need to be equipped for a world in which people from different places and histories increasingly talk to each other, work together and understand the complexities of each other’s political and social pressures. Australians know less about Asia than other parts of the world, yet Asia’s role in Australia’s trade, security and culture is inescapable – and growing.

This report points out the internationally recognized foundations of Australia’s Asia knowledge, laid down since the 1950s. It argues that changing global circumstances present both an opportunity and a necessity. Australia’s Asia knowledge can be an expanding asset; but it requires renewing and repositioning. Such a process will maximize its use for a diverse Australia, drawn relentlessly into multi-dimensional ties with Asia Pacific.

The study of Asia in Australian universities has fallen far short of the targets called for by the Asian Studies Council and the Ingleson Report (*Asia in Australian Higher Education*) in 1988-9. In 2001, this report estimates that fewer than 5 per cent of undergraduate load in Australian universities studied either a subject substantially devoted to Asia or an Asian language. The Ingleson Report had set a target of 20 per cent by the year 2000 from about 3 per cent in 1988.

Budget stringencies have led to a contraction of subjects primarily devoted to Asia. The pool of Asia specialists is shrinking as a result of retirements and the lure of jobs overseas. Most universities are not inclined to replace scholars of Asia who resign or retire. At the same time, a number of “vocational” areas of university study find the need to allude to aspects of Asia. This cursory interest, obvious among a great many Australians, needs to be encouraged, developed and deepened; the study of Asia needs to be repositioned, as well as renewed.

In relative terms, the study of China has fared best in recent years among the regions of Asia. Numbers of Australian students and university administrators see both economic and strategic sense in focusing on a vast, burgeoning power. Yet even those students studying China or Chinese language constitute only a tiny fraction of less than two per cent of the undergraduate population.



Japanese language continues to be the most popular Asian language among students, though in-depth study of the society, politics and culture of Japan and northeast Asia is even less widespread than the study of China.

While Chinese and Japanese were relatively secure, teaching of languages of lower demand was in danger at a number of universities. Fewer Asian languages were offered in 2001, and fewer universities were offering them than in 1997.

The study of Indonesia and Indonesian language has faltered in the past five years, and the study of India and the countries of South and West Asia has contracted strikingly. In 1988, 15 universities taught substantial subjects about India; in 2001, this had fallen to five.

This report offers a plan to reposition and renew Australia's Asia knowledge. It calls for the establishment of a Council for Maximizing Australia's Asia Knowledge and Skills (C-MAAKS) to initiate and oversee this process. It calls for governments and educational institutions to re-send strong signals to the community about the importance of understanding Australia's largest, nearest and least known, strategic and economic partners.

It recommends a package of measures, which use new technologies, to achieve critical mass and stability in the teaching of languages, particularly languages of lower demand.

Drawing on US, UK and Canadian examples of institutional change in similar circumstances, it outlines a program to bring a new generation of Asia specialists into Australian higher education in ways that allow them to diffuse their expertise across a wider spectrum of students and subject areas than in the past.

It recommends use of new technology to allow Australian business people and professionals, who find themselves engaging with Asia, to have access to the best Australian expertise to get answers to questions and to pursue systematic study at various levels of commitment.

Secondary school education is a crucial component of the repositioning and diffusion of Australia's Asia knowledge. This inquiry recommends renewed efforts to embed the study of Asia in Years 11 and 12 curriculums in all states and territories and to ensure the study of Asia is part of the training of all future teachers.

The inquiry argues

- **that the forces of globalisation will lead Australia to interact increasingly with the countries of Asia**
- **that Australia's long-standing Asia-knowledge base is in jeopardy**
- **that a careful program of renewal, making imaginative use of new technologies, allows Australia to reposition, extend and deepen its Asia knowledge in ways that will enhance security, prosperity and cultural communication.**



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## RECOMMENDATION 1 –

### COUNCIL FOR MAXIMIZING AUSTRALIA'S ASIA KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (C-MAAKS)

That the Commonwealth create a Council for Maximizing Australia's Asia Knowledge and Skills (C-MAAKS) to

- develop and promote Australia as a knowledge centre for the study of Asia and for activities relating to Asia
- link Australia's knowledge resources about Asia in government, education, business, media and non-government organisations (NGOs), including close cooperation with bilateral councils and business councils
- promote the deepening and diffusion of Asia expertise in education systems, including K-10, Years 11 and 12 and the tertiary sector
- initiate the educational programs recommended elsewhere in this review, which are essential for the renewal and repositioning of Australian knowledge of Asia for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

**Annual Cost: \$300,000**

*Four-year cost: \$1.2 million*

## RECOMMENDATION 2 –

### UNIVERSITY COMMITMENT TO STUDY OF ASIA

That C-MAAKS encourage universities to acknowledge the importance of study of Asia in mission statements and policy documents and to make eligibility for C-MAAKS programs contingent on such acknowledgement.

**No additional cost:**

*C-MAAKS secretariat*

## RECOMMENDATION 3 –

### ASIA-AUSTRALIA KNOWLEDGE PORTAL

That C-MAAKS interlink, extend and develop existing Australian Websites devoted to Asia to create a unique Asia-Australia Knowledge Portal. This will create a practical, new method of deepening, extending and exchanging Australia's Asia knowledge and reaffirming Australia's place as a world centre for knowledge of Asia.

**Annual cost: \$250,000**

*Four-year cost: \$1 million*



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## RECOMMENDATION 4 –

### ASIA KNOWLEDGE FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT

That the C-MAAKS draw on units of study and scholars from around Australia to develop an ensemble of Web-based subjects to allow people working with Asia to deepen and extend their knowledge; and that

- these subjects be available for appropriate academic credit at various levels of accreditation from Certificate to Masters by coursework
- this method of promoting broadly based life-long learning be monitored for its potential as a model for other branches of knowledge.

**Annual cost: \$200,000**  
*Four-year cost: \$800,000*

## RECOMMENDATION 5 –

### UNDERGRADUATE PATHWAYS

That C-MAAKS identify best-practice and actively encourage universities to create degree structures and “pathways” that enable students easily to incorporate study of Asia, and international experience, in their courses of study.

**No additional cost:**  
*C-MAAKS secretariat*

## RECOMMENDATION 6 –

### SECURING STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT LANGUAGES

That the C-MAAKS designate up to five languages (which might include Arabic, Burmese, Hindi-Urdu, Khmer, Korean, Pashto, Persian, Tagalog, Thai, Vietnamese, etc) as “Asian Languages of Lesser Demand” (ALLDs); and that the C-MAAKS offer, by tender, the teaching of these languages to universities;

that the terms of the offer include

- funding for the equivalent of two fulltime positions at a minimum of Level B for a period of four years in the first instance
- developmental, infrastructure and administrative expenses
- the requirement that successful institutions
  - teach the language face-to-face in the city of location and to Australians and international fee-paying students by all appropriate technologies, including the World Wide Web
  - vigorously promote awareness of these languages to Australians (not merely conventional students) and internationally to fee-payers
  - achieve recognition from Australian universities to credit these language courses towards a student’s degree

and that the program be reviewed regularly and re-evaluated by the end of the third year.

**Annual cost (five languages): \$1 million**

*Four-year cost: \$4 million*

## RECOMMENDATION 7 –

### RENEWING EXPERTISE

That the C-MAAKS establish 15 entry-level positions in the study of Asia at Australian universities to be awarded, by tender, at the rate of five a year for three years;

- that these positions carry salaries for three years after which they become the accepted responsibility of the university;
- that success in tendering for these positions be based on a university’s past and present commitment to the study of Asia; and
- that these positions usually be “joint” positions, involving more than one unit of the tendering university.

**Annual cost: (average) \$700,000**

*Five-year cost: \$3.5 million*

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## RECOMMENDATION 8 -

### CAREERS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS

That C-MAAKS survey universities and identify the most practical methods, either currently in place or capable of being implemented, for providing attractive career paths and conditions for dedicated language teachers at universities.

**No additional cost:**

*C-MAAKS secretariat*

## RECOMMENDATION 9 –

### FIELDWORK FELLOWSHIPS

That the C-MAAKS establish and fund up to 15 fieldwork fellowships of \$20,000 a year to allow postgraduate scholars to work for an extended period in an Asian country. These fellowships recognise the difficulty of completing a fieldwork-based doctoral thesis within the three-year period increasingly mandated by other Australian funding bodies.

**Annual cost (15 fellowships): \$300,000**

*Four-year cost: \$1.2 million*

## RECOMMENDATION 10 –

### LANGUAGE FELLOWSHIPS

That the C-MAAKS, drawing on the experience of the University Mobility in Asia Pacific (UMAP) program, establish and fund up to 10 postgraduate study-in-Asia language fellowships at an average annual value of \$20,000 each (varying with the country of study) for advanced students to study language for a year in a country of Asia.

**Annual cost (10 fellowships): \$200,000**

*Four-year cost: \$800,000*

## RECOMMENDATION 11 –

### EXPERIMENTAL LANGUAGE DEGREE STRUCTURE

That the C-MAAKS call for tenders and subsidise for four years an experimental four-year undergraduate degree in Asian languages, which will provide sufficient funds for intensive teaching and for one-year of in-country study for a total of 80 students over four years; and that this initiative be carefully monitored to provide a model for future policy.

**Annual cost (subsidy): \$200,000**

*Four-year cost: \$800,000*

## RECOMMENDATION 12 –

### INTER-UNIVERSITY COOPERATION IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

That C-MAAKS invite universities to make proposals for city-wide, or region-wide, teaching of a language to maximize and ensure long-term effectiveness and that C-MAAKS fund at least three such proposals for up to \$180,000 over three years.

**Average annual cost (3 programs): \$180,000**

*Maximum three-year cost: \$540,000*

## RECOMMENDATION 13 –

### AN “AUSTRALIAN FULBRIGHT” SCHEME FOR ASIA

That the C-MAAKS work with governments and private enterprise to establish three fellowships at \$80,000 each for outstanding younger scholars from Asian countries to work in an Australian institution for a year.

**Annual cost (three fellowships): \$240,000**

*Four-year cost: \$1 million*

## RECOMMENDATION 14 –

### TRAINING TEACHERS IN THE STUDY OF ASIA

That, as a matter of urgency, the C-MAAKS survey the place of Asia in the programs of Education Faculties in Australian universities;

- using the survey findings, the C-MAAKS develop strategies to ensure that every teacher-in-training studies some aspects of Asia and is made aware of the possibilities and resources for teaching about Asia; and
- this emphasis on making new teachers Asia-equipped remain a C-MAAKS priority.

**First-year cost: \$200,000**

*Four-year cost: \$300,000*

## RECOMMENDATION 15 –

### STUDY OF ASIA AT YEARS 11 AND 12

That the C-MAAKS take the initiative in cooperating with state Ministries of Education, the Asia Education Foundation and other interested organisations, to ensure that study of Asia becomes a significant component of Year 11 and 12 curriculums in all states.

**No additional cost:**

*C-MAAKS secretariat*

**AVERAGE ANNUAL COST: \$3.8 million**

*Approximate cost over 4 to 5 years: \$15 million*



# 1. NATIONAL ASSET IN A GLOBALISING WORLD

From the 1950s, Australia gained international recognition for the quality of its knowledge and scholarship about Asia.<sup>3</sup> The rapidity of globalisation since the 1990s makes this Asia knowledge an even greater national asset, which requires skilful redeployment to provide maximum economic, strategic and cultural advantages in an internationalizing world.

## IS AUSTRALIA'S ASIA KNOWLEDGE REMARKABLE?

An American scholar recently noted the “seminal” nature of Australian scholarship of Southeast Asia, though he doubted whether such significance would continue in future.<sup>4</sup> The Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA) has published more than 60 monographs in fifteen years and conducts a quarterly journal – without government or private-foundation grants.<sup>5</sup> The achievements of specialist subdivisions of the ASAA, outlined later in this report, are also notable. Such outcomes result from the depth and vitality that grew up among scholars of Asia in Australia from the late 1950s, emerging in part from the Second World War and a growing realisation that Australia could not deny its geography.<sup>6</sup>

In the 1980s, in response to strong, newly emerging imperatives, Australia sought to enhance and broaden understanding of its Asian context. Much was achieved in developing the range and reach of Asian languages in schools and universities, in establishing high levels of specialist knowledge about Asia, and in developing a new familiarity and ease in the way in which many Australians interacted with Asian societies.

## WHAT ARE THE NEW CHALLENGES?

Today, we face a new range of challenges not only in managing our relationships with Asia, but in coming to terms with the diversity and complexity of an evolving multi-cultured Australian society. The roots of these challenges lie in ever-accelerating globalisation, and they confront leaders and educators in Asia as much as in Australia.

3. Early work would include W. Gordon East and O. H. K. Spate (eds), *The Changing Map of Asia* (1950), C. P. Fitzgerald, *Revolution in China* (1952), Herb Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* (1962) and J. D. Legge, *Indonesia* (1964).

4. Alfred McCoy in *Weighing the Balance: Southeast Asian Studies Ten Years After* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 2000), p. 43.

5. The Association for Asian Studies, Inc. in the US has a membership of 7,500 in 2002. It peaked at 8,000 in 1994. The AAS publishes the quarterly *Journal of Asian Studies*. Michael Paschal, Executive Director, AAS, email, 4 February 2002.

6. R. R. C. de Crespigny, “Asian Studies in Australia,” *Abr-Nahrain*, vol. 10 (1970-1), pp. 16-25; John Legge, “Asian Studies: from Reconstruction to Deconstruction,” *Australian Cultural History*, No. 9 (1990), pp. 93-102.

“to meet these challenges, we must build knowledge and skills at all levels in society”

The challenges include:

- building harmonious civil society in a culturally diverse country
- promoting the benefits of increased cross-border flows of ideas, investment, goods and people while sustaining resilient local communities and economies
- influencing institutional reform and democratic transition in Asia beneficially
- overcoming the problems of human security in the region, including issues of strategy and defence, refugees and displaced persons, crime and terrorism
- coping with local tensions arising from efforts to promote development
- making our messages heard in a sophisticated, rapidly changing and frequently non-English-speaking media context
- understanding the complex traditions of religion and belief that are sometimes used as vehicles to express anxiety, promote discord or provoke instability
- using changing technologies of communication effectively.

As the best insurance of our capacity to meet these challenges, we must build knowledge and skills at all levels in society. We must sustain high-level expertise in the languages and changing cultures and institutions of those Asian countries of most strategic relevance to us. Equally, we must seek in Australia a strong sense of Asia’s diversity, an openness to that diversity and the skills to adapt to growing interaction with countries of Asia.

This review argues that Australia’s Asia knowledge is a national asset. Repositioning and renewal are essential to exploit this asset effectively in the new circumstances that come with globalisation.

#### **WHY SPECIAL EFFORTS FOR ASIA?**

Globalisation makes engagement with the world inescapable. Time and money dictate that this engagement will be most intense with places that are closest, cheapest to reach, and with whom most business is done – the countries of Asia.

But even if geography and economics mean that interaction with the countries of Asia will grow, why should Australia make *special* effort to educate its citizens about Asia? Why *Asia*, more than other parts of the world?



Geography and difference provide the answers. No other part of the world envelops Australia as do the countries of Asia. Few other regions are as different and diverse. Most Australians know little about Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism or Shintoism. Most Australians do not know that Malaysia is a federation and China a unitary state or that the differences in languages and social structure between one part of the Indian federation and another are as great as among the countries of Europe. The celebrated maiden speech of Pauline Hanson in parliament made the point: quick scrutiny found 13 factual errors, including the populations of Malaysia and Indonesia.<sup>7</sup> In short, Australians, who might know a lot about Italy or Greece, who would understand that the shops might be closed in New York City on 25 December and who would include the Houses of Parliament on their sight-seeing tour of London, need to work harder to achieve the same levels of familiarity, comfort and ease with Asia.

### ASIA IN AUSTRALIA, 1989-2002

For more than 50 years, governments have periodically recognised that Australia's knowledge of the countries of Asia needed special attention if economic, strategic and diplomatic interests of Australia were to be effectively served. The establishment of the Department of Far Eastern History in the Research School of Pacific Studies at the ANU in 1952, the Auchmuty Report of 1971 and the FitzGerald (1980) and Ingleson (1989) Reports all stand as recognition that Australia's long-term well-being depended on its ability to understand and interact with its nearest, but least familiar neighbours.<sup>8</sup>

*Asia in Australian Higher Education* (the Ingleson Report) was published in 1989 – on the cusp of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the great political and technological changes leading to the accelerated globalisation that now seems irresistible.<sup>9</sup> Taking a snapshot of tertiary education about Asia in Australia in 1988, it laid out a program to address deficiencies, and it set targets for the future.

Progress towards the targets of the Ingleson Report was patchy in the 1990s, though there were notable achievements, described below. In 2001, however, there was an unmistakable possibility that Australia's Asia-knowledge capacity would *decline* rather than grow – at a time when the need for it to grow, and the potential benefits from such growth, have never been greater.

*“No other part of  
the world envelops  
Australia as do the  
countries of Asia.  
Few other regions  
are as different and  
diverse”*

7. Laura Tingle, “Behind the Lines,” *The Age*, 15 November 1996, p. A15.

8. J. Auchmuty, *The Teaching of Asian Languages and Cultures* (Canberra: Commonwealth Government Printing Office, 1970); Stephen FitzGerald, *Asia in Australian Education* (Canberra: ASAA, 1980).

9. *Asia in Australian Higher Education* (Canberra: Asian Studies Council, 1989).



Australia's geographical position, though sometimes regarded as a threat (especially germane in the case of the Auchmuty Report of 1970, which came in the midst of the Vietnam war), can also be celebrated as an immense advantage. Proximity to the largest emerging markets of the world should benefit trade. Over-reaction to the Asian economic crisis of 1997 encouraged a downplaying of the economic importance of Asia to Australia, but more recent trends have highlighted the danger of such over-reaction. Major economies, not merely those of Asia, are prone to economic downturns. Asia remains not only a central force in the world economy but continues to be Australia's major export market. In spite of the fluctuations of the late 1990s, by the year 2000 trade with Asia had grown to half of Australia's total trade - up from 44 per cent in 1989 (Table 1.1).



**Figure 1:** Major economies are prone to downturns. The Asian financial crisis of 1997 led to overreaction. The tigers weren't dead, just stunned. Spooner, *The Age*, 21 Oct. 1997.

