

**Building an 'Asia capable' state:
Response to the Tasmania's Place in the Asian Century
Issues Paper**

**Asian Studies Section
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The Asian Studies section of the School of Asian Languages and Studies at the University of Tasmania warmly welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the development of a Tasmanian position on the Asian Century.

Tasmania has had a long and diverse engagement with Asia – from the untold stories of Chinese convicts from Hong Kong in the 1840s, the more well known Chinese tin-miners in the 1870s and 80s, the migration of the Hmong community following the arrival of Vue Thaow on the Colombo plan in 1973, refugees from south-east Asia in the 1980s, and to the students from all over Asia in increasing numbers over the 1990s and the 2000s.

Tasmania may seem a long way from Asia but it offers Year 11 and 12 students the only subject in Australia which explicitly engages with Asia and teaches students about Australia's relationship to the region. *Australia in Asia and the Pacific*. Kathe Kirby, Executive Director of Asialink and the Asia Education Foundation, commended the group of AAP college teachers across the state for their hard work and dedication in keeping AAP a viable option for Tasmanian TCE students. This subject, Kirby noted, was one she wished all states and territories would emulate. This an achievement about which Tasmania can feel justifiably proud.

Since 2010, teachers of *Australia in Asia and the Pacific* have partnered with the University of Tasmania to offer students in year 11 and 12 access to Asian Studies at the University through the University College Program (UCP). This extends the very successful University College Language Program which began in 2009 in which University taught classes in Japanese and Chinese languages are offered as an extension activity for TCE students. Both aspects of the UCP (languages and studies) aim to cultivate interest in Asia and develop Asia related skills in an innovative way for Tasmanian students.

Currently, the University offers three Asian languages: Japanese, Chinese, and Indonesian. These are integrated with the Asian Studies program. An important guiding philosophy is that languages must be studied within the political, social, historical context of the target language. Thus units in Chinese/Japanese/Indonesian studies complement the study of languages. All of these programs are offered in both Hobart and Launceston in face to face mode. In addition, overseas study programs are available for each language thus giving students the valuable option of extending their language learning through immersion. Students of Asian studies have the option to undertake internships in Asia to enable them to put their Asia skills into practice.

As the premier provider of Asian language teaching in Tasmania, the School of Asian Languages and Studies has a nuanced and detailed knowledge of the state of language teaching and learning in Tasmania.

In 2009, the School of Asian Languages and Studies was successful in securing \$500,000 in federal funding under the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) scheme for the *New pathways for teaching and learning Chinese, Indonesian and Japanese in Tasmania* project. The University contributed an equivalent amount in scholarships and in-kind support, making this a million dollar project (full report available on request). Under the leadership of the Indonesian specialist, Associate Professor Pam Allen, this 30 month project aimed to

- increase student participation in Chinese, Indonesian and Japanese language programs, particularly in the senior secondary and tertiary sectors;
- provide postgraduate programs for Asian language teachers, and to support professional development of existing teachers.

within the broad goals of

- developing Asian languages excellence in Tasmania
- strengthening networks between the University of Tasmania, Tasmanian schools, local Asian communities and businesses, and partner universities in Asia.

This innovative project included a range of innovative and successful activities:

- Scholarships for teachers to undertake programs of study to develop their skills in teaching Japanese, Indonesian, and Chinese languages
- Scholarships for students enrolled in a Diploma of Languages concurrently with other degrees
- Cooperation with the Faculty of Education to increase the engagement with Asia for teachers in training
- Staff and student visits to secondary and senior secondary schools across Tasmania
- School visits to the University, including the highly successful 'Opening a Door to Asia' event in 2011
- Support for the Chinese Teachers Forum (formed through a UTAS School of Asian Languages initiative) to be formalised as the Chinese Language Teachers Association of Tasmania (CLTAT)
- Offering the Diploma of Language to TCE Asian Language students