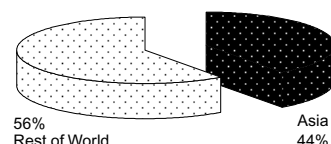
**Table 1.1: Australia's Total Merchandise Trade with Country Groups, 1989-90 and 1999-2000 (A\$ '000)**

REGION	1989-90	PERCENT	ASIA %	1999-2000	PERCENT	ASIA %
North Asia	35,060,600	35%		69,817,509	34%	
Southeast Asia	8,094,054	8%		28,530,323	14%	
South Asia	1,371,604	1%	<b>44%</b>	3,656,981	2%	<b>50%</b>
Middle East & North Africa	4,105,783	4%		7,317,473	4%	
Sub-Saharan Africa	409,143	0%		2,601,802	1%	
Western Europe	21,506,817	21%		38,654,622	19%	
Eastern Europe	1,317,974	1%		765,833	0%	
North America	19,804,889	20%		35,786,985	17%	
Other America	1,466,973	1%		2,515,164	1%	
Oceania	6,563,327	7%		15,269,737	7%	
Other	710,680	2%		2,579,925	1%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100,411,844</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>207,496,354</b>	<b>100%</b>	

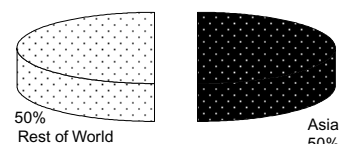
**Source:** *Direction of Trade Time Series, 1979-1980 to 1999-2000*, Market Information and Analysis Unit, DFAT, December 2000, p. 59

Australia has market advantages as a centre for education and the teaching of English language. Asian students numbered nearly 100,000 by 1999, representing close to two-thirds of all overseas students (Table 1.2). In addition, students from Europe and North America, as well as from Asia itself, attend Australian universities to take advantage of Australia's Asia knowledge and proximity to Asia. Anthony Milner, Dean of Asian Studies at the Australian National University, argues that the long-standing relationships between Australian and Southeast Asian scholars offer them "the opportunity to become intellectual brokers."<sup>10</sup> They are able to offer new concepts for understanding exchanges between cultures because they have been interacting in this way for 50 years. In an age of on-line learning, there are particularly significant opportunities for Australian universities to use new technologies to support the export of educational services to Asia, to promote collaboration with Asian educational institutions and to create greater international recognition of Australia's Asia expertise.

**MERCHANDISE TRADE WITH ASIA '89-90**



**MERCHANDISE TRADE WITH ASIA '99-2000**



10. Anthony Milner, "Southeast Asian Studies in Australia," manuscript, p. 13.

**Table 1.2: Visitors to Australia for education, 1999**

COUNTRY OR REGION OF RESIDENCE	NUMBER
Indonesia	14,400
Singapore	13,500
Japan	11,300
Malaysia	11,000
Hong Kong (SAR of China)	8,700
Korea	8,400
Taiwan	7,700
Other Asia	23,700
Total from Asia	98,700
Total Education Visitors	152,700

**Source:** Australian Bureau of Statistics: [www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/NT00017C92](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/NT00017C92)

For large numbers of Australians, the interaction with countries of Asia has become a fact of life. Business people, tourists, government officials, migrants, students, academic administrators, refugees and many others come and go in increasing numbers from Australia to Asia and from Asia to Australia. By 1999, close to 40 per cent of Australian residents going overseas (1.2 million) listed Asia as their major destination.(Table 1.3).

**Table 1.3: Australian Residents Travelling Overseas, 1999**

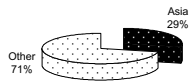
COUNTRY/ REGION OF MAIN DESTINATION	CONVENTION/ CONFERENCE '000	BUSINESS '000	VISITING FRIENDS/ RELATIVES '000	HOLIDAY '000	EMPLOYMENT '000	EDUCATION '000	OTHER AND NOT STATED '000	TOTAL '000	CHANGE ON 1998 %
Indonesia	5.0	22.6	13.5	224.0	5.4	1.9	8.3	280.6	-19.7
Malaysia	6.8	22.0	25.5	57.1	3.3	0.8	4.5	119.9	7.1
Philippines	1.2	10.9	24.0	14.9	0.5	0.2	3.5	55.2	-3.7
Singapore	8.2	40.8	20.5	58.5	5.4	1.6	5.8	140.8	14.9
Thailand	4.4	14.6	10.4	102.0	1.3	0.5	3.8	137.0	0.9
China	2.7	25.3	25.6	28.5	2.6	1.9	4.4	90.9	10.8
Hong Kong (SAR of China)	5.3	35.1	37.3	44.9	7.3	1.6	4.8	136.4	-7.5
Other Asia	6.8	52.1	92.5	75.1	6.7	8.3	11.9	253.4	8.4
Total to Asia	40.4	223.4	249.3	605	32.5	16.8	47	1,214.2	
Total	141.0	525.8	799.8	1,475.5	81.1	44.3	142.5	3,210.0	1.5

**Source:** Australian Bureau of Statistics: [www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/NT0001890E](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/NT0001890E)

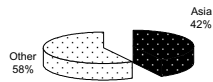
Many Australians have become “Asia mobile” – in ideas and imagination as well as in person – without really thinking about it. The bank official from Western Australia attending a meeting in Singapore, the student from country Victoria whose friend invites her to teach English in Japan, the office worker who meets clients from Asian countries and takes a holiday in the country of new-found acquaintances – such stories typify the Asia mobility which Australia’s geography guarantees will grow. Australia’s tourist industry and universities draw large parts of their revenue from visitors from (and to) Asian countries (Tables 1.2 and 1.3).

#### AUSTRALIAN RESIDENTS TRAVELLING OVERSEAS: REASON & DESTINATION

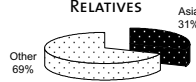
##### CONVENTION & CONFERENCE



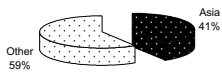
##### BUSINESS



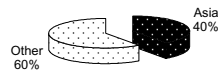
##### VISITING FRIEND OR RELATIVES



##### HOLIDAYING



##### EMPLOYMENT



##### EDUCATION





## THE “NEW” NEED FOR ASIA KNOWLEDGE

Dennis Altman has taught US and Australian politics for 30 years and writes about a variety of issues, particularly gender, AIDS and globalisation. He has increasingly interacted with colleagues in Asia over the past ten years.

**My view is that the particular position of Australia in the world means it is vital we have a critical mass of scholars who are aware of Asian history, cultures and politics. It is too easy to assume that globalisation and the increasing use of English makes such knowledge less important, even as our relations with the countries of Asia become more significant (and perhaps more complex) due to the rapidity of social and economic transformations. As any real understandings of a society requires one to have an intimate knowledge of its history, culture and language, the case for expanding Asian studies (and building up our knowledge of countries where there has been relatively little knowledge in Australia, e.g., the Philippines) can only increase. The growing use of English as a sort of lingua franca does not mean less need to learn Asian languages; indeed, it may increase this need, or else force Australians to deal with the region through intermediaries whose interests will not coincide with ours.**

I would argue for a much greater emphasis on comparative studies, rather than the single country (or culture) expertise which has been the norm to date in Asian studies. We need to develop an approach to “Asian studies” which combines extensive study of one language/country/culture with a larger conceptual framework which can make sense of the larger context.

Given the considerable investment of time and energy required to master a language, we should rethink how language study is funded and how it is incorporated into a degree structure.

Maybe we should advocate a four-year Bachelor of Asian Studies, which combines an extensive language immersion course (including time in country) with the equivalent of a year’s study of related disciplines (e.g., history, politics, anthropology, economics).

I would see the specialists trained through such a system then going on to do graduate work in particular disciplines, where they would bring in their extensive country/language skills to bear on particular problems which we “new Asianists” may be aware of in aggregate, but don’t have the skills necessary to pursue in particular cases. There is a national security interest in developing such skills, which is as important as the old arguments about trade and investment, which have never seemed all that convincing to me – easier to trade with people without knowing their language than to come to a real understanding of, say, the potential for the disintegration of the Indonesian state or the likely political balance in a post-SLORC Burma.

*Dennis Altman, President, International Congress on AIDS in Asia Pacific*

**Table 1.4:** Asian-born Australians, 1981-2000

	1981	1990	2000
Asian-born Australians as a percentage of total overseas-born Australians	8.9	16.9	23.9
Number of Asian-born Australians	276,000	655,700	1,077,800

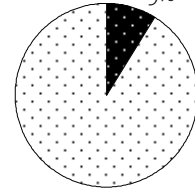
**Source:** Dennis Trevin, *Australian Social Trends 2001*, Canberra: ABS, 2001, p. 13. See also the *Age*, 7 June 2001, p. 1.

The nature of Australia's population has changed. In 2001, people born in Asia numbered more than a million, or 6 per cent of Australia's population (Table 1.4), an increase of nearly five times since 1981 and 65 per cent since 1990. This presence has various consequences:

- it builds links to countries of Asia, just as the presence of Australians of Irish or English origin builds links to those countries
- it leads Australians in their daily lives into increased interaction with different faiths, foods and experiences.
- it has created a new constituency of 300,000 young people – dinki-di in speech, dress and some tastes, yet “Asian” in language background, appearance and certain customs.<sup>11</sup>

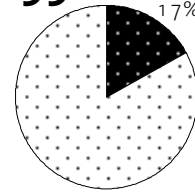
In the United States, similar processes have led to attempts to maximize the benefits of such diversity. “Diasporas at home, and tourism abroad,” writes Professor Anthony Reid of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), “are transforming the way dominant cultures experience and perceive otherness.”<sup>12</sup> In the US, universities like UCLA have embarked on programs, designed to cater for such enhanced interests and opportunities. Reid's recruitment from the ANU in 1999 was part of this strengthening and expansion of US Asian-studies capacity. One of the tasks in Australia, as in the US, is to use cultural diversity to foster economic ties, learn languages, spark curiosity and impart wider cultural comfort.

**1981** Asian Born  
9%



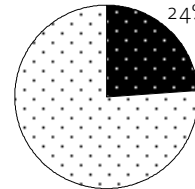
Australians born overseas

**1990** Asian Born  
17%



Australians born overseas

**2000** Asian Born  
24%



Australians born overseas

11. *Age*, 7 June 2001, p. 1. And see, for example, Vijaya Joshi, *Indian Daughters Abroad: Growing Up in Australia* (New Delhi: Sterling for the ASAA, 2000).

12. Anthony Reid, “Southeast Asian Studies: Decline or Rebirth?”, manuscript introduction to a book to be published in 2002.



**Figure 2:** John Spooner played with Australia's old familiar faces and found various new blends in this take on the John Brack painting. *The Age*, 10 Dec. 1996.



## ASIA IN AUSTRALIA’S GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT, 1989-2002

The period 1989-2002 saw *fluctuation* of interest in Australia’s relations with the countries of Asia. It is not surprising that popular opinions and preferences go up and down; but when these fluctuations are translated into long-term policies – in education, for example – continuity, depth and expertise are endangered.

At the beginning of 2002, in the wake of Asia’s economic downturn of 1997-8, the emergence of an independent East Timor, Indonesia’s political instability and war in Afghanistan resulting from terror campaigns in the United States, Australia’s stake in understanding Asia was undeniable and clear. But it is worth recalling features of Australian foreign policy over the previous decade to emphasise the importance of sustained commitment to capacity-building of Asia knowledge. Such capacity takes time to establish. It is difficult to turn on and off.

Following the end of the Cold War, many Australian leaders advocated an accelerated “engagement” with Asia. It was a two-pronged process – to institutionalise Australia’s Asia links through shared membership of regional forums and to construct a new framework which located Australia as a “middle power” in the newly conceptualised “Asia-Pacific” region. Security was to be maintained *within* not *against* the region, and was to be multidimensional, involving not only defence but economic, diplomatic, environmental, and cultural links.

By 2000, it was clear that integrating with “Asia” posed greater challenges than the Keating government had acknowledged. Much of the news from Asian countries lacked the exhilarating spin that “economic miracles” had provided in the 1980s and early 1990s. Though the task of understanding these processes was therefore even greater, the opportunities for Australian businesses and students seemed less exciting and inspiring. Momentum for engagement faltered. This coincided with the growing need of universities to be sensitive to student preferences and to fund-raising potential when making decisions about hiring staff or maintaining subjects.

The attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September 2001 underlined the dynamics of globalisation and the inescapable prominence of Asia in Australia’s connections to the world: mass killing in New York and Washington led to Australian soldiers serving in Afghanistan. As the ramifications spread towards Australia, through Pakistan, India, Malaysia and Indonesia, the need for Australians to know about the history, cultures and languages of these places and people became self-evident. Yet, as this review shows, Australia’s capacity to study and discuss the countries of West and of South Asia (i.e., the Indian subcontinent) declined markedly in the 1990s, and the diffusion of Asia knowledge in Australia grew only modestly at best.

*“Australia’s capacity  
to study and discuss  
the countries of  
West and South Asia  
declined markedly  
in the 1990s”*



### AFTER 11 SEPTEMBER ...

**We need a return to the pre-eminence of the area specialist. In universities, too many useless theoreticians dominate, while in government agencies and intelligence bodies, functionalists or generic managers predominate. What is needed is the officer who spends his whole life studying Egypt, or the Arabian peninsula, or South Asia. Only those types have the local knowledge and contacts...**

Greg Sheridan, *Foreign Editor, The Australian, 27 September 2001, p. 13*

The overall foreign-policy lesson of the 1990s is that skilled, informed people are essential for Australia's survival in its globalised region. Fluctuation in fashion and policy, driven by reaction to events, undermines the continuous effort needed to strengthen Australia's Asia-knowledge base.

### FOUNDATIONS

Four developments have contributed to improvement of Australia's capacity to comprehend the countries of Asia:

- processes of globalisation have driven Australians to interact with their nearest global partners – the countries of Asia – in ways that would have been unimaginable in the past.

In 2002, the seven-hour flight from the eastern states to Singapore is less an adventure for many Australians than the overnight train from Sydney to Melbourne once was (and, some would say, ever shall be). In Western Australia and the Northern Territory, Asia is closer and more accessible than “over east” or “down south.” This is the Asia mobility which Australians have almost unconsciously embraced.

- the study of Asian countries in Kindergarten to Year 10 (K-10) is now systematically addressed in close to one in five Australian schools, and outstanding teaching materials about Asia are being steadily produced.

The absence of such material was one of the laments of the Auchmuty Report of 30 years ago.<sup>13</sup> Australia has created the foundations from which a sustained, broad-based capacity to benefit from interaction with Asia can be expanded.

- a diffusion of reference to Asia runs through a wide range of university subjects. This underlines a sense in the community that things Asian are important. But such acknowledgement is accompanied by uncertainty about *how* to understand the “Asian fact.” The diffusion of a *wish* to know needs to be matched by deepening the *capacity* to know.
- the study of Asian languages has expanded, though fitfully, and in a time of declining language study by Australian students.

13. J. Auchmuty, *The Teaching of Asian Languages and Cultures* (Canberra: Commonwealth Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 100.

## CHALLENGES

The survival and strengthening of Australia's Asia knowledge face challenging trends. Skilful planning and investment will be necessary to overcome such trends and make the most of the Asia-knowledge asset.

- undergraduate study of Asia in 2001 was nowhere near the targets set by the Ingleson Report in 1989.  
  
Australian university students in 2001 were scarcely more likely to study aspects of Asia than they were in 1988. Even allowing for those students who encounter reference to things Asian through the superficial engagement with Asia that globalisation necessitates, this report estimates that in 2001 the proportion of undergraduate load introduced to the affairs of Australia's nearest neighbours is still less than 5 per cent. In 1988, the Ingleson Report estimated a proportion of about 3 per cent studied some aspect of Asia. It recommended that the target for undergraduate students studying aspects of Asia should be 10 per cent by 1995 and 20 per cent by 2000, spread across commerce, arts, education and law.
- Australia's pool of specialist scholarly knowledge of Asia is drying up.
  - Financial pressures on universities have led to a contraction of Humanities and Social Sciences faculties, where most scholars of Asia in the past have worked.
  - The age profile of teachers in Australian universities means that large numbers approach retirement. Given the need to cut staff to meet budgets, they are rarely replaced. Nearly half of the respondents to the survey of ASAA members conducted for this review were over 50, and 75 per cent were over 40.<sup>14</sup>
- Australia between 1997 and 2001 lost a dozen of its most outstanding Asia specialists, headhunted by institutions in half a dozen countries to invigorate their study of Asia. Australian universities have rarely replaced such lost talent, and, indeed, on current pay scales would find it difficult to do so.
- the political and economic upheaval in Asia since the economic collapses of 1997 has dampened popular interest in the study of Asia.

Such perceptions are difficult to measure, but they can be inferred. Interest in the study of Indonesian language has fallen since the collapse of the Indonesian economy, the tumult in Indonesian politics and the confrontations in East Timor. Old hands in language teaching recall similar fluctuations in the study of Chinese after Tiananmen Square in 1989.<sup>15</sup> Faculties of Education have dropped Asia from their list of the top 10 priorities in the training of teachers.<sup>16</sup>

14. 53 out of 113 respondents were over 50 years old; 85 were over 40; only six were under 30. This is higher than the overall national average, which puts 36 per cent of academics over 50 and 54 per cent over 45. *Sunday Age*, 26 August 2001, p. 1.

15. Australian Academy of the Humanities, *Subjects of Small Enrolment in the Humanities: Enhancing their Future* (Canberra: Paragon Printers, 2000), p. 41.

16. Survey by Kathie Kirby, Manager, Asia Education Foundation, August-September 2001.

*“undergraduate  
study of Asia in  
2001 was nowhere  
near the targets  
set by the Ingleson  
Report in 1989”*

### MAXIMIZING A NATIONAL ASSET

As globalisation accelerates, Australia's Asia knowledge offers many potential benefits. To enable Australia to make the most of its geographical location and its multi-cultural population, this national asset needs repositioning and renewal. This report describes current assets and risks. It sets out a plan for a future in which Australia must interact ever more regularly and effectively with the world at large and the countries of Asia in particular.



**Figure 3:** Some kangaroos wanted to shed their newly acquired tiger stripes after the economic downturn of 1997 dampened popular interest in Asia. Spooner, *The Age*, 28 Oct. 1997.

## 2. STUDY OF ASIA

The paradox of Australia's Asia knowledge in universities in 2001 was that more subjects in a variety of disciplines *touched on* themes relating to Asia than was the case a dozen years ago. One of the informants to this report wrote:

A positive sign is that the study of Asia is now more diffuse in the University curriculum and many non-traditional programs offer courses which touch on Asia. One possible problem is the level of expertise ... Some are taught for purely expeditious reasons ... and not necessarily by staff with deep cultural experience in the regions.

Many Australians now experience an "Asia mobility," whether in business, travel, interaction with Asian students or decisions about which takeaway food to buy. But *specialist knowledge* of Asia, and specialist subjects about Asia, made little progress into the broad student community, as evidence in this chapter indicates.

### DIFFUSION AND IN-DEPTH STUDY

A survey of course handbooks of the University of Melbourne and the University of New South Wales identified some 100 Asia-focused subjects (i.e., subjects with more than 50 per cent Asia-related content) at each institution. These subjects were in disciplines ranging through architecture, business, engineering, law and medicine, as well as Asian Studies programs and the social sciences and arts. (See Table 2.1 and the box, "Asian Studies – the Disciplinary Shift" for reference to Monash University).

**Table 2.1: Number of subjects dealing with Asia at five universities, 2001**

	ASIAN STUDIES SUBJECTS	DISCIPLINE-BASED SUBJECTS WITH MORE THAN 50% ASIA CONTENT	DISCIPLINE-BASED SUBJECTS WITH SOME ASIA CONTENT BUT LESS THAN 50%
Melbourne	48 (12 of which not offered in 2001)	52 (3 of which not offered in 2001)	25 (8 of which not offered in 2001)
UNSW	40	64	39
Flinders	18	18 (6 of which not offered in 2001)	24 (2 of which not offered in 2001)
Curtin	12	62	29
James Cook	Nil	18	6

**Source:** Analysis of institutions' handbooks for 2001 as found on the World Wide Web (August 2001). "Asian Studies" means subjects taught within a unit called "Asian Studies." "Discipline-based" means subjects taught in History, Commerce, Tourism, etc.

Such coverage is welcome; but a danger lies in misplaced confidence based on superficiality. A tourism subject, for example, which discussed hotel management in India but left students generalizing about "the passive nature of the Indian race,"<sup>17</sup> might be counted among examples of "studying Asia"; but its students would be disastrously misinformed.

17. This example is based on experience but disguised to preserve anonymity (R. Jeffrey).



## ASIAN STUDIES - THE DISCIPLINARY SHIFT

Research and teaching in Asian studies have increasingly expanded beyond the arts and humanities faculties in Australia into other faculties and disciplines, particularly business and economics, law, education and medicine.

A recent inventory of Asian studies in the Faculty of Business and Economics at Monash University showed that there were about 85 subjects which focussed on Asia or used substantial examples from the Asian region. One of the largest growth areas in this faculty has been subjects dealing with international business, international taxation law, international labour relations and international organisations such as the WTO and APEC. Significant parts of these subjects, often the bulk of the teaching, has related to Asia.

This shift to the “other” disciplines represents an important development in the integration of the Asian experience in the teaching and research agendas of Australian universities. At the same time, special strategies need to be developed to ensure that our academic expertise on Asia is built up.

Many of the academic staff currently undertaking teaching and research on Asia are not Asia specialists in the old sense of the word. Traditionally, an Asia specialist was an academic who had a long period of undergraduate and postgraduate training in Asian studies – typically a particular Asian country, region or city, supported by years of fieldwork and language training. Such “area specialists” are hard to generate today because the “area” based approach to teaching and learning has virtually been abandoned with few exceptions. The result is that many “Asian specialists” today have in-depth expertise in a particular narrow field of knowledge – say the tax laws of Indonesia – but they may lack knowledge about the wider historical, cultural and political context of those tax laws.

The result is that the rapidly shrinking pool of area specialists increasingly finds itself being approached by both staff and students for guidance and expert advice. Unfortunately, the remaining area specialists do not have the time to deal with even a fraction of these queries.

The Australian educational system needs some kind of mechanism capable of generating sufficient numbers of area or country specialists to provide in-depth expertise (yes, of the old fashioned kind) to their colleagues, students, government and business. The growth of Asian studies beyond the traditional disciplines in the Arts faculties is to be welcomed; but until the question of how best to generate high levels of “Asian expertise” is settled, this growth of interest is problematic.

*Marika Vicziany, Director, Monash Asia Institute*

In 1988, the Ingleson Report estimated that 1.9 per cent of student load was based on subjects devoted to study of Asia. The inclusion of language study took this proportion to 2.9 per cent.<sup>18</sup> The Ingleson Report recommended that by the year 2000, 20 per cent of student load should be in subjects focused on the study of Asia and in Asian languages.<sup>19</sup>

The Ingleson Report had sufficient funds to permit visits to most campuses by the chief investigator or an associate. The current inquiry has worked within a much smaller budget, and most of our data collection has been by telephone, email and fax and depended on the good will, diligence and commitment of hard-pressed colleagues.<sup>20</sup> We cannot claim the comprehensiveness in data collection of the Ingleson Report.

This current report selected a sample of seven universities, for which our data allow some comparison with data from the Ingleson Report. Analysis of the sample provides a snapshot of national trends, which evidence from regional reports in this chapter supports (Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2: Student load (EFTSU) in Asia-content subjects as percentage of student load, 1988 and 2000-01 (selected sample where comparability possible)**

UNIVERSITIES	EFTSU IN ASIA-CONTENT SUBJECTS, EXCL. LANGS. 1988	% OF THIS INSTITUTION'S EFTSU 1988 (INGLESON REPORT)	EFTSU IN ASIA-RELATED SUBJECTS, EXCL. LANGS, 2001	INSTITUTION'S EFTSU 2000	% OF THIS INSTITUTION'S EFTSU 2001
Adelaide	55	2.7	98	11,293	0.9%
Griffith	122	8*	185	20,148	0.9%
La Trobe	144	3.4	160	16,855	1.0%
Melbourne	125	1.5	90	28,956	0.3%
Murdoch	66	3.6*	39	8,950	0.4%
New England	62	1.7	142	8,539	1.7%
Queensland	110	1.1	c.100	25,371	0.3%
Totals	674		814	122,112	0.6%

\* Includes languages

**Notes:** The definition of an Asia-related subject differs between 1988 and 2001. For 1988, subjects were “wholly on Asia.” Ingleson Report, p. 88. For 2001, we used a definition of “more than half” devoted to Asia. This measure makes the 2001 outcome look stronger than it would if a “wholly on Asia” criterion were applied.

Griffith and Murdoch both had dedicated administrative units called “Asian Studies” in 1988.

**Sources:** Ingleson Report, pp. 78-84, 86-9. Surveys carried out for this report. “Characteristics and Performance Indicators of Higher Education Institutions. Students Enrolled: 2000” ([www.dest.gov.au/archive/highered/statistics/characteristics](http://www.dest.gov.au/archive/highered/statistics/characteristics)).

*“The Ingleson Report recommended that by the year 2000, 20 per cent of undergraduate load should be enrolled in subjects focused on the study of Asia and in Asian languages”*

18. Ingleson Report, p. 64.

19. Ibid., pp. 25, 259.

20. See Appendix A.

The difficulties of dealing with data of this kind are notorious, but rough, bold pictures emerge. In raw numbers, the student load in subjects related to Asia increased by about 20 per cent between 1988 and 2001 in our sample institutions; but the *proportion* of Asia-content in the total student load declined (Table 2.2). Student load in Australia's universities grew by about 65 per cent in the period.

Combined with evidence from scholars in the universities, these data support the proposition that Australian university students were little more likely to include in-depth study of aspects of Asia in their course in 2001 than they had been in 1988. "More than 97 per cent of university and college graduates complete their courses without even a single unit focused on Asia," the Asian Studies Council wrote in 1988, "most of them without even reference to Asia."<sup>20</sup> In 2001, *reference* to Asia is more common, and this is to be welcomed. But it is safe to say that more than 95 per cent of students still complete their course without "even a single unit focused on Asia."

This is far from the target of 20 per cent of student load that the Ingleson Report laid down in 1988.

Students increasingly choose (and pay for) their universities and courses. How is student choice to be factored into an equation that will result in larger numbers studying aspects of Asia in greater depth? Part of the answer, we believe, lies in **Recommendation 7**, a program to reposition Australia's Asia knowledge. It promotes the appointment of younger scholars who not only have deep experience of Asia – are "Asianists" in the old language – but who work in other disciplines. Such appointments should be combined appointments (e.g., Chinese anthropology and medicine, Indian economics and accounting). In this way, they enrich the teaching of colleagues who are not Asia specialists and influence students for whom combined degrees are increasingly popular.

Diffusion needs to be strengthened by encouraging the appointment of scholars who are both area specialists *and* members of mainstream, discipline-based programs. This occurs in some institutions, but to reposition and maximize Australia's Asia knowledge it needs to happen widely, as we explain below.

## DEPLETION AND REPLENISHMENT

The study of Asia has recently suffered from three related processes. First, budget cuts to universities have produced a need to reduce payrolls and staff. Second, the age profile of Australian universities, which did much of their hiring in the 1960s and 1970s, has meant increasing retirements in the 1990s; retiring staff have rarely been replaced.<sup>21</sup> Both the former developments affect most units of universities, but the third element – using the level of undergraduate enrolments to determine areas of study to be preserved or abolished – has particularly affected the study of Asia.

20. Asian Studies Council, *A National Strategy for the Study of Asia in Australia* (Canberra: AGPS, 1988), p. 2.

21. *Campus Review*, 16-22 May 2001, p. 2. 55 per cent of academics of senior-lecturer level and above were over 55. 70% of professor and readers were over 55.



Asia-related subjects in the Arts and Social Sciences have tended to frighten off younger students. Critics might say the wounds were sometimes self-inflicted. “Asia experts” revelled in the esoteric detail of their specialities, unable and unwilling to “popularise” them to undergraduates or work with colleagues in comparative fields not directly related to their specialities. Such extreme pictures, however, were rare. Much more importantly, the study of Asia has suffered from a widespread reluctance of students to venture into unfamiliar territory. Though there are no doubt exceptional undergraduates who seek the unfamiliar, the majority opts for subjects that they “know something about” from school or in which their interest has been whetted by favourable treatment on television or in film. In popular media the affairs of Asia most often appear confronting, confusing and messy, rather than clear and sanitised. In a cafeteria curriculum, most customers prefer cakes with familiar icing.

The consequence of staff reductions, often based on the popularity of particular branches of study, has meant that the pool of specialists on Asian countries in Australian universities has shrunk notably since the mid-1990s.

Overseas salaries overtook and significantly surpassed Australian salaries. At the National University of Singapore (NUS) salaries in 2001 could be twice as high as in Australia. A professor at NUS started on \$168,000 Singapore dollars a year (Table 2.3). A professor in an Australian university earned AUD\$95,000 a year with no increments available.

**Table 2.3: Academic Salaries, Australia and Singapore, 2001**

	AUSTRALIA	SINGAPORE
Professor	AUD\$95,000	S\$168,000 to S\$222,000
Lecturer (PhD; Level B)	AUD\$50,000	S\$60,000

**Note:** The Singapore dollar in 2001 was worth about AUD \$1.05. Income tax rates are lower in Singapore.

**Sources:** Professor Peter Reeves provided NUS salary scales. The salary scales of non-Singapore nationals vary somewhat. The Australian scales are those used at La Trobe University and are part of a national wage agreement.

The quality of Australian-based scholars of Asia contributed to this shrinkage: they have been headhunted (Table 2.4). Since 1997, 12 leading scholars have been attracted to important jobs around the world – to the People’s Republic of China, Hong Kong, the USA, Malaysia, the Netherlands, the UK, Singapore and Japan.

Such recruitment highlights the reputation of Australia’s Asia knowledge. In different circumstances, it could be welcomed unequivocally. Movement is good for universities. But in the budget climates of the 1990s, departures have usually meant salary savings. Departing staff are seldom replaced.

*“the pool of  
specialists on  
Asian countries  
in Australian  
universities has  
shrunk notably”*



The senior scholars of Asia who left Australia since 1997 have vast scholarly, teaching and administrative experience. Indeed, that is why they have been recruited for leadership positions by overseas institutions. To lose such talent takes slices off the heart of Australia's Asian-studies capacity. Nor do these losses include senior Asia scholars who have retired or younger scholars who have gone overseas.<sup>22</sup> There is, to be sure, some new blood, but senior appointments, such as that of the distinguished Indonesia scholar Professor Arief Budiman to the Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Studies (MIALS) or Professor Jenny Corbett in Japan studies at the ANU are rare.

**Table 2.4: Australian scholars of Asia moving to senior positions overseas, 1997-2001**

SCHOLAR	FORMER AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTION	REGIONAL/DISCIPLINE SPECIALTY	RECRUITED TO
1. Professor Malcolm Falkus	UNE	Thailand, East Asia	World Bank, Cambodia (2000)
2. Professor Kevin Hewison	UNE	Southeast Asia	Director, Southeast Asia Research Centre, City University of Hong Kong (2000)
3. Professor Beverley Hooper	UWA	China	Professor of Chinese Studies, University of Sheffield, UK (2000)
4. Professor Rey Ileto	ANU	Southeast Asia	Chair of Southeast Asian Studies Program, National University of Singapore (2001)
5. Professor Kee Poo-kong	Victoria U of Technology	China, migration	Director, Chinese Heritage Centre, Nanyang Technical University, Singapore (1999)
6. Professor Rikki Kersten	Sydney	Japan	Professor, Leiden University, The Netherlands (2001)
7. Professor Michael Leigh	Sydney	Southeast Asia	Director, Institute of East Asian Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (1997)
8. Professor Peter Reeves	Curtin	South Asia	Coordinator, South Asian Studies Program and Director, Languages Centre, National University of Singapore (1998)
9. Professor Anthony Reid	ANU	Southeast Asia	Director, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, University of California at Los Angeles (1999)
10. Professor Ramesh Thakur	ANU	International relations	Vice-Rector, United Nations University, Tokyo (1998)
11. Professor Andrew Watson	Adelaide	China	Ford Foundation Representative, Beijing (1999)
12. Professor Timothy Wright	Murdoch	China	Chair, School of East Asian Studies, University of Sheffield, UK (2000)

**Source:** Research conducted for this inquiry.

We estimate that there are in Australia no more than 400 "Asia specialists" – people who have spent considerable periods of time in Asian countries, know languages, do research and write about aspects of Asia. The pool appears to be shrinking at a time when it ought to be growing and when it needs to be carefully developed to maximize its national benefit.<sup>23</sup>

22. A number of institutions, including ANU, Griffith, Melbourne and UWA noted outstanding graduate students or junior faculty moving to more secure and better paid work overseas. More frequently, however, able postgraduates must find work outside the university system.

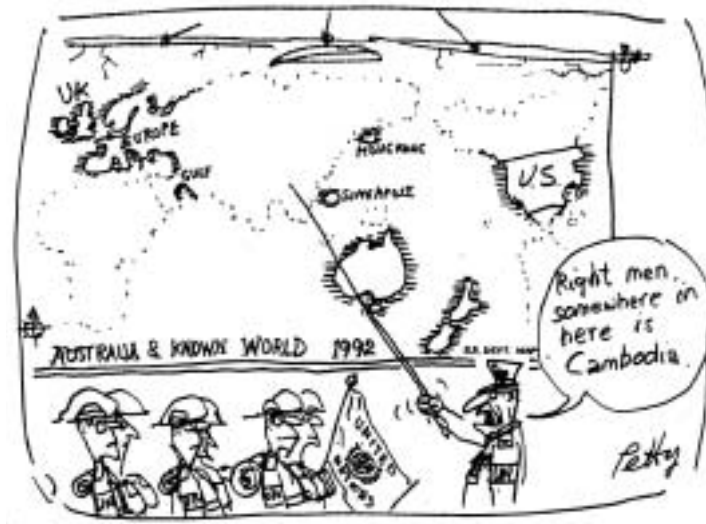
23. The ASAA had about 400 individual members in 2001. Not all "Asia specialists" are members, nor are all members necessarily "Asia specialists"; but the membership figure is indicative. It has fallen from a high point of 620 individual members in 1992.

## REGIONS OF ASIA: DIFFERING SUPPORT

This contraction of the pool of Asia knowledge is characteristic of most of the regions of Asia, but it is most pronounced for West Asia and for South Asia (i.e., India and its neighbours), where Australia was from the 1960s a world leader. The international focus on Afghanistan and Pakistan (and, inseparably, with Kashmir and India) in 2001 and 2002 underlines the irony. It also highlights the problem that arises when student subject preferences lead to the abandonment of teaching and research about areas that are important to the long-term national interest.

The following regional sketches highlight four points:

- attrition of staff and contraction of student numbers are dominant themes for each region, though with China least affected
- a significant asset base has been built up, which includes highly skilled people, functioning associations and substantial journals focusing on China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines and South Asia
- the capacity to interpret and teach about South Asia has shrunk dramatically
- diffusion of Asia-related content is noteworthy throughout the curriculums of a few universities, though the quality, prevalence and impact are difficult to assess



**Figure 4:** The gaps on maps that Bruce Petty suspected in 1992 still remain to be filled in for many Australian undergraduates – and others. *Sunday Age*, 5 April 1992

## SOUTH ASIA

From the early 1960s, Australia established an international reputation as a centre for the study of South Asia, especially modern South Asian history. S. Arasaratnam, A. L. Basham, Ranajit Guha, Ravinder Kumar, D. A. Low, Robin Moore, S. N. Ray, Peter Reeves and D. P. Singhal were scholars of world distinction. The Ingleson Report in 1988 found intensive teaching about South Asia going on at 15 of Australia's (then) 19 universities. In 2001, undergraduate subjects on South Asia remained significant at only five (ANU, Curtin, La Trobe, Monash and New England). The University of Western Australia, once a stronghold of the study of South Asia and with a fine library collection, now does not teach or research about the region. The University of Melbourne, which had supported an Indian Studies Centre from the 1960s, wound up the centre and its interest in the study of India in the mid-1990s.

There were at least nine senior retirements in the period 1998-2001, in addition to Professor Reeves' move to Singapore mentioned above.<sup>24</sup> Given the precarious position of arts and social sciences faculties around Australia, those who retire are unlikely to be replaced. The result is that teaching about South Asia will almost disappear in the cities of Sydney and Adelaide where it was once notably strong. It ended in Brisbane, where the University of Queensland once had a substantial program, in the 1980s.

The study of South Asia in Australia has registered notable achievements in the past 40 years. Since 1971, South Asianists have had an active professional association (the South Asian Studies Association), have published an international journal, *South Asia*, and since 1976 have sustained a monograph series, from 1985 under the umbrella of the Asian Studies Association of Australia (the South Asian Publications Series), which has published on average a book a year. Between 1993 and 1997, a National Centre for South Asian Studies (NCSAS), funded partly by the Commonwealth Government and partly by a number of university partners, carried out projects that promoted better understanding of the region in business, education and media. The end of Commonwealth support for the NCSAS coincided with contractions in university budgets and the ending of broad-based university support, though it survives less extensively at Monash University. The Indian Ocean Studies Centre in Perth was wound up when funds from various sources were ended in 2001.