The NALSSP project demonstrated the expertise of the School of Asian Languages in Studies in responding to the challenges of increasing engagement with Asian languages across the state of Tasmania. The school has excellent connections and networks across Tasmania and is well aware of the key issues involved in education regarding Asian languages and studies in Tasmania. The depth of engagement with Asia by the school covers all three languages and Asian Studies:

In 2013, the School of Asian Languages and Studies will host both the Chinese Studies Association of Australia (CSAA) and the Australian Society of Indonesian Language Educators (ASILE) national conferences. Hundreds of Asia specialists will visit Hobart in September, 2013. In addition, UTAS is a key member of the national

consortium 'Regional Universities Indonesian Language Initiative (RUILI)', which developed a shared curriculum of six core Indonesian language units for internal, online and in-country delivery. RUILI was funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) through the Collaborative and Structural Reform (CASR) fund in conjunction with a smaller grant from Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities. Since the 1970s, UTAS has played a central role in supporting the teaching of Japanese in Tasmania.

Despite sustained efforts by the School of Asian Languages and Studies and dedicated teachers across the Tasmanian education system, however, once the funding for the NALSSP project finished, the decline in the uptake of languages has resumed. In addition, recent Federal government decisions to cap the number of funded postgraduate coursework places has effectively led to the study options for language teachers being severely limited into the foreseeable future.

Paradoxically, the decline in languages and the downplaying of the importance of knowledge about Asia in Australian schools has occurred concurrently with the Asian economic boom. This decline has not been limited to Tasmania; it is Australia-wide. As the 67 reports into Asian language and studies which have been published over the last two decades shows, (Asia Education Foundation) there are serious structural, political, policy, funding and resourcing reasons behind this decline.

Simplistic explanations such as 'Asian languages are not seen as cool' need to be challenged: the School of Asian Languages and Studies NALSSP project showed that there is a great interest across Tasmania at all levels in learning about Asia and in learning languages.

In contrast to claims in the *Tasmania's Place in the Asian Century Issues Paper*, our extensive local experience shows that the shortage of suitably trained language teachers is not a result of the limited nature of the Asian expatriate communities in Tasmania. Rather it is the result of a complex interplay of policy, funding and resourcing.

This decline in the number of students learning Asian languages across all levels of the education system (including tertiary) has occurred at the same time that opportunities for overall 'Asia literacy' has increased. The number of Australians travelling to Asia for work or pleasure has been steadily increasing. In addition, there has been a boom in Asian tourism since the 1980s which Tourism Australia hopes to extend in the near future by aiming to attract more of the Chinese outbound tourism growth market. Asian markets are now very significant for Tasmania's economy as is increasing Asian investment in the state.

With more news reporting of Asia (especially China), better access to Asian cultural products via television and the internet, and increased migration from Asia it is

probably true to say that the engagement of everyday Australians with some aspect of Asia has increased. The challenge for Tasmania is in turning these encounters into sustained, ongoing relationships with Asia.

We are in general agreement with the views expressed in the Tasmanian Government's submission to the Australian Government's White Paper 'Australia in the Asian Century' and are very pleased to be a participant in the process of thinking about Tasmania's place in the Asian Century.

General observations

1. Asia is heterogenous with each country/region requiring diverse strategies of engagement: Care needs to be exercised in ensuring that 'Asia' does not become a codeword for 'China'
2. It is important to see people in Asia as potential partners not just markets or consumers
3. Engagement with Asia will be successful if long term partnerships are developed through trust and ongoing involvement
4. Engagement through cultural activities and exchanges will ensure that Tasmania's vibrant art community is central to establishing deep, satisfying and meaningful engagements with Asian partners
5. 'Asia literacy' is more than language learning: skills, attitudes, and knowledge of Asia and its diversity are all crucial for the Tasmanian population to be well placed to be part of the 'Asian Century'.
6. Overcoming structural, funding and policy barriers to Asian Language learning requires innovative solutions which involve a wide-range of stakeholders and incorporates local knowledge and experience
7. Partnerships are essential: between government and the University; across the education sector including TAFE, the University, primary, secondary and senior secondary schools, and incorporating different sections of the community
8. Tasmania's approach to the Asian Century needs to be informed by local expertise and on the ground experience
9. Increasing Tasmania's engagement with Asia will necessitate the Tasmanian government developing a nuanced awareness of politics within the Asian region
10. Developing an 'Asia capable' workforce is one of the greatest challenges facing the Tasmanian government, the University, and employers within the state. This process can be guided by the National Strategy for Developing an Asia Capable workforce, Asialink, September, 2012.

Opportunities for Tasmania and possible implementation strategies

- 1) **Capitalise on the skills pool within international students studying in Tasmania, in partnership with the University and TAFE. Encourage and support employment of graduates within the state**
 - Extend existing internships

- *Asian Studies in Action* program: partnerships between domestic and international students which work with schools, particularly K – 9, in developing Asia Literacy
- 2) **Extend Tasmania's international reputation as a home to a vibrant arts community by facilitating increased engagement in the visual, music, and performing arts. Contemporary arts are booming across Asia.**
- Increased cultural exchanges and performances, touring shows
 - Support the promotion of events like 'Ten Days on the Island', MOFO etc to Asia in order to increase partner involvement and also tourism
 - As Asialink has argued, there is a need for a 'new generation' collaborative and reciprocal model of cultural engagement with Asia and a need for leadership and resources for a new generation arts and culture workforce which is 'Asia Capable'.
- 3) **Develop an 'Asia ready' approach to improving the tourism experience for Asian visitors in Tasmania, thus capitalising on Tasmania's unique qualities**
- Audit existing tourist experiences from an awareness of the needs of Asian visitors, keeping in mind the diversity of visitors
 - Map suitable new markets through consultation with University experts e.g.
 - o Chinese middle class looking for a luxury experience
 - o Food and farm tourists from Asia
 - o Emerging tourist groups such as 'donkey friends' AKA Chinese 'semi independent' backpackers
- 4) **Work with the University to develop Tasmania's position as not only a producer of safe and clean, good quality food but also as a food tourism destination**
- Food studies is undergoing a global growth phase – in partnership with industry, TAFE and the University, Tasmania could claim a place as a centre for the academic study of, and technical training in, food production; a more liberal arts engagement with food studies (history, culture, politics of food); residential cooking schools with local produce tours. For a country such as China, food safety is THE biggest issue facing people in everyday life. It is hard to overestimate the Chinese interest in Tasmanian agricultural products especially milk. (See paper by Ross, K. Faking it: Food Quality in China for a summary of recent food issues in China: available on request)
- 5) **Promote Brand 'Cultural Tasmania' in Asia**
- Support the promotion of Tasmania Studies in places like China, Japan, Indonesia, and India where there is a burgeoning interest in Australian literature, poetry and art. This could be done through utilising existing Australian Studies networks, writers' tours and exchanges
 - Capitalise on Tasmania's interesting history and architecture by promoting short tours for Asian visitors looking for a different experience

6) Support unique initiatives like the Australia and the Asia Pacific (AAP) TCE unit; support the study of Asian languages in schools

- Ensure that the Tasmania education system embraces the National curriculum in a way which embeds engagement with Asia across the curriculum
- At the same time, work with the education sector to examine the structural barriers and disincentives which result in reduced numbers of students taking up Asian languages and AAP.
- Develop incentives for Asia engagement by students
- Collaborate with the University in arguing for more funded places for postgraduate courses which engage with Asia including language teacher training course. Teachers need targeted professional learning programs to build Asia knowledge in the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and National Standards which require building Asia literacy. The major themes are 1) Asia and its diversity; 2) the achievements and contributions of the people of Asia; and 3) Asia-Australia engagement.

Paranville

The Asian Studies program at the School of Asian Languages and Studies strongly welcomes the development of Korean language teaching capacity in Tasmania afforded by the proposed Paranville project. However, it is our view that the Issues paper places undue importance on the positive impact of the Paranville project. If this project is developed according to the publicly released plans, it will be a great asset for Hobart and will support growth in the Korean community. It is unlikely, however, to fill the need for English language teaching for Hobart.