### THE U.S. MILITARY'S PUSHTU PROBLEM

**The United States faces an important disadvantage if it plans to attack Muslim militants in Afghanistan – the armed forces has no speakers of Pushtu. It is the language of the ruling Taliban and people in the south and east of the country and is also spoken in parts of Pakistan. The army is now recruiting the services of hundreds of Afghan-Americans who do speak the language, say Western diplomats. The military does, however, have several people fluent in Dari, which is a dialect of Persian spoken widely in Afghanistan. The language issue, among other problems, is likely to delay any attack for at least four more weeks, say diplomats in Islamabad.**

- *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 September 2001, p. 8.

24. Professor Robin Moore (Flinders), Professor Michael Pearson (UNSW), A/Professor Lance Brennan (Flinders), Dr J. C. Masselos (Sydney), A/Professor Robert Stern (Macquarie), Dr D. F. Miller (Melbourne), Dr G. A. Oddie (Sydney), Dr Vivienne Kondos (Sydney), Dr Paul Alexander (Sydney).

The Australian National University established an Australia South Asian Research Centre in 1994 and appointed Professor Raghbendra Jha to the Rajiv Gandhi Chair of South Asian Economics in 2001. This is a research area, not involved with undergraduate teaching.

Teaching about South Asia is now confined to the Australian National University, La Trobe and Monash universities in Melbourne, Curtin University in Western Australia, which has a South Asian Research Unit (SARU), and the University of New England in Armidale.

The average age of the remaining scholars teaching about South Asia in these institutions is well over 50. If trends continue, there is a strong possibility that in five years no Australian institution will teach undergraduates explicitly about South Asia. (*Howard Brasted, Robin Jeffrey*)

## CHINA

For several decades, Chinese studies in Australia has enjoyed an enviable reputation internationally for its teaching and research on China and the Chinese diaspora. In the last ten years, this reputation has continued to grow. While some established scholars have left the country for more lucrative posts, world-class scholars, including Colin Mackerras, John Fitzgerald, Geremie Barmé and David Goodman, remain and continue to exert an impact on the field. More importantly, a younger generation of scholars, equipped with the latest research methods, is making its presence felt. Australian publications, including *The China Journal* edited by Jon Unger and Anita Chan, are frequently cited and used as authoritative references by Sinologists and think-tanks throughout the world. Similarly, the recently retired Mabel Lee has built Australia's international reputation in Chinese studies through her translation of *Soul Mountain* (Harper Collins, 2000) whose author, Gao Xingjian won the Nobel Prize for literature in 2000.

The teaching of Mandarin Chinese in Australian universities made considerable progress in the 1990s. In student numbers alone the average increase has been nearly 100 per cent – in the case of UNSW, nearly 1,000 per cent. The two notable exceptions to this growth trend are Canberra University and Murdoch, which have both experienced a decline in numbers of students learning Chinese.

In the non-language sphere, the range of disciplines being taught within Chinese studies has expanded during the decade. While traditional Sinology subjects such as Classical Chinese are still taught in the more established universities, interest in contemporary cultural forms (e.g. film) and current social issues (e.g. gender) has added new vigour to the Chinese studies offerings.

These achievements are supported by international trends resulting from the expansion of the economic and political influence of the Greater China region. In the coming decade this trend will be even more pronounced. The Greater China region emerged from the "Asian Economic Crisis" with more economic prosperity and an increase in democratic reforms. Moreover, Australia's relations with the Greater China region have become closer and bilateral trade continues to grow. There is a widespread acceptance among Australians at all levels – governments, businesses and parents – that Australian interests are served by deepening and broadening knowledge of Chinese language and culture.



*“Beijing’s hosting of the Olympics in 2008 is expected to generate even greater ... demand for Chinese teaching and research skills”*

Importantly, most Australian universities have embraced the opportunities afforded by the increasing presence of students with Chinese origins on their campuses. In part this increase is derived from the expansion in numbers of international students, a significant proportion of whom have Chinese ethnic origins. In addition, the number of Asian-born Australians has nearly doubled in the last ten years. Both these groups of students seek knowledge about Chinese culture, and many want either to learn or maintain their Chinese language skills (or diversify their skills by adding Mandarin to their existing competency in Cantonese). As a consequence, the proliferation of courses designed for “background speakers” has led to a general improvement in the quality and quantity of Chinese courses in universities in the last ten years.<sup>25</sup> This is illustrated by the fact that when the University of Queensland held a conference in 1991 to discuss the issue of teaching background speakers, very few universities had such courses, let alone materials designed for them. Now, almost all universities see the “background-speaker stream” as important and essential for their well-being.

The entry of China and Taiwan into the World Trade Organisation in 2001 and Beijing’s hosting of the Olympics in 2008 is expected to generate even greater interest in and demand for Chinese teaching and research skills by Australian academics and government leaders.

To meet the expansion in demand for these skills across the Australian economy and society, it is important to devise policies to ensure that Australia’s current skills-base is not squandered and that the opportunities for Australia-China collaboration are grasped. (*Kam Louie*)

## **JAPAN AND KOREA**

The past decade has seen many movements of Japanese and Korean specialists, increasingly losing rather than gaining on an international level. Leading scholars in diverse disciplines (anthropology, law, linguistics, literature, history, cultural studies, political science etc.) have left Australia to take up positions mainly in Japan and North America.<sup>26</sup> The trend is also evident among younger researchers. And there have been retirements of distinguished scholars, such as Royall Tyler and Kenneth Gardiner. Senior positions vacated by resignation or retirement are at best advertised at much lower levels; in many cases they are used as an opportunity for restructuring and budget savings.

If the situation in Japanese studies is difficult, it is even more acute in smaller programs such as Korean studies.<sup>27</sup> The National Centre for Korean Studies in Melbourne, which originally consisted of four universities, ceased to exist in 2001. Only one of the four partners (Monash) still offered Korean.

The general decrease in staff, including administrative support staff, has resulted in increasing workloads for those remaining. An academic staff member has now not only more teaching hours (and hours of word-processing his/her exam papers and student workbooks in Asian scripts) but also more meetings and administrative work. At the same time, the pressure to research and publish and attract external grants increases. The situation is alarming: there is more pressure and more competition than incentive.

25. The fickleness of “demand” is underlined, however, by the fact that UWA offered a new subject for native-speakers in 2002. A substantial enrolment was expected; but the subject drew such a small response that it had to be called off.

26. In Japanese studies: Reiko Atsumi (Griffith to Okayama), Sandra Buckley (Griffith to SUNY and thence to Montreal), Toshiko Kishida (Monash to Tokyo), Junko Kumamoto (Melbourne to Oita), Bill Mihalopoulos (Adelaide to Cambridge to NYU), Satoshi Miyazaki (Monash to Waseda), Orié Muta (UWA to Gifu), Yuki Tanaka (Melbourne to Niigata), Veronica Taylor (Melbourne to University of Washington) and Hiro Uchiyama (Griffith to Shimomoseki).

27. The UQ Korean program, for example, has lost its only fulltime position. Griffith had to reduce teaching staff.

There has been a decline in student numbers in Japanese and Korean studies (including language studies) in some institutions.<sup>28</sup> One reason seems to be the 1997 economic crisis.

Another notable change is the dramatic increase in international and local students with Chinese-character (i.e., script) background. It is common to find two-thirds or three-quarters of a Japanese class, especially at introductory level, consisting of such students. The implications of this include the need to modify course materials and teaching and assessment methods. It also seems clear that an increasing number of students take only one or two subjects as electives rather than aim for a major. The impact of this change is seen not just in language classes but in studies subjects too. Many students require special guidance in English academic writing. Partly because of this difficulty, many students try to avoid studies subjects or try to opt, if possible, for the studies subjects with which they feel more familiar and comfortable. The number of native (or near native) speakers doing Korean or Japanese seems to be increasing, even though the percentage is much lower than in the case of Chinese.<sup>29</sup>

In a way this change has provided an excellent opportunity for us to reassess the assumptions we made in previous decades about students' areas of interest, prior linguistic and cultural knowledge, study attitude and motivations. Whether we have adequate resources to cope with this is one of many questions we must face. An even more urgent question is what we can do about the obvious and serious decline of interest among those Australian students who are not of Asian background.

Japanese language and studies programs have maintained a relatively secure position at a number of universities. Sydney, UNSW and ANU have managed to expand or establish their Korean programs, though in most cases the funding came from Korean rather than Australian sources. Japan has been prominent in new projects (e.g., the Asian identities project at the University of Queensland, web production at Griffith University), courses (popular culture, film study, translation study, business etc.), programs (a new postgraduate program in Asian and Comparative Law to be launched at UNSW in 2002), and journals (such as *Australian Journal of Asian Law* started in 1999 by the University of Melbourne, ANU and Northern Territory University), as well as successful conferences, exhibitions, workshops, film festivals, and other events.

While the membership number of the Japan Studies Association of Australia (JSAA) has dropped from about 300 in 1997 to 180, its journal *Japanese Studies* has established its international reputation and overseas institutional subscriptions have substantially increased. (*Tomoko Aoyama*)



28. E.g., the Japanese program in Tasmania is growing, if slowly.

29. One exception is the Korean program at Sydney, where a very high proportion of Korean-Australian students is reported.



## SOUTHEAST ASIA

Southeast Asian studies has been numerically dominated by **Indonesian studies**, which in most institutions is in decline. Most measures of this decline relate to language and area studies departments. Sydney University, for example, has lost three senior academics in the 1990s, though it recently made a commitment to a new appointment in Southeast Asian studies. Sydney University will not be able to enrol either honours or post-graduate students in this area in 2002. Australia's most significant specialist journal in Indonesian and Malay Studies, *RIMA*, is seeking to move from Sydney.

Similarly, in Western Australia, there has been a substantial decline in students enrolling in first-year Indonesian language. In 1989-90 the intake in Murdoch University alone was more than 80 individual students. In 2001, the combined intake of individual first-year students at UWA, Murdoch and Curtin was less than that.

However, the decline in language teaching alone may not be an adequate reflection of the state of Southeast Asian studies across the various disciplines. In many of the larger universities, a Southeast Asian component is included in a variety of courses, many of which may not have Southeast Asia or even Asia in its title. In the case of research-based Masters and PhD degrees, scholars from Southeast Asia are carrying out research in disciplines from Engineering to Education.

Australia's long-standing commitment to the study of Indonesia survives in various initiatives. The Australian Consortium for In-Country Indonesian Studies (ACICIS), established by Murdoch University with seed funding from the Commonwealth in 1994, now embraces 21 Australian universities. The program allows Australian students to spend one or two semesters studying at Indonesian universities for credit towards their Australian degrees. In January 2002, the program's 500th Australian student arrived in Indonesia. Though ACICIS "survives on a shoe-string and primarily on the basis of the good will and volunteer commitment of dozens of individuals nationally,"<sup>30</sup> it indicates what can be achieved with limited, but carefully directed funds, spent by experienced, motivated people. Other initiatives still maintain an Australian reputation for engagement with Indonesia: the magazine *Inside Indonesia*, electronic mailing lists maintained by individual scholars, the ANU's annual "Indonesia Update" conferences and occasional general conferences such as that held in Melbourne in July 2001. (We discuss the problems of Indonesian language in the next chapter).

Although Australia retains considerable research strength in some areas, it is of concern that we have almost no researchers working on potentially important countries, including **Burma**.

Since the mid-1990s, the Philippines Studies Association of Australasia Inc. (PSAA) has maintained a membership of about 80, including those in Papua New Guinea and New Zealand. There are about 50 academics, spread fairly evenly around Australia, whose work touches on **Philippines** issues, and more than 30 postgraduate research students in 2001. The PSAA collaborates with US-based scholars to publish *Pilipinas*, one of only three major international journals devoted solely to study of the Philippines.

30. Note by Professor David Hill, ACICIS chair, Murdoch University, 2 March 2002.



The PSAA estimates 11 scholars of the Philippines have retired or died in the past four years. Conditions in universities mean that few are being replaced. An accelerated trend of retirements is expected in the next five years. In the absence of promising opportunities in Australia, three younger scholars have taken jobs overseas.

Australia has suffered a marked decline in its **Thai** studies expertise. Thai language programs were cut from both Monash and Curtin universities in the 1990s, and Thai is now offered as part of a degree course only at the Australian National University (which also offers limited Lao studies) and the University of Sydney. Griffith University has a language exchange program with Chulalongkorn University in Thailand.

The next few years will see the retirement from the Australian National University of leading linguists Tony Diller and Preecha Juntanamalaga. At Macquarie University, Professor Annette Hamilton has moved to an administrative position at UNSW; Paul Cohen will retire. This decline is occurring despite the growing strategic links and economic and trade importance of Thailand and the Mekong region to Australia.

Departure of high-profile scholars in Southeast Asian studies has been notable, particularly the moves of Anthony Reid (Indonesia and Malaysia) to the United States and Kevin Hewison (Thailand) to Hong Kong. (*Krishna Sen, Paul Mathews, Andrea Whittaker*)

## WEST AND CENTRAL ASIA

There has been considerable decline in the study of West and Central Asia in the past decade. This contrasts with the continued significance of the region to global security and economic welfare. The importance of the region was demonstrated in the wake of the 11 September terrorist attacks when much of the world's focus shifted to Afghanistan. Academic books on the Taliban, previously considered obscure and of minority interest, suddenly became best-sellers in the US. Australian universities experienced a flood of requests from media for information, analysis and comment.<sup>31</sup> It was glaringly apparent that there were few specialists available in Australia to speak about the region, with the notable exception of Amin Saikal of ANU and William Maley of the Australian Defence Forces Academy (ADFA). The crisis in the US made it clear that Australian specialists were needed to explain the implications for the attacks for Australia. Tellingly, the Australian Defence Force recently created appointments for specialists of the region to fill what has been a neglected area in intelligence and language-teaching.

In 2001, subjects relating to West and Central Asia, were offered by a small and dwindling number of universities. The nature of the disappearing field has either forced specialists to leave Australia for better employment opportunities,<sup>32</sup> or led specialists to teach in mainstream subjects like pure sociology or international relations while trying to maintain their contact with their area of expertise through research (e.g., Michael Humphrey at the University of New South Wales and Shahram Akbarzadeh at La Trobe University and now Monash).

*“In January 2002  
the 500th ACISIS  
student arrived in  
Indonesia”*

31. Higher Education Supplement, *The Australian*, 19 September 2001.

32. In 2000 Ray Juredini (Sociology) left Monash University and Professor David Christian left Macquarie University.

*“there has been a considerable decline in the study of West and Central Asia in the past decade”*

Language teaching has borne the brunt of this contraction. Arabic language teaching has been under strain and has suffered contraction in some universities, including Sydney University. The only Central Asian language to be taught at universities in Australia is Persian at the ANU, facilitated by funding from an outside sponsor. Research on the region is confined to ANU, Macquarie University, and to some extent the University of Western Australia, largely as a result of the efforts of Samina Yasmeen.

Recent Australian publications on the region come mainly from these universities and from a very few specialists elsewhere. The *Journal of Arabic, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies*, started from Deakin University in 1994, ceased publication in 1999. There is now no Australian-based journal on the region. (*Shahram Akbarzadeh*)

### **DANGERS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

As globalisation relentlessly links more Australians with the peoples and countries of Asia, the systematic study of Asia paradoxically becomes more precarious, rather than more secure. This is even more evident in the case of most Asian languages, which are examined in the next chapter.

Australia faces a danger and an opportunity. The danger lies in the shrinkage, verging on disappearance in some areas, of a national asset – the Asia knowledge built up over 50 years. The opportunity lies in the possibility of using the Asia-knowledge base to capitalise on internationalisation, especially with the countries that constitute Australia’s largest trading partners and immediate security environment.

### 3. LANGUAGES OF ASIA

Three tortuous issues bedevil language teaching in Australian universities:

- finance, including
  - excessive reliance on annual enrolments as the basis for funding
  - lack of clarity about the cost of teaching languages, leading to under-funding
- labour relations, notably the absence of suitably defined, rewarded and valued career structures for language instructors
- the need for uncomplicated, well-known, widely recognised study pathways for students

Behind all of these lie two larger questions:

- the question of *quality* – ensuring that energy, time and money spent on language study lead to meaningful levels of ability. Examples of “best practice” in attempting to deal with these issues are scattered around Australia; but general solutions are still to be achieved. This report suggests some measures. **(Recommendations 5, 6, 8, 10 and 11).**
- the question of *priority* – how important do Australians, especially policy and opinion-makers and university administrators, consider language-learning to be for national prosperity and survival? This report suggests that “signals” – symbolic and material gestures – about priority are crucial in affecting the decisions of both students and universities. The creation of C-MAAKS **(Recommendation 1)** represents in itself such a crucial signal.

#### TRENDS

The decade from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s was a time of expansion for Asian languages in Australian universities. The period witnessed an extension in the range of Asian languages taught, an increase in the number of universities providing them and substantial growth in the number of students enrolled in Asian-language subjects. However, by 2001, fewer than 3 per cent of Australian tertiary students were studying such languages (see below, “Rates of Growth or Absolute Numbers?” for the calculations), and the financial viability of language teaching was a troubling question, even for the largest universities.

Achievements over the first half of the 1990s capitalised on decades of capacity-building. Expansion in provision and enrolment was in line with the recommendations of the Ingleson Report and came close to matching the expectations of the Asian Studies Council.

Trends varied from language to language and from institution to institution over the *second half* of the 1990s. Where enrolments declined, as with Indonesian, the rate of decline at the close of the decade was steep. To be sure, measured in actual numbers, enrolments in Indonesian at the close of the decade far exceeded levels of a decade earlier; but they represented only a tiny fraction of all students.



### THE ANGUISH OF THE LANGUAGE COORDINATOR, 2002

**“I don’t know what’s happening elsewhere but 2002 figures here are disastrous! Over a 50% fall in first year enrolments from 2001. This is for all languages ... This is the largest fall on record. The powers-that-be are telling us in the short to medium term there will be much culling of language staff to compensate. If this is a national trend, then it’s back to the 1930s.”**

- A Language Coordinator, February 2002

Table 3.1 gives one indication of recent fluctuations in fortunes of Asian languages in the Australian university system. A few languages survived relatively securely, but others declined and, in some universities, disappeared. The disappearance or impending disappearance of small languages of strategic importance needs national attention, since no single university is likely to be willing to serve the national interest unaided.