Substantive points – further observations

Asia is heterogenous

It is of vital importance to recognise the heterogenous nature of Asia – each country is specific and requires a specific strategy for deepening relationships and developing possibilities. This is also the case for recognising the diversity within countries – e.g. do not just focus on Tier One cities in China on the eastern seaboard – importance of tier 2 and 3 cities.

Engagement requires relationships

Fundamentally, Asia must be seen as more than markets/consumers – successful engagement requires developing relationships and trust; engagement must be more than just economic. Cultural engagement is an effective way of building trust and relationships. It is important to think about Asian partners as partners.

Successful engagement requires developing relationships of trust and understanding over the long term. To do this, government, industry and education organisations need to ensure that they employ staff with the necessary Asia capabilities yet

anecdotal evidence university graduates with Asian skills have not found the employment opportunities they hoped for within Tasmania.

Engagement with Asia needs to incorporate business, education, science and culture in order to ensure that engagement is robust and sustainable.

The importance of partnerships between the Tasmania government, industry and education cannot be over-emphasised. It is our view, that 'partnership' is the key term underpinning Tasmania's successful engagement with Asia.

Developing an Asia Capable Tasmanian workforce

The Tasmanian strategy needs to support the development of not only Asia specialists but also an Asia literate and Asia work capable workforce. Clearly, there is a shortage of Asia-literate business leaders and many companies and organisations are nowhere near achieving the goal of an Asia capable workplaces

Addressing this skills shortage is crucial as it will increase the capacity of Tasmanians to understand as well as engage with Asia

Tasmania needs to develop systems, knowledge, networks and mindsets to create sustainable 'Asia capable' organisations.

Asia capable workforce To boost the demand for Asian studies and languages, the government needs to actively encourage the recruitment of Asia specialists into the public service. The state government, along with the University, TAFE and industry must undertake audits of the state of Asia capability which exists within each organisation (see list of individual and organisational Asia capabilities in Appendix One.)

Asia Literacy in Tasmania

Asia literacy is a term first used by Stephen Fitzgerald in 1988. He argued that an Asia literate society would have 'a populace in which knowledge of an Asian language is commonplace and knowledge about Asian customs, economies and societies very widespread. Such knowledge will not help our performance just at the margins. It will be central to our ability to perform.'

It is crucial to note that Asia literacy is *more than* language learning and ability. Language fluency *can* provide deep insight into how other people think and behave, and ensure that businesses can engage with Asian partners in a more direct and less mediated manner. However it is an unrealistic goal to expect a large proportion of the Tasmania population to develop Asian language skills.

Asia literacy is within the reach of all Tasmanians. We need to ensure that the skills base in both Asian studies *and* languages is supported and increased.

Asian cultural literacy should be a key component of not only international business courses but be embedded in the undergraduate and postgraduate programs in humanities and social sciences (particularly Economics, Law, Creative Industries, Science and Engineering and Education). Graduates with Asian cultural literacy (Asia capabilities) need to be valued within Tasmanian government and industry.

Importance of languages for Tasmanians

As noted above, the factors affecting Asian language learning are not limited to Tasmania. There are clear disincentives for studying Asian languages due to TCE scoring. The decrease in the number of courses required for TCE has contributed to the decline in uptake of languages and Asian studies within the TCE.

For Asian languages to flourish, the entire education system – from primary through to tertiary needs to be considered. Without a feeder population of expatriates or a diaspora, it is certain that language students will be mostly from non-Asian Language speaking backgrounds. Therefore Tasmanian students need to be given the opportunity to develop the Asia skills and knowledge necessary for their futures.

Addressing the need for languages at the tertiary level is a partial but essential solution for addressing the lack of Tasmanians with a working knowledge of an Asian language. However, there is an opportunity here for the University. Currently, the structure of university degrees acts as a barrier to the uptake of intensive language study. As the recent phenomenal increases in the study of Japanese, Chinese, and Indonesian at the Universities of Melbourne and Western Australia show, degrees can be structured in such a way that Asian literacy and skills are valued for students across the full range of disciplines. We sincerely hope that the State Government can encourage the University to move in this direction for the benefit of Tasmania. With regard to teacher training, it is important to ensure that all graduate teachers enter the workforce with Asia knowledge and skills

If this is interwoven with the introduction for the National Curriculum regarding Asia literacy, Tasmania could see a reverse of the declining rate of the number of students undertaking study of Asia and Asian languages. Other correctives such as rewarding such studies by privileging it when students apply to tertiary institutions could also have a positive impact.

Strong language programs at the tertiary level can also be a factor in student choice of senior secondary subjects where students are competing for university entry and other further education opportunities.

Conclusion

The Asian Studies section of the School of Asian Languages and Studies at the University of Tasmania greatly appreciates this opportunity to put forward our views on Tasmania's engagement with Asia in the Asian Century and we look forward to the opportunity for further discussion and collaboration.

Appendix

Extracts from:

Developing an Asia Capable Workforce: A National Strategy

Asialink Taskforce for an Asia Capable Workforce

September, 2012

Available at www.Asialink.unimelb.edu.au

This very recent report argues for the importance of developing an Asia Capable workforce. At the heart of the strategy is a vision of business working with education and training sectors with support from government. The report outlines specific strategies for each of the sectors: government, business, and education. Individual and organisational qualities and critical capabilities are well delineated.

The School of Asian Languages and Studies thinks that the strategy outlined by the Asialink Taskforce should be adopted to guide Tasmania in how to think about making Tasmania an Asia capable state.

THE 11 CRITICAL CAPABILITIES

Six individual and five organisational capabilities have been identified as being critical to business success in and with Asia.

INDIVIDUAL CAPABILITIES

Sophisticated knowledge of Asian markets/environments

- In-depth understandings of the business, cultural, political, ethical and regulatory environments specific and unique to each Asian country of operation
- Understanding of the strength of local Asian competitors and of the importance of 2nd and 3rd tier cities

Extensive experience operating in Asia

- Extensive experience (>2 years) operating across a diverse range of Asian markets
- Successful experience managing risk (e.g. FX/LP), working with governments and regulators, and navigating market access hurdles

Long-term trusted Asian relationships

- Investment in, and the ability to develop and maintain, business networks and long-term relationships
- Ability to utilise long-term relationships to identify and select quality partners and/or acquisition targets
- Ability to deal and negotiate with Asian business executives, potential partners and acquisition targets

Ability to adapt behaviour to Asian cultural contexts

- Sensitivity to the impact of culture on the process and content of business interactions
- Flexibility to adapt behaviours to specific Asian cultural and business contexts

Capacity to deal with government

- Ability to work with government entities, state-owned enterprises and government processes
- Ability to deal and negotiate with Asian political leaders and regulators in local markets

Useful level of language proficiency

- A useful level of proficiency in the local language(s), for better communication and to demonstrate commitment and cultural sensitivity

ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITIES

Leadership committed to an Asia-focused strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged leadership with clear strategy for Asian operations and clear vision of how they fit within a more global business Leadership team of both expats and locals with experience gained through cross-cultural rotations
Customised Asian talent management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customised local talent management strategies to attract, develop and retain local talent Fluid rotation of emerging leaders (both Asian and expatriates) to, from and within Asia
Customised offering / value proposition based on customer insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptation of offering, brand and value proposition to Asian market segments and preferences, informed by customer insights Global standardisation balanced with local customisation to optimise economies of scale and scope
Tailored organisational design with tendency to local autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tailored organisational structure to suit one's own business and the local market conditions Tendency toward local autonomy and country-specific organisational structure, providing flexibility to adapt to complex and rapidly changing Asian markets
Supportive processes to share Asian learnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes in place to ensure proactive and collaborative sharing of Asian learnings and best practice between business units, functions and countries

Interviews and brief surveys of business leaders and advisers suggest that Australian companies have some clear strengths. For example, a survey of Austrade senior officials in Asia for this report suggests both SMEs and large Australian companies are strong or very strong relative to international competitors in their ability to develop long-term, trusted Asian relationships.