**Table 3.1: Asian Languages at Australian Universities 1997 and 2001**

LANGUAGE	UNIVERSITIES 1997	PROVIDING UNIVERSITIES 2001 (EXCLUDING RECIPIENT-ONLY INSTITUTIONS)	UNIVERSITIES, 2001 (INCLUDING RECIPIENT-ONLY INSTITUTIONS)
Arabic	4	5	5
Burmese	1	0	0
Cambodian	1	0	0
Cantonese	2	0	0
Mandarin Chinese	28	26	29
Hindi	4	2*	3
Indonesian/Malay	24	24	28
Japanese	35	33	34
Javanese	1	1	1
Korean	9	7	8
Lao	1	1	1
Persian	0	1	1
Sanskrit	5	2	3
Sundanese	1	0	0
Filipino <sup>#</sup>	0	1	1
Thai	8	5	6
Urdu	1	1	1
Vietnamese	8	5	6

**Note:** Recipient-only institutions are those that have agreements for their students to study the language in a program provided by another university.

\* RMIT offers a semester of Hindi, but has not run a class since 2000.

# Based on *Alpabetong Filipino* of 1987.

**Sources:** 1997: Australian Academy of the Humanities, *Subjects of Small Enrolment in the Humanities: Enhancing their Future* (Canberra: Paragon Printers, 2000), Tables 1 & 2. Data for 2001 derived from ASAA survey.

A sense of crisis pervades the university system concerning the provision of languages generally and languages of Asia especially. This sense of crisis is fuelled by speculation about declining enrolments, but arises more concretely from the deteriorating relationship between enrolment trends and funding trends for the provision of languages.

In 2001, enrolments in all major Asian languages were higher than they had been in the late 1980s. But the growth that Asian languages achieved in the 1980s and early 1990s could not be sustained under the funding patterns that emerged and still apply. In business, managers would acknowledge that if the availability of services is wound back severely, a decline in demand is likely to follow.





## THE DEANS' DILEMMA

### *What is “demand”?*

The question of “demand” is more complicated than it might seem. Significant numbers of students want to study languages. But language programs are expensive, because they require greater amounts of staff time. This is recognized in most universities by giving a weightage to the “value” of language students; but the assigned weightage, which varies from one university to another as a result of internal pressures, is seldom sufficient to cover the costs of lower-enrolment languages or to cushion sudden fluctuations in student interest.

Deans of Faculties often proclaim that they cannot support language programs due to “insufficient demand.” The Deans’ dilemma lies in the mechanisms that convert demand into supply. It is not in levels of demand alone.

It requires three teachers to maintain a vigorous three-year language program – a salary cost of about \$220,000. Questions of “demand” loom large when enrolments fall below the threshold capable of sustaining three teachers. At current funding levels, this means a program must enrol at least 40 EFTSU<sup>33</sup> or 150-200 individual students. Common sense would suggest that 150 students represent significant demand, yet few Deans are able to agree. Such a level, possible for Chinese and Japanese at a large metropolitan university, is impossible for smaller institutions and lower-demand languages.

If staffing levels are reduced to a minimum, they cannot bear further reduction without making a program unviable. At this point, any fall in enrolments signals to the Dean that a given language must go.

Some wealthier universities subsidise languages. One or two reputedly fund Asian languages at double the rate per student of other disciplines. Universities that cannot afford, or decline to make, concessions of this kind<sup>34</sup> complain of “insufficient demand” rather than of faulty mechanisms linking supply and demand.

Such is the Dean’s Dilemma. It applies to all Languages Other Than English (LOTE), not just to Asian ones.

*John Fitzgerald, Professor of Asian Studies, La Trobe University*

33. A respondent to this report underlines the uncertainty within the system. At his institution, a student unit, weighted for language, was calculated to be worth about \$4,800 in 2001. They would need between 45 and 50 EFTSU to pay a \$220,000 salary bill – perhaps 200 individual students enrolled in a single language. Email, 25 February 2002.

34. The University of Melbourne and Monash University are reported to have adopted this strategy to maintain Asian languages programs. In the case of the Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Societies (MIALS) at the University of Melbourne, Asian languages have been “ringed off” from the Faculty budget to avoid the pressures felt by other humanities and social science programs.

Governments and universities can promote language learning by implementing ways to make the study of languages attractive and simple. Degree pathways and course structures that facilitate language study, economical programs of in-country study and rewards and incentives for students' achievement are measures that recognise the importance of language learning. In addition, new technologies make it possible to teach lower-demand languages effectively to the entire nation – indeed, the world, if a market exists – as has never before been possible.

The possibility is timely. Globalisation presents a paradox: an increasingly global culture, yet local cultures and traditions acquiring an unprecedented capacity to act globally. Smaller languages and cultures are unlikely to disappear; rather, they are likely to impinge on distant and unlikely places in ways that may surpass understanding – if insufficient attention is paid to serious study of people and their languages.



**Figure 5:** Global tiger-traders no longer have to stalk local goats; they can e-stalk on the Web. Spooner, *The Age*, 7 Aug. 1997.



## WON'T ENGLISH DO?

Everyone says these days that it's a global world. But that doesn't mean that it's an English speaking world. Actually, native English speakers are declining as a percentage of the world's population. Perhaps more surprising... the world's percentage of wealth is overall declining in English-language countries, leaving aside the United States. So, too, with the world's new favourite means of business, the Web. We once thought of the Web as an English-speaking device, as another means by which English would take over the world. Indeed it sprang from the Pentagon's loins. Those irritating scripts and accents of foreign languages were a bit of a problem in the early Web days. But, with most problems overcome, the Web has become a way of celebrating local difference in language. Very soon – in fact by next year – over half the material on the Web will be in a language other than English. One recent study suggests that the percentage [of English on the Web] will settle at around 35 per cent within five years.

As a primary tool of business, what will this mean for those in the dwindling English-language countries, who, through cultural arrogance or educational poverty, can only communicate in English? How will our next generation of Australians measure up in accessing those two-thirds of Web knowledge, which is locked up in foreign languages? And that, in an Australia which has now no professor of Russian, no professor devoted full-time to German, and that has lost more full-time academic staff over the last four years in Japanese than in any other language?

Language is a vital tool for accessing knowledge, as well as developing cultural pluralism and multiple perspectives on the world. It is vital to Australia's national security interests. Like our water, it is hard to cost, but, as with water, lack of national expertise may cost us incalculably in the future. Any invaders from our north are hardly likely to provide us with subtitles after all.

Malcolm Gillies  
*President, Australian Academy of the Humanities,  
South Australian Press Club, 25 July 2001*



## LANGUAGES OF HIGHER DEMAND – JAPANESE, CHINESE, INDONESIAN

The availability of the “big three” Asian languages – Japanese, Chinese and Indonesian – increased between 1988 and 2001. One or the other was available at all but one of Australia’s universities in 2001 – 36 out of 37. In 1988, 29 tertiary institutions had offered one or more of the three. (Table 3.2).

The data gathered for this inquiry show that the study of Mandarin Chinese grew steadily in the 1990s, while Japanese and Indonesian showed modest proportional gains after impressive increases in the 1980s and early 1990s; but in the case of Indonesian, momentum was lost and enrolments were falling at the end of the decade. Overall, as argued below (p.42), fewer than 3 per cent of students enrolled in Australian universities in 2001 studied an Asian language.

**Table 3.2:** “Big Three” Asian Languages (Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Indonesian), 1988 and 2001

LANGUAGE	EFTSU 1988	EFTSU 2001	MULTIPLE INCREASE 1988/2001
Japanese	1061	2476	2.3 times
Mandarin Chinese	363	1338	3.7 times
Indonesian	158	632	4 times

**Note:** EFTSU for 1988 have been rounded and do not therefore coincide precisely with Ingleson.

**Sources:** For 1988, Ingleson Report; for 2001, data collected for this report.

### JAPANESE

Japanese was available at 34 institutions in 2001. It was available at 19 in 1988.

Almost 2,500 EFTSU<sup>35</sup> were enrolled in Japanese in Australian universities in 2001. This was more than twice the EFTSU of 1988.<sup>36</sup>

35. Converting EFTSU to individual students is difficult. DEST explains an EFTSU as “a standard unit against which resource inputs can be measured. One EFTSU represents a standard annual full-time workload. As a rough approximation, useful only for large aggregates of students, load in EFTSU is about 80 per cent of student numbers.” If we use this formula, 2,500 EFTSU would equate to about 3,100 individuals.

36. Ingleson Report, pp. 129-30 There was a sharp increase between the Ingleson Report in 1988 and the Leal Report in 1990 when EFTSU were put at 1998 (vol. 2, p.170). Leal’s figures are somewhat inflated because they sometimes include “studies” subjects with languages.

**Table 3.3:** Japanese: EFTSU, 1988 and 2001

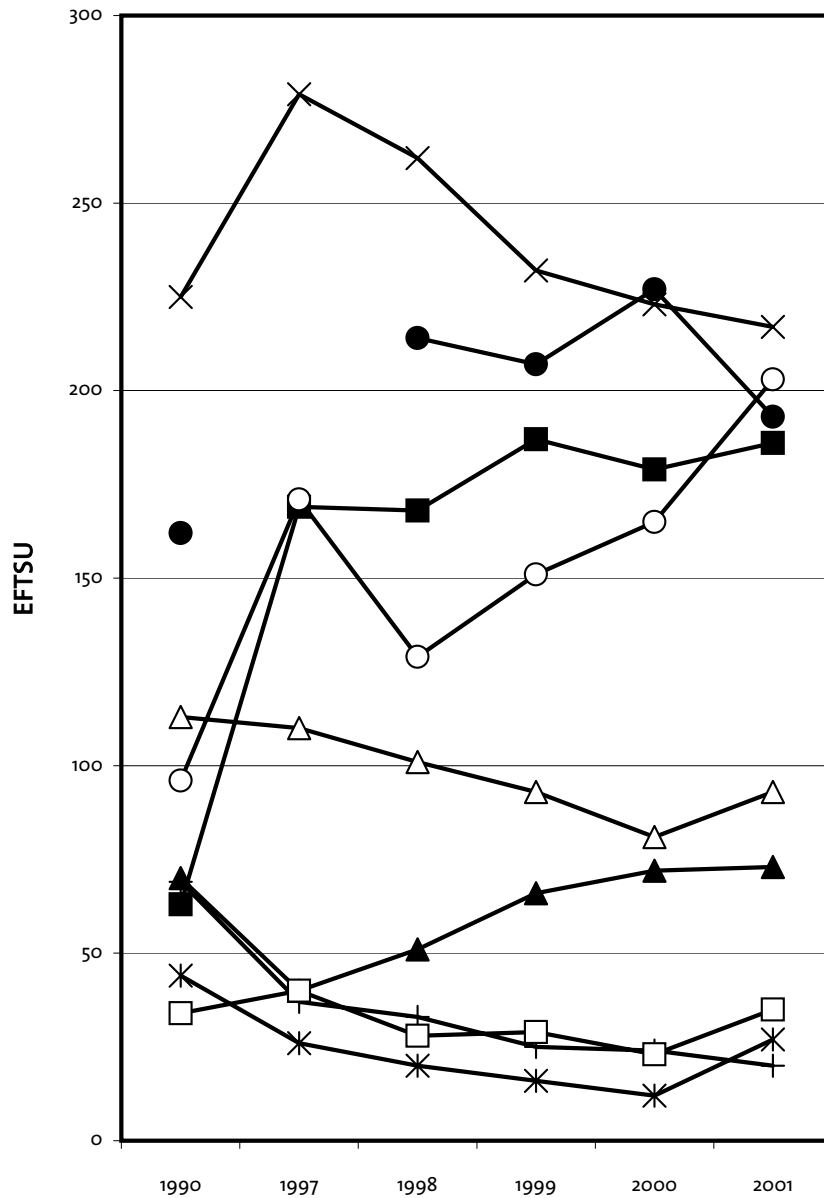
UNIVERSITY	EFTSU 1988	EFTSU 2001
ACU	-	20
Adelaide	73	93
ANU	32	87
Ballarat	-	25
Bond	-	16
Canberra	36*	27
Curtin	31	48
Edith Cowan	-	62
Flinders	1	Adelaide
Griffith	86	213
James Cook	-	39
La Trobe	-	73
Macquarie	-	105
Melbourne	60	186
Monash	108	217
Murdoch	-	35
Newcastle	78	29
QUT	-	63
RMIT	-	52
South Australia	-	32
Southern Cross	-	8
Sunshine Coast	-	18
Swinburne	42	56
Sydney	132	193
Tasmania	37	50
UCQ	-	53
UNE	-	51
UNSW	36	203
UQ	201	172
UTS	-	83
UWA	38	47
UWS	-	50
VUT	-	36
Wollongong	-	34
Capricornia (Qld)	48	-
Gold Coast CAE	3	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1062</b>	<b>2476</b>

\* Canberra CAE

**Note:** The reference to "Adelaide" in the second column indicates that Flinders students study Japanese at Adelaide University and are included in its EFTSU total.

**Sources:** For 1988, Ingleson Report, pp. 129-30. For 2001, data collected for this survey.

**GRAPH 3.1: JAPANESE EFTSU, SELECTED INSTITUTIONS, 1990, 1997-2001**



There has been a plateauing or decline in interest in some universities since the Asian economic crisis of 1997. Graph 3.2 shows trends for a sample of universities for which comparable data are available.

**Graph 3.1:** Japanese EFTSU, selected institutions, 1990-2001

- △ Adelaide
- + ACU
- \* Canberra
- ▲ La Trobe
- Melbourne
- × Monash
- Murdoch
- Sydney
- UNSW

## MANDARIN CHINESE

Mandarin Chinese was available at 29 institutions in 2001. It was available at 13 in 1988.

More than 1,300 EFTSU were enrolled in Mandarin Chinese at Australian universities in 2001. This was 3.7 times greater than in 1988.<sup>37</sup>

**Table 3.4:** Mandarin Chinese: EFTSU, 1988 and 2001

UNIVERSITY	EFTSU 1988	EFTSU 2001
Adelaide	50*	73
ANU	28	56
Ballarat <sup>38</sup>	-	1
Bond	-	10
Canberra	15**	12
Curtin	-	32
Deakin	-	69
Edith Cowan	-	16
Flinders	Adelaide	Adelaide
Griffith	44	82
La Trobe (Bundoora only)	-	40
Macquarie	42	92
Melbourne	53	130
Monash	20	86
Murdoch	21	15
Newcastle	-	11
QUT	-	Griffith/UQ
RMIT	-	21
South Australia	-	Adelaide
Sydney	38	123
Tasmania	-	36
UNE	-	30
UNSW	-	147
UQ	34	76
USQ	-	8
UTS	-	91
UWA	-	20
UWS	-	33
VUT	-	24
Victoria College	14	-
WA CAE	3	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>1334</b>

\* Includes Flinders students taught in Adelaide program.

\*\* Canberra CAE

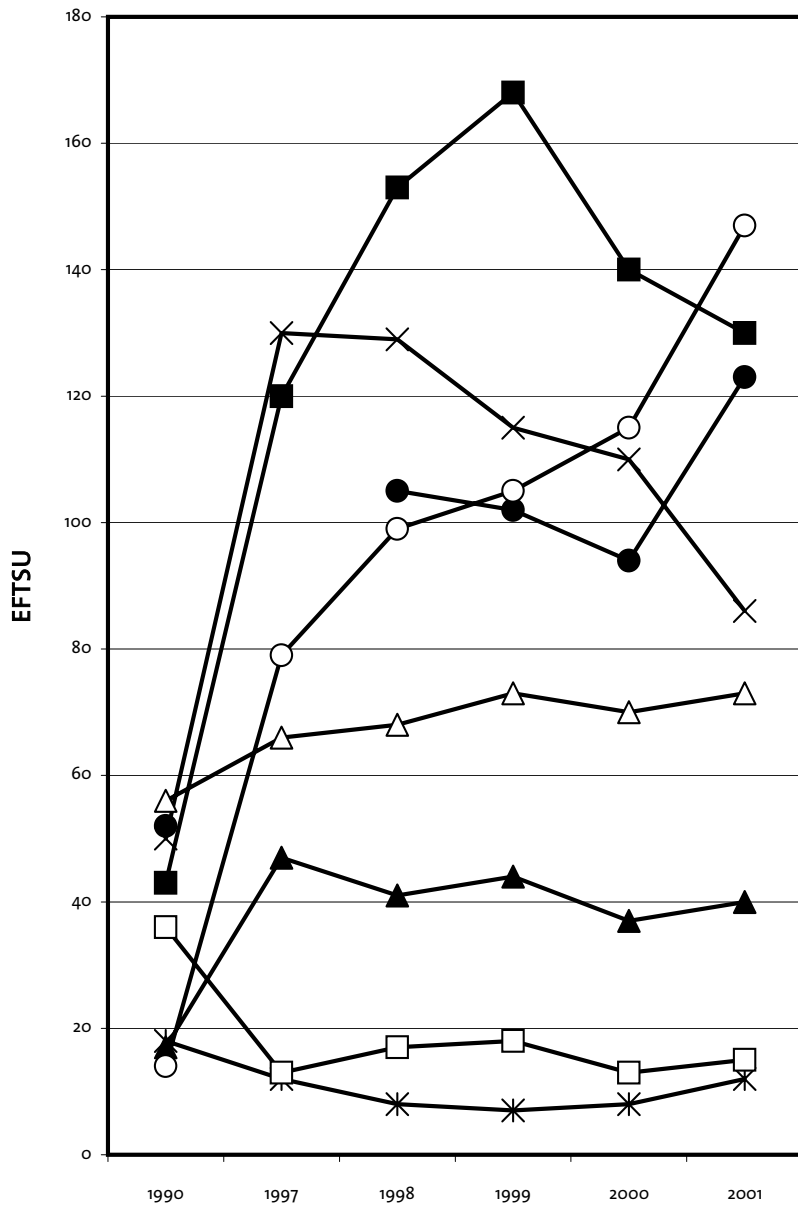
**Note:** The names of universities in the third column indicate that their students were taught by the institution in the first column, in whose EFTSU those students are counted. For consistency over time, the La Trobe figure includes only the Bundoora campus. Four EFTSU were taught at other campuses.