However, there are still many concerns. In particular, a common theme was that the culture of Australian business is rooted in Western, transactional models and that Australian businesses were not adapting to the different cultural norms in Asia. There was also a recurring view that corporate Australia lacked deep Asia experience, especially at board and senior executive level. This general view was reflected in the survey of Austrade officials, where it was noted that, overall, large Australian companies are seen by business leaders and advisers as possessing only 'average' Asia capabilities, compared to international competitors.

Indeed, there would appear to be an even greater challenge for Australian SMEs, who are seen (on average) to fall behind their international competitors on their understanding of, and experience operating in, Asian markets, cultural/language proficiency, and dealings with Asian governments and regulators. They also appear to be behind competitors (on average) in the customisation of their organisations, people and products and services to the context of each Asian market.

NATIONAL STRATEGY TO IMPROVE AUSTRALIAN WORKFORCE ASIA CAPABILITIES

A very wide range of factors will influence Australia's success in doing business in and with Asia. They include investor and community support, diplomatic efforts, terms of trade, financial market performance, migration policy, global competition and taxation policy. A broad-based policy blueprint, the White Paper on Australia in the Asian Century, will examine these areas in detail. The paper is in draft form and the Taskforce looks forward to its release.

In relation to those areas where business and the education and training sectors have a greater degree of control, the Taskforce proposes a broad, national strategy that supports acceleration into Asia. The objective is to see business, working with the education and training sectors and supported by government, building a workforce that is truly Asia capable. Based on survey data, interviews with leading businesspeople and other stakeholders, research into global best practice, and case studies of Australian businesses working in Asia, we therefore propose the following strategic priorities:

- 1 Advocate broadly the case for developing an Asia capable workforce

- 2 Accelerate the development of Asia-focused strategies with Australian business taking the lead

- 3 Invest in developing Asia capability throughout the Australian workforce

- 4 More effectively educate Australia's future workforce for the Asian Century

INITIATIVES TO REALISE THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1

Advocate broadly the case for developing an Asia capable workforce

While the existence of the Asian opportunity is broadly recognised by business and governments, the need to build Asia capability must be a clear focus of attention. Businesses must cooperate to persistently demonstrate the case for developing an Asia capable workforce. Governments must ensure that policy development takes account of the need to accelerate into Asia and upskill the workforce. Strong messages from CEOs and government ministers will lead to increased demand for Asia-focused courses, degrees and subjects from university, TAFE and school students, and their parents.

Business initiatives

- Cooperate to advocate for an Asia capable workforce
- Encourage greater diversity on boards and in corporate leadership roles to meet the needs of Asia-focused business strategies and to reflect Australia's multicultural society

Education sector initiatives

- Support programs that increase the value students, parents and the community place on Asia knowledge and Asian languages

Government initiatives

- Ensure that policy development and public messages consider the need for greater economic integration with Asia and the need to invest in an Asia capable workforce

2

Accelerate the development of Asia-focused strategies with Australian business taking the lead

Australian businesses must couple their advocacy with the accelerated development of Asia-focused strategies, based on some critical questions for their future success:

- Can you achieve above trend growth without an Asian entry strategy?
- Will you have missed the opportunity in Asia if you don't move in the near future?
- Will you be able to compete with Asian counterparts in 5 years?
- How can your business evolve to succeed in a world where Asian economies may well be globally dominant?

Individual businesses must re-orient strategies to take account of the Asian opportunity, develop frameworks by which to assess the effectiveness of those strategies, and share learnings between functional and geographical silos.