**Sources:** For 1988, Ingleson Report, pp. 123-4; for 2001, data collected for this report.

37. Ingleson Report, pp. 123-4. EFTSU were reported at 509 by the Leal Report in 1990 (vol. 2, p. 159).

38. Ballarat University ceased offering Mandarin Chinese in 2002; 2001 was its final year.

**GRAPH 3.2: CHINESE EFTSU, SELECTED INSTITUTIONS, 1990, 1997-2001**



Graph 3.2 shows trends in eight institutions, which probably indicate similar circumstances elsewhere. After strong growth in the early 1990s, Chinese declined or plateaued in the 1990s in most universities, but Sydney University and UNSW showed renewed growth.

**Graph 3.2:** Mandarin Chinese EFTSU, selected institutions, 1990, 1997-2001

- △— Adelaide
- \*— Canberra
- ▲— La Trobe
- Melbourne
- ×— Monash
- Murdoch
- Sydney
- UNSW

## INDONESIAN/MALAY

Indonesian/Malay was available at 28 institutions in 2001. It was available at 13 in 1988.

Indonesian dramatizes the paradox that confronts the study of Asia across Australian universities. Between 1988 and 2001, the study of Indonesian grew from 156 EFTSU to 621 EFTSU – an increase of four times.<sup>39</sup> The most spectacular growth appears to have come in the 1988-90 period when EFTSU leapt from about 150 when Ingleson reported to 400 by the time Leal reported in 1990. As Graph 3.3 indicates, a downturn began in 1997, and the overall increase in the decade 1991-2001 was a modest 10-15 per cent.

As a result of these falls in enrolment from the late 1990s, Indonesian programs were in decline or in jeopardy at a number of universities in 2001. Notable progress was thus in danger of being lost as a result of fluctuating student demand. Such demand may well return, but the capacity to meet it will have been lost in some institutions.

**Table 3.5:** Indonesian/Malay: EFTSU, 1988 and 2001

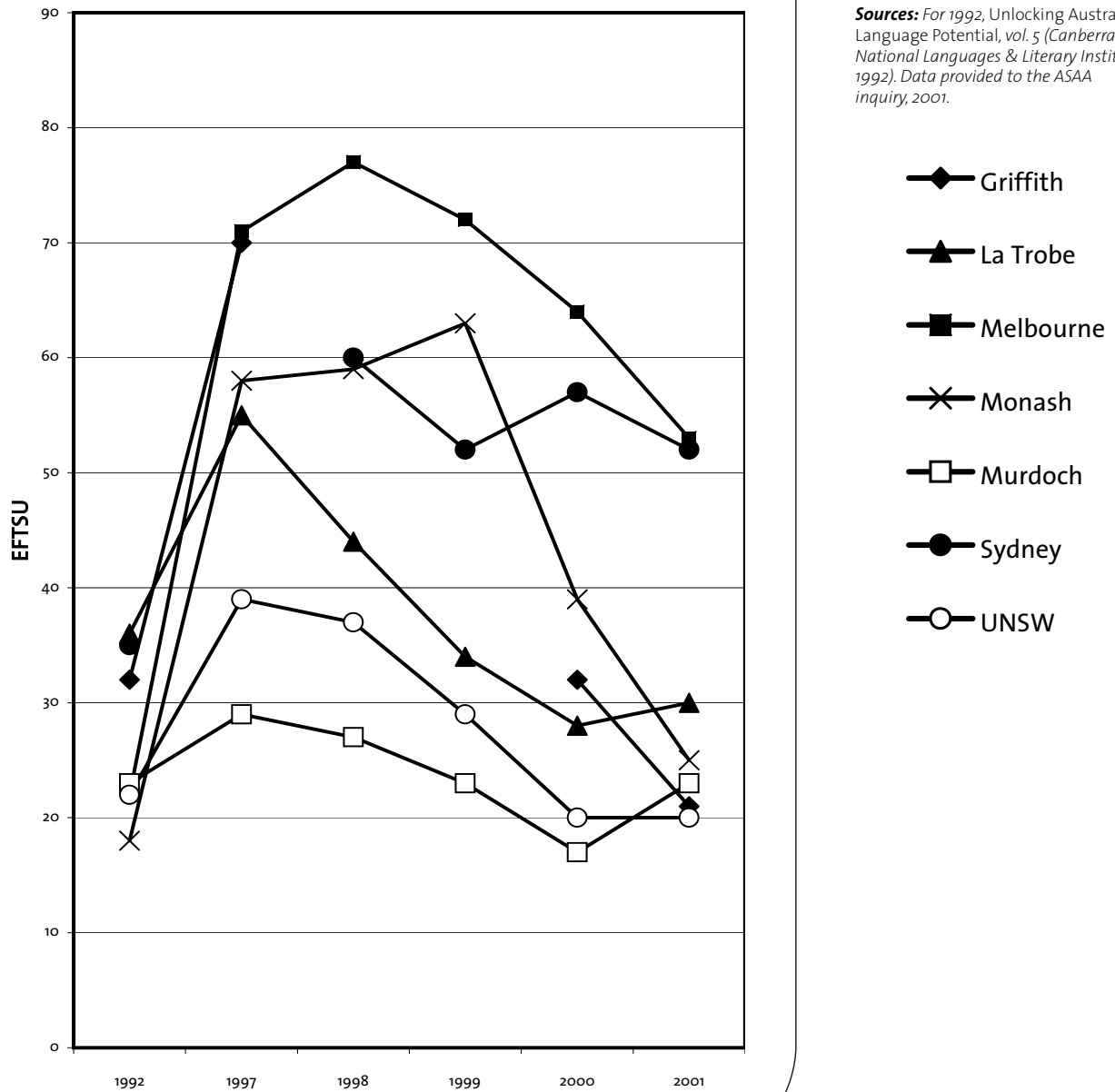
UNIVERSITY	EFTSU 1988	EFTSU 2001
Adelaide	-	Flinders
ADFA	-	23
ANU	26	45
Curtin	9	28
Deakin	-	90
Edith Cowan	-	8
Flinders	16	34
Griffith	29	21
James Cook	9	-
La Trobe (Bundoora only)	-	30
Macquarie	-	Sydney
Melbourne	15	53
Monash	21	25
Murdoch	12	23
NTU	-	20
QUT	-	11
RMIT	-	3
South Australia	-	Flinders
Sydney	"very low" – no figures	52
Sunshine Coast	-	8
Tasmania	-	32
UNE	-	40
UNSW	-	20
UQ	-	8
USQ	-	16
UTS	-	Sydney
UWA	-	15
UWS	-	5
VUT	-	11
Darling Downs CAE	19	
TOTAL	156	621

**Notes:** To maintain consistency over time, La Trobe figure for 2001 includes only Bundoora campus. An additional 11 EFTSU were taught elsewhere.

**Sources:** For 1988, Ingleson Report, p. 126; for 2001, data collected for this report.

39. Ingleson Report, pp. 125-6. Indonesian was taught at nine universities and four Colleges of Advanced Education. This had grown to 21 institutions and 408 EFTSU when Leal reported in 1990 (vol. 2, p 168).

GRAPH 3.3: INDONESIAN EFTSU, SELECTED INSTITUTIONS, 1992, 1997-2001



Graph 3.3: Indonesian EFTSU, selected universities, 1992-2001

Sources: For 1992, Unlocking Australia's Language Potential, vol. 5 (Canberra: National Languages & Literary Institute, 1992). Data provided to the ASAA inquiry, 2001.

## RATES OF GROWTH OR ABSOLUTE NUMBERS?

How are we to judge the progress of the “big three” Asian languages in Australian universities since 1988? Enrolments in the “big three” grew faster than university enrolments overall between 1988 and 2001. University enrolments increased by about 65 per cent; enrolments in Japanese, Chinese and Indonesian grew by about 190 per cent.<sup>40</sup>

What must be emphasized, however, is that Australian universities in 2001 enrolled more than 550,000 EFTSU. The 4,446 EFTSU enrolled in Chinese, Japanese and Indonesian (see Table 3.2) represented 0.8 per cent of total EFTSU in Australia.

If we convert EFTSU into individual student enrolments, we know that 696,000 students were enrolled in Australian universities in 2000 and 732,000 in 2001. If we calculate, as a number of administrators of language programs do, that one EFTSU credited to a language program is made up of approximately 3.5 individual students, then 4,446 EFTSU in the “big three” languages constituted perhaps 16,000 individual students studying Japanese, Chinese and Indonesia in 2001 – 2.2 per cent of all students.

If one includes Asian languages of lesser demand (about 360 EFTSU), discussed below, we get a total of 4,800 EFTSU – perhaps 16,800 individual students. Thus fewer than 3 per cent of individual students at Australian universities study an Asian language.

This is far from the target of 10 per cent by the year 2000, called for by the Asian Studies Council in 1988.<sup>41</sup> Further, the increase in Asian language enrolments is partly explained – even inflated – by the rapid growth in international student enrolments over the same period. International students recognize the value of Asian languages in an increasingly global professional environment. Most, however, take their skills with them when they return to their countries of origin after graduation.<sup>42</sup>

There is reason to applaud the progress that Australian governments, universities and language teachers have made since 1988 in overseeing the growth in the numbers of students studying Japanese, Mandarin Chinese and Indonesian. But the goals set in 1988 are still far from achievement, and systemic and generational change in the university system puts the accomplishments of the 1990s in jeopardy. For example, several respondents to the ASAA survey indicated that the teaching of Indonesian was at risk in their institution. In the present funding climate, declining enrolments could lead institutions to reduce or abandon their Indonesian programs. This points to the problems both of student perceptions and the funding of languages. Such problems affect languages of lesser demand still more adversely.

40. 421,000 individual students were enrolled in 1988 (336,000 EFTSU) and 696,000 (557,000 EFTSU) in 2000. DETYA, *Higher Education Students Time Series Tables. Selected Higher Education Statistics 2000* (www.dest.gov.au). There were 732,000 individual students in 2001 and an estimated 835,000 in 2002. *Australian*, 7 May 2002, p. 3.

41. Asian Studies Council, *A National Strategy for the Study of Asia in Australia* (Canberra: AGPS, 1988), p. 4.

42. For example, students from dialect backgrounds in Chinese opt for formal study of standard dialects, and students from Japanese and Chinese backgrounds take the opportunity to learn the other language.



## LANGUAGES OF LESSER DEMAND – KOREAN, ARABIC, HINDI, THAI, VIETNAMESE

Languages of lower demand did not fare as well as the three major languages, and some experienced marked decline. Hindi, Vietnamese and Thai were available in fewer institutions in 2001 than they had been in 1997. (Table 3.1)

The place of South Korea in the Australian economy has given impetus to study of the Korean language since the 1980s. Korea alone of the smaller countries of Asia has a bilateral council of the Australian government dedicated to the promotion of exchange and understanding.<sup>43</sup> Trade with Korea in 2001 represented 5.9 per cent of Australia's total trade, making Korea Australia's fourth largest trading partner and third largest export market.<sup>44</sup> The nature of the North Korean regime and moves towards reunification between North and South mean that the Korean peninsula is of particular strategic importance to Australia's region.

In 2001, nine universities taught Korean to 128 EFTSU (400 or more individual students). Although this was a notable increase from 1988, the number of institutions offering Korean has fallen from nine to eight since 1997.<sup>45</sup> The fact that the language of Australia's fourth largest trading partner finds it difficult to sustain support for the long haul underlines the fickleness of funding mechanisms for all language teaching.

**Table 3.6:** Korean, EFTSU, 1988 and 2001

UNIVERSITY	EFTSU 1988	EFTSU 2001
ANU	c. 4*	8
Curtin	-	13
Griffith	-	18
Monash	-	11
Sydney	-	44
UNSW	-	24
UQ	-	8
UTS	-	Sydney
TOTAL	4	126

**Table 3.7:** Other languages, EFTSU, 2001

LANGUAGE	UNIVERSITIES	EFTSUs IN 2001	INSTITUTIONS OFFERING, THEN WITHDRAWING, THE LANGUAGE, 1990s
Arabic	5: ANU, Melbourne, UWS, Sydney, Deakin	120	1: RMIT
Hindi/Urdu	4: ANU, Sydney (via ANU), La Trobe/OLA, RMIT*	12	4: UQ, Melbourne, Monash, Sydney
Sanskrit	3: ANU (via Sydney), Sydney, La Trobe	6	4: Melbourne, UQ, Newcastle, ANU
Thai	6: ANU, Canberra, Griffith, Sydney, UTS (via Sydney), RMIT	46	5: Curtin, Macquarie, Monash, VUT, UQ
Vietnamese	6: Adelaide, ANU, Griffith, Sydney (via ANU), UWS, VUT	44	6: ACU, Edith Cowan, U of SA, Deakin, Monash, Swinburne

\* ANU was the only provider and had 15 students enrolled at all levels.

**Note:** Swinburne was phasing out a small Korean program in 2002.

**Sources:** For 1988, Ingleson Report, p. 134; for 2001, data collected for this report.

\* RMIT offers a semester of Hindi each year but has not had enough enrolments to proceed since 2000.

43. The Australia-Korean Foundation was created in 1992.

44. Market Information and Analysis Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade ([www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au)).

45. Australian Academy of the Humanities, *Subjects of Small Enrolment in the Humanities: Enhancing their Future* (Canberra: Paragon Printers, 2000), Tables 1 & 2. Data for 2001 from ASAA survey.



The difficulties of maintaining languages of lower student demand are illustrated by the starts and stops of the 1990s (Table 3.7). Thai and Vietnamese, for example, were attempted, then abandoned, at eleven institutions. The abandonment of such languages resulted from the collision of budgetary pressures, based on enrolments, with the requirements of high-quality language teaching. (See the box, “The Deans’ Dilemma”). These circumstances highlight fundamental problems confronting language teaching in Australian universities, which are discussed below.

Events since 11 September 2001 illustrate the pitfalls of allowing student preferences to shape national language-learning capacity. No tertiary institution in Australia teaches Pashto, the principal language of Afghanistan; Persian is available only at the ANU. Hindi and Urdu, mutually intelligible when spoken, constitute the second largest spoken language in the world. Hindi is a full three-year program only at the ANU. Two years of Hindi are available through Open Learning Australia, which continues on a year-to-year basis at La Trobe. (See box, “Hindi and Urdu”).

### HINDI AND URDU

Together, the close to 600 million speakers of Hindi and Urdu represent the second largest language-speaking group in the world after Mandarin Chinese. Hindi, written in the Devanagari script, and Urdu, written in the Perso-Arabic script, are the same language in simple spoken form. Hindi-Urdu is the parade-ground language of the armies of India and Pakistan, 1.5 million men.

In India and Pakistan, as well as in West and Southeast Asia and parts of the Pacific, Africa and Latin America, Hindi and Urdu films have been popular for fifty years. In the past ten years, satellite television has expanded this following. India’s flourishing advertising industry increasingly conducts its work in Hindi.

In Australia, the Australian National University teaches Hindi to degree level and has provided some teaching to Sydney University. La Trobe University provides limited support to an independent scholar who offers Hindi through Open Learning Australia. Urdu is not taught to degree level.

*Robin Jeffrey, La Trobe University*

In the narrowest terms of national security, Australia has an interest in having numerous citizens in a variety of professions able to work in languages of strategic significance. According to Lt-General Peter Cosgrove, commander of the INTERFET force in East Timor in 1999, “many Australian officers in INTERFET were able to establish co-operative relations with Indonesian counterparts in East Timor because they had either trained in Indonesia, learned Bahasa or had hosted Indonesian personnel who had trained in Australia.”<sup>46</sup>



### TRANSLATIONS

**The trial for the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centre ended in 1994. A bomb-making manual in Arabic that was part of the evidence was not translated or mistranslated, and the mistake only corrected in 1996.**

**Terrorism expert Steven Emerson pointed out the errors, saying that they deprived investigators of a subtle early clue to the existence of bin Laden’s group.**

**... “Had the government correctly translated the material,” Emerson said, “it might have understood that the men who blew up the World Trade Centre [in 1993] and bin Laden’s group were linked.”**

*- Sunday Age, 28 January 2001, p. 5 from the New York Times*

One may speculate that even a small pool of Australian public servants able to work in Persian, Kurdish, Pashto or Arabic might have permitted less agonized handling of Australia’s refugee standoffs of 2001 and 2002.

## CRITICAL ISSUES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING

Although the study of Japanese, Chinese, Indonesian and Korean has increased from 1988 levels, language teaching in Australian universities is at a crossroads, which many language teachers see as a crisis. Key languages of lower student demand are in danger of being wiped out, and even Indonesian programs at some institutions are threatened by annual fluctuations in enrolments.

The experience of the 1990s suggests that it is financially impossible for single institutions, even in Sydney and Melbourne, to sustain languages of lower demand without national support and direction. Indeed, from the time of the Auchmuty Report of 1971, there has been recognition of the need for national initiative to make such languages available to the substantial national – not single-city – cohort of potential students.<sup>47</sup>

46. Lt-General P. J. Cosgrove, Public Lecture, Griffith Asia Pacific Council, Griffith University, 14 September 2000 ([www.gu.edu.au/centre/gapc/CosgrovePaper.html](http://www.gu.edu.au/centre/gapc/CosgrovePaper.html)).

47. The Auchmuty Report, pp. 92-3 recommended opening the RAAF School of Languages at Point Cook to the wider community. The Ingleson Report, p. 111, recommended creation of a National Centre for Applied Linguistics, which the Asian Studies Council endorsed in its *National Strategy* of 1988 (p. 29).

Within cities or wider regions, attempts are made to have one institution provide a language to students at other universities. Such attempts encounter a number of difficulties. They show the most productive results when they bring a new language to an institution that previously did not offer the language. They appear to result in severe contraction of enrolments when they are a cost-cutting measure, produced by the abolition of a full-fledged program at one institution, which is justified by arranging for another institution to offer the language. There are no doubt ways of making Languages with Unique Regional Providers (LURPs) work successfully, but the mechanisms need to be discovered and promoted, as **Recommendation 12** proposes.

The electronics revolution of the 1990s now makes national – indeed, global – programs of language teaching genuinely feasible. The Hindi program, run through Open Learning Australia at La Trobe University on the scantiest of resources, already uses some of the available technology, as does the ANU Hindi program servicing Sydney University. There are indications that global markets exist for well-designed courses of this kind.<sup>48</sup>

The plan set out below includes a series of recommendations designed to address these issues. **(Recommendations 5, 6, 8, 10 and 11).**

The problems of language teaching are not confined to the languages of Asia. According to a report by the Australian Academy of the Humanities, 100 language teaching positions were lost in Australian universities from 1996-1999.<sup>49</sup> Of the 78 net losses reported between 1997 and 1999, 32 were employed in teaching Asian languages and studies. The great majority of positions lost were in languages of high demand, especially Japanese. This trend reflects the difficulty of maintaining staffing levels in times of financial stringency, regardless of levels of demand.

**Table 3.8:** Reported Net Loss of Asian Language Positions 1997-1999

LANGUAGE	NUMBER OF POSITIONS
Chinese	6
Japanese	17
Indonesian	4
Korean	2.5
Thai	0.6
Hindi/Urdu	2
TOTAL	32.1

**Source:** Australian Academy of the Humanities, *Subjects of Small Enrolment in the Humanities: Enhancing their Future* (Canberra: Australian Academy of the Humanities, 2000), p.43.

National initiatives are needed to make strategically important languages available to a nationwide cohort of potential students and to ensure that the major languages of Asia are available regularly and effectively to large sections of Australians.

48. The Open Learning Australia offering in Hindi, based at La Trobe University, has students enrolled from Asia, Europe and North America as well as Australia. With no publicity and little infrastructure, the introductory unit attracted six students in 1997, its first year. This has doubled to 12 in 2002. Peter Friedlander, email, 25 February 2002.

49. Australian Academy of the Humanities, *Subjects of Small Enrolment in the Humanities: Enhancing their Future* (Canberra: The Australian Academy of the Humanities 2000), p.43.

## 4. MAXIMIZING AUSTRALIA'S ASIA KNOWLEDGE: A PLAN

In an era of choice – consumer choice, student choice, hard choices by governments, businesses and educational institutions – demonstration by governments that they have chosen to emphasise Australia's Asia knowledge is crucial for that knowledge to be exploited and extended. Strong signals are needed that engagement with Asia is a matter of national concern and commitment.



### RATIONALE 1.

To provide this lead in repositioning and extending, we recommend that the Commonwealth create a Council for Maximizing Australia's Asia Knowledge and Skills (C-MAAKS).<sup>50</sup> It will use new ideas and technologies to bring together Australia's diverse resources of Asia knowledge to enhance Australia as a global centre for understanding of the region. It will initiate and oversee programs (outlined below) that contribute to the goal of making large numbers of Australians perceptive and sophisticated in their approach to the Asia dimension of globalisation. C-MAAKS would be chaired by a prominent Australian familiar with the affairs of Asian countries and with wide connections in Australian public life. An executive officer would lead a small secretariat whose role would be to initiate, coordinate and guide programs, but only rarely to execute them.

### RECOMMENDATION 1 –

#### COUNCIL FOR MAXIMIZING AUSTRALIA'S ASIA KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (C-MAAKS)

That the Commonwealth Government create a Council for Maximizing Australia's Asia Knowledge and Skills (C-MAAKS) to

- develop and promote Australia as a knowledge centre for the study of Asia and for activities relating to Asia
- link Australia's knowledge resources about Asia in government, education, business, media and non-government organisations (NGOs), including close cooperation with bilateral councils and business councils
- promote the deepening and diffusion of Asia expertise in education systems, including K-10, Years 11 and 12 and the tertiary sector
- initiate the programs recommended elsewhere in this review to reposition and extend Australia's Asia knowledge for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

**Annual Cost: \$300,000**  
*Four-year cost: \$1.2 million*

<sup>50</sup> The authors of this report chose to call this body C-MAAKS, but the name is not especially important and is for government to determine. The "Asia-Australia Council" has been suggested as a pithier possibility.



## RATIONALE 2.

Australia has two reasons for maximizing its Asia-knowledge asset:

- sophisticated interaction with its neighbours signals Australia's recognition of its geographical place.

It signals that Australian interest extends beyond issues of bottom-line commerce and border security.

- more and more Australians will inevitably interact with Asian countries in future.

They will be vastly more effective – as officials, tourists, students, peacekeepers or businesspeople – if they understand the histories and cultures of the people with whom they deal. Australia should aim to have significant numbers of its citizens move in Asia with the assuredness that Dutch or Scandinavians often move in English-speaking countries.

To reposition Australia's Asia knowledge, it is necessary to recognize the importance of the task. The creation of a high-profile C-MAAKS bestows that recognition and provides the mechanism to develop and reposition Australia's Asia knowledge. Other aspects of the plan seek to refocus and renew Australia's Asia expertise in universities, to extend interactions with the countries of Asia and to encourage processes of interaction with Asia that are already at work in the wider community.

### RECOMMENDATION 2 –

#### UNIVERSITY COMMITMENT TO STUDY OF ASIA



That C-MAAKS encourage universities to acknowledge the importance of study of Asia in mission statements and policy documents and to make eligibility for C-MAAKS programs contingent on such acknowledgement.

C-MAAKS secretariat: **No additional cost**

Of 26 Australian Vice-Chancellors who replied to a survey conducted for this report, 20 reported that their institution included specific reference to interaction with Asia in its mission statement or other key policy documents. Sixteen out of 26 travelled to an Asian country three or more times a year. Yet only two knew an Asian language (Hindi and Indonesian). The creation of C-MAAKS will reinforce an understanding in the region that Australia is committed to engagement with Asia and to being part of its region. At home, such a clear statement will encourage university administrations to support and extend existing efforts.



### “UNITED STATES SECURITY STRATEGY AND CONCERNS SHIFT TOWARD ASIA”

The next decade will in all likelihood see the locus of United States security strategy and concerns shift toward Asia. The ... cold-war preoccupation with ... the fate of Europe is over...

Asia, however, is another story. Important parts of the region ... have mastered the core technological and institutional competencies of the West ... The region has an inherent weight that also comes from sheer scale ... For the last three decades the world's highest rates of economic growth have been recorded in Asia ... Japan has long been the world's second largest economy – 40 percent larger than Germany's ... Singapore's GDP per capita exceeds Britain's.

Marvin C. Ott, “East Asia: Security and Complexity,” *Current History*, vol. 100, no. 645 (April 2001), p. 147

*“Australian interest extends beyond issues of bottom-line commerce and border security”*





### RATIONALE 3.

Electronic technologies require thousands of Australians to interact with countries of Asia each day, if only through offshore call-centres or data-processing centres. The potential for more profound and beneficial use of the technology is clear. To maximize the use of the Internet as a tool for extending Australia's Asia knowledge, this report recommends that C-MAAKS oversee the creation of an "Australia-Asia Knowledge Portal."

The portal will create a practical method of deepening, extending and exchanging Australia's Asia knowledge and reaffirming Australia's place as a world centre for knowledge of Asia. It will help to develop a new genre by providing a single entry point to all possible sources of knowledge about Asia in Australia and elsewhere.

The common theme and purpose of the "Asia-Australia Knowledge Portal" will be to bring together as many aspects as possible of Australia's Asia knowledge and make these known to Australians and others.<sup>51</sup> In the old world of print, it would have had relatives among magazines, telephone directories, reference books, scholarly journals and business newsletters. It will link or copy some items but provide a place of initial publication for others. Its editor – "webitor" – will interact with users and contributors. Design and delivery of the Australia-Asia Knowledge Portal will be put out to a tender process that will emphasise conceptual imagination and Asian experience. The aim is to create an electronic gateway to Asia which will become as familiar to Australians as the name of their daily newspaper.

### RECOMMENDATION 3 – ASIA-AUSTRALIA KNOWLEDGE PORTAL



That C-MAAKS interlink, extend and develop existing Australian Websites devoted to Asia to create a unique Asia-Australia Knowledge Portal. This will create a practical, new method of deepening, extending and exchanging Australia's Asia knowledge and reaffirming Australia's place as a world centre for knowledge of Asia.

**Annual cost: \$250,000**  
*Four-year cost: \$1 million*

51. One of the respondents to this report points out that "materials currently made available on the Web by Asianists in Australia" highlight "how important the medium is and what a significant contribution is already being made to global information on Asia by Australians. E.g., the pioneering e-journal *Intersections* <<http://www.she.murdoch.edu.au/intersections/>> is rapidly establishing itself in Asian gender studies; the ASAA e-journal on Asian linguistics; the ASAA e-newsletter; secondary school LOTE teacher websites (WILTA, VILTA etc)." David Hill, Murdoch University, 2 March 2002.





#### RATIONALE 4.

We have been constantly reminded of the degree to which many Australians now interact with Asia in their daily work and leisure. To inform and deepen such interaction, we recommend that C-MAAKS initiate the creation of Web-based pathways of study, available to all Australians and drawing on the best and most appropriate subjects available in Australian universities.

The aim is to allow Australians who develop connections with Asia to explore and extend these work or leisure-related interests. The role of C-MAAKS or a successful tenderer will be not only to identify suitable subjects and make such study technically feasible but to overcome administrative barriers that sometimes stand in the way of maximizing Australia's Asia knowledge.

A student on a frigate in the Arabian Gulf, an aid project in Southeast Asia or a farm in Queensland would be able to select subjects for study and pursue them either for general interest or to the level of a Certificate, Diploma or Masters by coursework.

The technical expertise to deliver such teaching is deployed in a number of Australian universities. C-MAAKS would oversee its adaptation to offer Australia's Asia knowledge to a growing community of people who *do* things with Asia and are discovering they want to *know* more about Asia.

*“the aim is to allow  
Australians who develop  
connections with Asia to  
extend these interests,  
drawing on the best and  
most appropriate subjects  
available in Australian  
universities”*

#### RECOMMENDATION 4 –

##### ASIA KNOWLEDGE FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT



That the C-MAAKS draw on units of study and scholars from around Australia to develop an ensemble of Web-based subjects to allow people working with Asia to deepen and extend their knowledge; and that

- these subjects be available for casual study and appropriate academic credit at various levels of accreditation.
- this method of promoting broadly based life-long learning be monitored for its potential as a model for other branches of knowledge.

**Annual cost: \$200,000**  
*Four-year cost: \$800,000*

*“there is a national interest at stake, and small, struggling programs do not necessarily serve that interest well”*



### RATIONALE 5.

At the undergraduate level, a number of universities have devised degree structures that allow students to incorporate extensive language study in their course. This may involve a parallel diploma in a language and an extra year of study. It may involve intensive, in-country study. Best-practice in this area needs to be identified and institutions encouraged to adapt such practice to their students and their needs.

#### RECOMMENDATION 5 –

##### UNDERGRADUATE PATHWAYS

That C-MAAKS identify best-practice and actively encourage universities to create degree structures and “pathways” that enable students easily to incorporate study of Asia, and international experience, in their courses of study.

C-MAAKS secretariat: **No additional cost**



### RATIONALE 6.

This inquiry recommends that the Commonwealth government, either through C-MAAKS or DEST, call for tenders from tertiary institutions to provide both Web-based delivery, and face-to-face teaching in the local area of the institution, of a number of languages of lesser demand, the languages to be determined after consultation. We have heard arguments that such provision will undermine existing programs that have struggled to survive in difficult circumstances. We offer two points in reply:

- there is a national interest at stake, and small, struggling programs do not necessarily serve that interest well
- institutions with a track-record of teaching such languages will start as favourites in a tender process. If they win the tender, their programs will be more secure, broadly based and burgeoning than ever before.

We do not suggest that existing collaborative models for teaching languages, outlined in a 1999 survey by the Australian Academy of Humanities, should be abandoned.<sup>52</sup> Rather, new technologies and appropriate incentives should be used to encourage such programs to expand their potential to deliver language instruction nationally and globally.

52. Australian Academy of the Humanities, *Subjects of Small Enrolment in the Humanities: Enhancing their Future* (Canberra: Australian Academy of the Humanities, 2000), p. 43. 22 of 37 institutions reported collaborating with other universities in providing one or more languages other than English. Our data show 14 universities collaborating in the provision of Asian languages. Outcomes of collaborative language programs have been mixed. In some cases, benefits have fallen short of expectations. In others, difficulties have proven insurmountable.

## RECOMMENDATION 6 –



### SECURING STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT LANGUAGES

That the C-MAAKS designate up to five languages (which might include Arabic, Burmese, Hindi-Urdu, Khmer, Korean, Pashto, Persian, Tagalog, Thai, Vietnamese, etc) as “Asian Languages of Lesser Demand” (ALLDs); and that the C-MAAKS offer, by tender, the teaching of these languages to universities;

that the terms of the offer include

- funding for the equivalent of two fulltime positions at a minimum of Level B for a period of four years in the first instance
- developmental, infrastructure and administrative expenses
- the requirement that successful institutions
  - teach the language face-to-face in the locality of the institution and to Australians and international fee-paying students by all appropriate technologies, including the World Wide Web
  - vigorously promote awareness of these languages to Australians (not merely conventional students) and internationally to fee-payers
  - achieve recognition from Australian universities to credit these language courses towards a student’s degree

and that the program be reviewed regularly and re-evaluated by the end of the third year.

**Annual cost (five languages): \$1 million**

*Four-year cost: \$4 million*



## RATIONALE 7.

In the United States and the United Kingdom, private foundations and governments have recognized the importance of Asia knowledge by investing millions of dollars in programs to renew and extend it. In the US, the Luce Fund for Asian Studies has committed US\$12 million to create 40 new entry-level positions to teach about Asia in universities. In the UK, government has earmarked 1 million (sterling) a year for five years to enhance the study of China. In Canada, the Canada Research Chairs initiative dedicated Can. \$900 million to the creation of 2,000 new research chairs in Canadian universities by 2005.<sup>53</sup> (See boxes).

### RECOMMENDATION 7 –



#### REPOSITIONING AND RENEWING AUSTRALIA'S ASIA KNOWLEDGE

That the C-MAAKS establish 15 entry-level positions in the study of Asia at Australian universities to be awarded, by tender, at the rate of five a year for three years;

- that these positions carry salaries for three years after which they become the accepted responsibility of the university;
- that success in tendering for these positions be based on a university's past and present commitment to the study of Asia; and
- that these positions usually be "joint" positions, involving more than one unit of the tendering university.

**Annual cost: (average) \$700,000**

*Five-year cost: \$3.5 million*

To reposition and renew Australian expertise on Asia, we recommend a program on the lines of these overseas initiatives. We recommend that C-MAAKS, following particularly the Luce Foundation model, support the creation of 15 entry-level appointments in the study of Asia to be created at the rate of five a year for three years.

53. By January 2002, out of 500 chairs awarded, about 100 had gone to scholars in the humanities and social sciences. Denis Croux, Director of Operations, Canada Research Chairs, email, 20 February 2002.



## UNITED STATES: THE LUCE FUND FOR ASIAN STUDIES

The Luce Fund for Asian Studies, established in 1999, is a \$12 million initiative to strengthen the study of Asia at the undergraduate level of American higher education. The initiative supports the creation of permanent new junior faculty positions at selective American liberal arts colleges to foster the study of Asia and reinforce the liberal arts. Grants will be awarded over four years through annual competitions. Over the life of the program, grants will be made for approximately 40 new positions to teach about the regions of East and Southeast Asia.

The Luce Foundation solicits proposals from competitive liberal arts institutions that can demonstrate a significant commitment to the study of Asia. The aim of the program is to bolster existing Asian studies programs to new levels of quality and coverage rather than to initiate new Asian studies programs.

Grants support salary and benefits for a new professor for a four-year period and a program fund of \$10,000 per year for Asia-related activities such as visiting lectureships, student internships, library acquisitions, and faculty exchange. Funding is provided on the condition that the institution will continue to support the position after the foundation's grant has expired...

In making its final selection, the foundation is guided by the recommendations of a panel of advisors, distinguished scholars familiar with Asia and liberal arts colleges. Awards are based on the quality, creativity and promise of each proposal as well as on the schools' existing institutional resources, strong commitment to and long-range strategy for Asian studies...

Thirty-one grants have been awarded in the first three rounds of competition. The final round is scheduled for 2002. (From [www.hluce.org](http://www.hluce.org)).

Institutions will tender for these opportunities, which will, as with the Luce Foundation program, be awarded partly on the basis of an institution's demonstrated commitment to the study of Asia. These appointments, moreover, will require an institution to show that the position has support in at least two disciplinary areas. A key aim is to *reposition* the study of Asia by fostering and enriching the *diffusion* that, as we have noted, is already proceeding in some institutions and to encourage this diffusion in other institutions. The C-MAAKS program will meet the salaries for these appointments for three years, after which institutions will be required to guarantee their continuance. Because the appointee will work in more than one disciplinary unit, the responsibility for the salary should be more readily accepted and easily carried.



### UNITED KINGDOM: STRENGTHENING THE STUDY OF CHINA

A new funding programme announced by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) aims to fill the skills gap that is hampering the growth of trade between the UK and China.

The HEFCE commissioned a review of Chinese studies, following concerns among industrialists, academics and Government that the UK higher education system was not equipped to respond to the opportunities presented by the opening up of trading and political relations with the People's Republic of China ...

In response to the review group's recommendations, the HEFCE is to set aside an additional £1 million a year for five years to strengthen Chinese studies in a handful of centres of expertise. These centres will be expected to provide conversion courses for graduates in other subjects - such as engineering, business and social science - so that they can acquire language skills and an understanding of Chinese culture and how it relates to their own field ...

*(From <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/hefce/1999/china.htm>  
Higher Education Funding Council for England [HEFCE])*



### CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS

In its 2000 budget, the Government of Canada provided \$900 million to support the establishment of 2,000 Canada Research Chairs in universities across the country by 2005. About 400 new Chairs will be named in each of the next five years. Recruitment will be from both inside and outside Canada.

There will be two types of Chair:

- seven-year renewable Chairs targeted at experienced researchers who are acknowledged by their peers as world leaders in their own fields;
- five-year chairs, renewable once, targeted at researchers who are acknowledged by their peers as having the potential to lead in their fields.

*([www.chairs.gc.ca](http://www.chairs.gc.ca))*



## RATIONALE 8.

Bound up with the cost of teaching languages is an industrial-relations question. A “class system” exists among teachers of language. To provide sufficient contact hours for students, administrators seek to minimize costs by hiring instructors at lower, often casual, rates of pay. At the other end of the spectrum, tenured academic staff in language departments are often highly trained specialists in literature or the social sciences whose time may not be best spent in labour-intensive introductory language teaching.

Language instructors, if they gain tenure under the present system, are expected to do research and publish. Such teachers, however, may be more productive and comfortable in teaching roles alone.

To devise salary and promotion structures that reward good language teachers, without necessarily imposing on them research and publication expectations, is a labour-relations problem whose solution is essential for the viability of language teaching in Australian universities. To work towards such a solution is itself a labour-intensive task that requires the persistence of a nationally focused body like C-MAAKS.

### RECOMMENDATION 8 -

#### CAREERS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS

That C-MAAKS, in cooperation with other interested groups, survey universities and identify the most practical methods, either currently in place or capable of being implemented, for providing attractive career paths and conditions for dedicated language teachers at universities.