Business initiatives

- Review strategies and plans to determine whether they take adequate account of the Asian opportunity and potential competitive threats from counterparts in Asia
- Develop and validate an Asia capabilities framework to identify areas of excellence and areas for improvement, and continually assess performance against it
- Put processes in place to share Asian learnings and best practice between business units, functions and regional offices
- Undertake targeted market research to develop customised offerings for Asian markets
- Encourage tailored organisational design for Asian markets that tends to local autonomy
- Integrate Asia capability development into reporting to signal its strategic importance to stakeholders

3

Invest in developing Asia capability throughout the Australian workforce

Having an Asia-focused strategy demands investment in Asia capability development. Businesses and other employers (including, for example, government departments) already engaged with or seeking to do business with Asia must build employees' skills, provide Asian experiences and build Asian networks. The business community must establish networks or utilise existing networks to share learnings and strategies. Governments must support relevant education, training and professional development bodies, including the proposed Centre for Asia Capability (see below), to provide courses and programs to build Asia capabilities. All institutions should also consider how best to utilise existing talent pools, including Asian Australian communities, repatriates and international students, to drive their Asia-focused strategies.

Business initiatives

- Recruit people with deep Asia expertise and experience, including Asia-based Australian university alumni, into board and executive positions
- Recognise Asia capable employees through promotion and other incentives
- Provide pathways for employees to spend time working in Asia, including through participation in short study tours to understand potential new markets
- Invest in just-in-time intercultural master classes for senior executives and directors, and generalist intercultural training for other staff
- Invest in targeted Asian language training where a useful level of proficiency will benefit the business
- Enable access to country-specific information on Asian markets and cultural/political environments
- Invest in developing high potential local Asian talent to meet global standards
- Establish networks for peer-to-peer learning

Education sector initiatives

- Provide courses and programs to build Asia capabilities, through universities, TAFEs and other training providers
- Amend the Australian Research Council's National Research Priorities to promote research into Asia with emphasis on building mutually beneficial relationships rather than 'safeguarding Australia'

Government initiatives

- Support businesses, and SMEs in particular, to build Asia capabilities
- Support the operations of the proposed business-led national Centre for Asia Capability

INITIATIVES TO REALISE THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES CONTINUED

4

More effectively educate Australia's future workforce for the Asian Century

In the course of their education, young Australians should be enabled to develop skills and knowledge that will be valuable in a workplace that is increasingly integrated with and oriented toward Asia. Businesses must work with education providers to provide internship and work experience opportunities for domestic and international students in Asia-focused businesses. This encourages mutual learning and network building. Businesses should also give a high priority to informing education and training institutions of current and emerging requirements for Asia capabilities consistent with business priorities. Universities, TAFEs and schools must incorporate Asia-relevant content across disciplines and curricula. In higher education, students must be encouraged to take up short-term study opportunities in Asia; this demands an expansion of existing student mobility programs. Relevant government agencies must support the evolution of school, university and TAFE curricula towards Asia capability through policy and building education workforce capacity. Transnational occupational standards and regional qualification frameworks would facilitate increased worker mobility into and out of Australia, opening our workplaces to Asian skills and perspectives.

Business initiatives

- Develop internship programs in Asia and in Asia-focused Australian businesses, in collaboration with existing education and training providers
- Expand work placement and volunteer programs for international students, in collaboration with existing education and training providers
- Inform education and training institutions of current and emerging requirements for Asia capabilities

Education sector initiatives

- Review curricula in universities, TAFEs and schools to incorporate Asia-relevant content across disciplines
- Build up the Asia capability of Australia's education workforce
- Design and implement Asia capabilities courses and programs in the higher education sector, led by Universities Australia
- Expand student mobility programs in Asia, such that 10 per cent of all university students will have studied in Asia on graduation
- Strengthen and link interiversity alumni networks throughout Asia
- Reciprocate existing TAFE exchange programs for Asian vocational institute directors to undertake training in Australia

Government initiatives

- Support the evolution of school, university and TAFE curricula towards Asia capability through funding and policy
- Entrust the Australian Workforce Productivity Agency with oversight of an Asia capability strategy in the VET system
- Establish and pursue an agenda to develop an Asia-Pacific Regional Qualifications Framework
- Develop transnational occupational standards, led by Industry Skills Councils