C-MAAKS secretariat: **No additional cost**





## RATIONALE 9.

To emphasise the importance of repositioning the study of Asia, we recommend that C-MAAKS encourage outstanding postgraduate study of the countries of Asia. For 50 years, Australia has built a reputation as a place where such postgraduate work was done well. However, the contraction of the pool of senior supervisors and of job opportunities, plus increasing pressures for completion of doctoral work within three years, have set up significant disincentives for postgraduate scholars. The three-year time-frame in which to complete a PhD is increasingly mandated by Australian grant-giving bodies. It is, however, a completely unrealistic deadline for work on topics that require in-country research. To study a language, do research in a different country and then perform the “normal” tasks of writing up a thesis needs time. Becoming a skilled researcher in a country of Asia is more complicated than working in an Australian archives or laboratory.

To encourage outstanding students to persevere with the study of Asia, we recommend that C-MAAKS establish up to 15 Fieldwork Fellowships of \$20,000 each, tenable for one year. Such fellowships will allow a student to suspend a regular scholarship for a year of fieldwork and thus provide the more reasonable time-span of four or four-and-a-half years in which to complete an Asia-related PhD topic. Strong preference will be given to students working on cross-disciplinary topics capable of strengthening the diffusion of Asia knowledge through Australian education, government, business and public life.

### RECOMMENDATION 9—

#### FIELDWORK FELLOWSHIPS



That the C-MAAKS establish and fund up to 15 fieldwork fellowships of \$20,000 a year to allow postgraduate scholars to work for an extended period in a country of Asia.

**Annual cost (15 fellowships): \$300,000**

*Four-year cost: \$1.2 million*





## RATIONALE 10.

Enrolments in the three well-established languages of Asia – Japanese, Chinese and Indonesian – appear to be sensitive to “signals” related to current events and apparent job possibilities. Even the longest-established language programs in the largest universities were susceptible to fluctuations in student demand in the 1990s and to resulting depletion of staff numbers and then of subject offerings. Language teachers at Monash, Sydney and the University of New South Wales, for example, report such struggles and uncertainty.

Enrolments even in the “big three” Asian languages waned in some institutions in the late 1990s. The reasons are difficult to identify without detailed research, but they include the “signals” that students read from current events and use to decide their choice of subjects, thus creating “student demand.” They also reflect budget constraints and staff cuts. If sizeable numbers of students are to enrol, languages need to have timetables and course structures that are clear, convenient and predictable.

A number of measures need to be taken to deliver unmistakably positive signals to students considering study of a language. At an advanced level, postgraduate scholarships for in-country study need to be expanded and promoted.

### RECOMMENDATION 10 – LANGUAGE FELLOWSHIPS



That the C-MAAKS, drawing on the experience of the UMAP program, establish and fund up to 10 postgraduate study-in-Asia language fellowships at an average annual value of \$20,000 each (varying with the country of study) for advanced students to study language for a year in a country of Asia.

**Annual cost (10 fellowships): \$200,000**  
*Four-year cost: \$800,000*



“students are sensitive to ‘prestige factors.’ Language study needs to carry prestige and promise”



### RATIONALE 11.

It is widely agreed that in-country study of a language is perhaps the most effective way of motivating students and developing their skills. Such programs already exist at a number of institutions, and the ACICIS program, as we have seen, has allowed 500 undergraduates to study in Indonesia in the past seven years.

What is required is predictable, systematic development and analysis of programs of in-country language learning. To this end, we recommend that C-MAAKS subsidise for 20 students a year for four years an experimental four-year degree in language, which will include one year of intensive in-country study. This proposal aims to

- build on current examples
- develop an effective model for large numbers of students to study language in-country
- emphasise to students the importance – even glamour – of language study

Such signals are important: students are sensitive to “prestige factors,” such as the tertiary courses chosen by students with the highest Year 12 exam results, and to the wisdom of the day about the job prospects that courses offer. Language study, coupled with study in other disciplines, needs to carry prestige and promise.

### RECOMMENDATION 11 – EXPERIMENTAL LANGUAGE DEGREE STRUCTURE



That the C-MAAKS call for tenders and subsidise for four years an experimental four-year undergraduate degree in Asian languages, which will provide sufficient funds for intensive teaching and for one-year of in-country study for a total of 80 students over four years; and that this initiative be monitored to provide a model for future policy.

**Annual cost (subsidy): \$200,000**  
*Four-year cost: \$800,000*



## RATIONALE 12.

Cooperation among universities to provide city-wide or region-wide teaching of languages has sometimes foundered on administrative complications and matters of relatively small expense. Yet such teaching holds the prospect of maintaining “endangered” languages by attracting viable student numbers and, more important, making languages conveniently available to students over a wide area. Such programs, however, should not be treated merely as a cost-cutting measure in which one institution abandons responsibility for maintaining a language. In such circumstances, enrolments at the non-providing institution usually fall.

C-MAAKS should therefore call for submissions from groups of universities seeking to make city-wide or region-wide language teaching effective and vigorous for the long-term. Successful bidders would demonstrate a genuine commitment by all partners to making the language conveniently and predictably available to their students. C-MAAKS would offer costs per language of up to \$80,000 a year in the first year, \$60,000 in the second and \$40,000 in the third for programs that made languages readily available across a region or city. Such expenses could involve salaries, transport, electronic equipment or whatever is necessary to make such programs work. Regional universities would be especially encouraged to apply. C-MAAKS would also lend its weight to overcoming the bureaucratic tangles in which such programs have become caught in the past.

### RECOMMENDATION 12 –

#### INTER-UNIVERSITY COOPERATION IN LANGUAGE TEACHING



That C-MAAKS invite universities to make proposals for city-wide, or region-wide, teaching of a language to maximize and ensure long-term effectiveness and that C-MAAKS fund at least three such proposals for up to \$180,000 each over three years.

**Average annual cost (3 programs): \$180,000**

*Maximum three-year cost: \$540,000*

*“These fellowships should carry the prestige of ‘a Fulbright’ or ‘a Rhodes’ but be distinctively Australian”*



### **RATIONALE 13.**

To build links with people who make policy and influence opinion in Asian countries effectively enhances and celebrates Australia’s Asia knowledge. Such two-way traffic has three advantages. It

- contributes to the diffusion of Asia knowledge in Australia by exposing Australians to outstanding men and women from Asia
- establishes networks for Australians studying and working in Asian countries
- makes women and men from Asian countries “Australia literate.” Australia benefits from having larger numbers of influential neighbours equipped with extensive, first-hand experience of Australia.

We therefore recommend that C-MAAKS create three fellowships to be awarded annually to distinguished younger scholars, officials or writers to conduct research in Australian institutions. These fellowships should bear the name of an outstanding Australian individual or of a company or institution (which might be invited to endow such fellowships) and should aim to carry the prestige of “a Fulbright” or “a Rhodes” but to be distinctively Australian. This has the advantage of further signalling high-level commitment by Australia to constant exchange with its neighbours.

### **RECOMMENDATION 13 –**

#### **AN “AUSTRALIAN FULBRIGHT” SCHEME FOR ASIA**

That the C-MAAKS work with governments and private enterprise to establish three fellowships at \$80,000 each for outstanding younger scholars from Asian countries to work in an Australian institution for a year.

**Annual cost (three fellowships): \$240,000**

*Four-year cost: \$1 million*





## RATIONALE 14.

This review has concerned itself with the study of Asia in universities. But the importance of primary and secondary education in any plan to improve Australians' ability to prosper in global times is self-evident.

A recent survey, commissioned by the DEST under the NALSAS Strategy, indicated that the inclusion of Asia-related content was not a high priority for those Education faculties surveyed. In addition, in the majority of cases where content on Asia was included in a subject, it constituted less than five per cent of the allocated time.<sup>54</sup>

The age-profile of the teaching profession suggests that Australian education systems will experience a large infusion of new blood in the next five years; but new teachers will be as little prepared as most of their predecessors to teach about the countries of Asia.

National recognition of the need to extend Australia's Asia knowledge will encourage state and territory education jurisdictions and universities to emphasise the study of Asia as part of every trainee-teacher's preparation for coping confidently with that aspect of globalisation that is on Australia's doorstep.

### RECOMMENDATION 14 –

#### TRAINING TEACHERS IN THE STUDY OF ASIA



That, as a matter of urgency,

- the C-MAAKS survey the place of Asia in the programs of Education faculties in Australian universities;
- using the survey findings, the C-MAAKS develop strategies to ensure that every teacher-in-training studies some aspects of Asia and is made aware of the possibilities and resources for teaching about Asia; and
- this emphasis on making new teachers Asia-equipped remain a C-MAAKS priority.

**First-year cost: \$200,000**

*Four-year cost: \$300,000*

54. A respondent to this report points out that the School of Education at the Australian Catholic University in Queensland has a compulsory Asian Studies unit in all BEd degrees, but gave up this component for its Victorian campus in 2001 as a result of restructuring. (Louise Edwards, ACU, email, 21 February 2002).



## RATIONALE 15.

Programs funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and state and territory education jurisdictions have been notably effective in expanding the study of Asia from Kindergarten to Year 10. These programs include initiatives of the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) Strategy and the Asia Education Foundation (AEF). Approximately 18 per cent of Australian schools are now part of the AEF's Access Asia Network of schools, and more than 50 high-quality original publications, with total sales of more than 60,000 copies, have been produced.

A focus on Asia is often missing, however, in Years 11 and 12 in most states. What goes on in the “senior school” influences attitudes of both teachers and students. National discussion of, and agreement about, the desirability of Asia-related topics in years 11 and 12 will

- support K-to-10 study by enhancing the perceived importance of Asia knowledge in schools
- encourage new university students, who tend to choose familiar subjects, to pursue Asian interests acquired at school

C-MAAKS should, as a matter of urgency, work with state education authorities to expand the opportunities for students in Years 11 and 12 to study aspects of Asia.

## RECOMMENDATION 15 –

### STUDY OF ASIA AT YEARS 11 AND 12



That the C-MAAKS take the initiative in cooperating with state and territory Ministries of Education, the Asia Education Foundation and other interested organisations, to ensure that study of Asia becomes a significant component of Year 11 and 12 curriculums in all states.

C-MAAKS secretariat: **No additional cost**

## 5. CONCLUSION

Three sets of reasons dictate Australia's need to preserve, widen and deepen its knowledge of the countries of Asia. They are inter-connected; none is overriding; and none should be ignored.

- **Economic.** The countries of Asia are Australia's largest trading partners. The rest of the world sees them as sites of huge potential growth, as the UK program to strengthen study of China illustrates. Learning the languages of one's trading partners may not lead to an instant 10 per cent improvement to a company's bottom line; but would the Swiss, Dutch or Swedes survive as well as they do if they were not multi-lingual?



**Figure 6:** Being ill-informed about one's place in the world can have adverse consequences, as a Ku Klux Kangaroo seems about to discover. Spooner, *The Age*, 30 Oct. 1996.

- **Security.** Security has sometimes been downplayed in arguments about why Australians need to know about the countries of Asia. Though the Auchmuty Report of 1971 grew out of the Vietnam war, it did not stress security issues.

This review argues that security, broadly defined, is a key reason for Australia's need to study the societies and cultures of Asia. Security means not just the defence of Australia against military or terrorist threats. It also means the involvement of Australians in peacekeeping and development activity aimed at making Asia Pacific a region of increasing peace, cooperation and prosperity. Lt-General Cosgrove's remarks in a public lecture to the Griffith Asia Pacific Council in Brisbane in 2000 highlight this aspect. (See Box, "We must ... ensure ...").

To anticipate, cooperate and plan require understanding. The wider such understanding is disseminated, the larger the pool of people able to exercise discriminating judgement



**“WE MUST ... ENSURE ... WE ARE POLITICALLY AND CULTURALLY PREPARED”**

All of the regional contributors to INTERFET [in East Timor in 1999] from the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, South Korea and Malaysia were accompanied by Australian officers who spoke their languages, knew their cultures and had formed relationships with key officers in their armed forces ...

The message from the new relationships that have formed as a matter of necessity on recent humanitarian and peace support operations is that the ADF [Australian Defence Force] needs to prepare and anticipate a requirement to be more politically and culturally sophisticated in the conduct of “good neighbour” operations in the future. Good neighbours learn to speak each other’s languages.

Good neighbours learn to respect each other’s religious and cultural beliefs. Good neighbours learn to allow for differences and to be inclusive. Good neighbours spend time with each other ...

As a consequence of these realities, the Australian Defence Force must increase its investment in civil affairs capabilities as well as language and cultural training. We must anticipate our future operational environments and ensure that we are politically and culturally prepared for them. This training should not be left to the last minute ...

*Lt-Gen. P.J. Cosgrove, Griffith Asia Pacific Council, Brisbane, 14 September 2000.*

- **Cultural.** As a notably multi-cultural society, Australia is well placed to adapt to the globalising forces that today seem irresistible. Maximizing Australia’s Asia knowledge provides a further advantage in such time of change.

This street runs both ways. Australians of Asian backgrounds can influence the repositioning of Australia’s Asia knowledge; and they can benefit from a more pervasive understanding among all Australians of the histories and cultures of Asian countries.

Many Australians now interact with Asia through work or tourism; they encounter Asia through media and electronic technologies; they take Asian foods for granted. This receptivity provides a platform from which to disseminate deeper and more sophisticated understanding, and this project represents the broad goal of proposals in this document.

Australians will interact with the countries of Asia either in a thoughtful, systematic way that expands the current creditable base or in the willy-nilly, unreflective way of crowds pouring out of a football ground. But, one way or the other, Australians *will* engage with Asia; indeed, they already do, and forces of globalisation promise to drive that process unrelentingly. This report suggests ways to make the engagement more fruitful.



## APPENDIX A – METHODOLOGY

This inquiry began with two surveys, one sent to all members of the ASAA and the other to people directing Asian-studies programs or Asian-language programs in Australian universities. The latter was addressed to Chairs, and Heads of Asian Studies in 38 universities. It sought data on staff, students and courses related to Asian Studies, as well as the opinions of heads of programs on the state of Asian Studies. In universities in which there was no Asian Studies department or program, the survey was sent to a lecturer involved in the teaching of Asian subjects or languages, or the Dean of the faculty. A brief survey of Vice-Chancellors was undertaken later.

These inquiries identified people willing to help the inquiry and were followed up with telephone calls and emails. Dozens of academics and administrators generously searched out and supplied data. We held three formal consultations, described in the Preface. Robin Jeffrey, who was in Perth as a visiting fellow at Curtin University, consulted teachers and administrators at Curtin, Murdoch and UWA in February 2002. He also made a presentation on the report in Brisbane in March.

The analysis, and the writing of the report, evolved over six months, with John Fitzgerald, Robin Jeffrey, Kama Maclean and Tessa Morris-Suzuki forming the core writers.

Limited funds meant that we were unable to visit every campus in Australia for intensive consultation and clarification, as the Ingleson team in 1988 had done. This report therefore does not offer the comprehensive, campus-by-campus analysis of the Ingleson Report, which was funded by the Asian Studies Council and had a budget in 1988 of close to \$200,000. The FitzGerald Report of 1980 received administrative services from the ANU and a \$14,000 grant from the Myer Foundation. The Auchmuty Report of 1971 was produced by a committee of the Commonwealth government. The current report has worked on a budget of \$25,000, including the cost of publication.

Though not claiming to be comprehensive, one of the functions that this report performs is to identify areas in which further or deeper research is needed to foster development of sharply focused policies.

# ASIAN LANGUAGE EFTSU IN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES, 2001

## APPENDIX B

Reporting University	Chinese	Indonesian	Japanese	Korean	Thai	Vietnamese	Hindi-Urdu	Sanskrit	Arabic	Javanese	Lao	Filipino	Persian	Cantonese
ACU			20											
Adelaide	73	Flin	93			5								
ADFA		23												
ANU	56	45	87	8	15	7	10	Syd	5	3	1		2	2
Ballarat	1		25											
Bond	10		16											
Canberra	12		27		3									
Curtin	32	28	48	13										
Deakin	69	90							45					
Edith Cowan	16	8	62											
Flinders	Adel	34	Adel											
Griffith	82	21	213	18	13	9								
James Cook			39											
La Trobe	40	30	73				2	3						
Macquarie	92	Syd	105											
Melbourne	130	53	186						14					
Monash	86	25	217	11										
Murdoch	15	23	35											
Newcastle	11		29											
NTU		20										1		
QUT	GU/UQ	11	63											
RMIT	21	3	52		5									
Southern Cross			8											
Sydney	123	52	193	44	10	ANU	ANU	3	36					
Sunshine Coast		8	18											
Swinburne			56	2										
Tasmania	36	32	50											
U of SA	Adel	Flin	32											
UCQ			53											
UNE	30	40	51											
UNSW	147	20	203	24										
UQ	76	8	172	8										
USQ	8	16												
UTS	91	Syd	83	Syd	Syd									
UWA	20	15	47											
UWS	33	5	50			5			20					
Victoria U	24	11	36			18								
Wollongong			34											
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1334</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>2476</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

**Note:** EFTSU arising from collaborative arrangements have been awarded to the provider university.

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## WHAT IS AN EFTSU?

An Equivalent Full-Time Student Unit (EFTSU) is the workload of a full-time student for a full year in a particular course.

In a university where an undergraduate in a Bachelor of Arts degree normally takes 4 different subjects in each of two semesters (thus 8 subjects in a year), each subject constitutes one-eighth of an EFTSU. Thus 8 students sitting in a class called “Asian History” add up to one EFTSU credited to “Asian History” in university accounts.

If this suggests that more individuals study a subject than the EFTSU total suggests, this is true. But it also needs to be remembered that the same student, worth one-eighth of an EFTSU in “Asian History” is likely to be making up another one-eighth in “Japanese Language” and another one-eighth in “Asian Anthropology.”

100 EFTSU in Asia-related subjects will not be made up of 800 different individuals. More likely the total will be composed of 200 or 300 individuals who study a number of Asia-related subjects. Language coordinators sometimes work on a rule-of-thumb that 3.5 different people constitute an EFTSU in a particular language.

DEST defines an EFTSU as “a standard unit against which resource inputs can be measured. One EFTSU represents a standard annual full-time workload. As a rough approximation, useful only for large aggregates of students, load in EFTSU is about 80 per cent of student numbers” (DETYA Annual Report 2000-01, [www.dest.gov.au/annualreport/2001/app/gnotes/note3.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/annualreport/2001/app/gnotes/note3.htm)).

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ISBN 0 9580837 0 3.