



Submission No 23

**Inquiry into Australia's Relations with the Republic of Korea; and
Developments on the Korean Peninsula**

**Organisation: Korea-Australasia Research Centre
The University of New South Wales**

**Contact Person: Dr Chung-Sok Suh
Director**

**Address: The University of New South Wales
Sydney NSW 2052**



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Australia's relations with the Republic of Korea

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1. Preamble

1.1 The Importance of the Republic of Korea to Australia

- The Republic of Korea (hereafter Korea) is the 4th largest trading partner of Australia. The importance of the relationship between the two countries has long been recognised by the Australian government and large Australian enterprises dealing with Korea.
- There exists an ample scope for further collaboration between the two countries in this new century.
 - Korea and Australia have been and will continue to be medium sized strategic allies and partners in the context of volatile international relations in the Asia-Pacific region and to contribute to the creation and maintenance of peaceful and conducive international relations.
 - In addition to the bilateral trade between Korea and Australia, the two countries can and should work together as partners in trade and investment, especially in other important markets in Asia, such as China and Southeast Asia.
 - In exploring these opportunities, the complementary nature in the resources and expertise of the two countries can be further utilised. These include not only tangible natural resources but also intangible resources such as labour, knowledge, technology, entrepreneurial expertise and cultural understandings.

1.2 The Current Status of Australia's Relations with the Republic of Korea

- Australia's relationship with Korea so far, has tended to focus on short term

economic benefits without paying specific attention to opportunities in working as long-term partners.

- Despite the mutual importance of maintaining good relations between the two countries and the potential scope for further collaboration for mutual benefits, the awareness of Korea among the Australian public remains unsatisfactory. The general consensus among government officials and large businesses that Korea is important to Australia and the need to deepen the relationship between the two countries is not widely shared by the Australian public.
 - Korean Language and Korean Studies education in Australian institutions started in the early 1990s. However, the initial enthusiasm has somewhat subsided and most institutions are currently facing difficulties in maintaining their Korean programs.
 - Considering the importance of Korea to Australia, there exists a critical shortage in academic research on Korea in Australia, which results in an inadequate level of understanding of Korea and an inadequate level of support for policy formation in Australia.
 - The number of graduate students undertaking research on Korea is very small.
 - The Australian media and particularly major newspapers, have tended to focus on portraying negative aspects of Korea.
 - The cultural exchange between the two countries has not yet gained significant momentum. The Korean communities in Australia have been playing a catalytic role in providing a linkage between the two cultures.
 - The number of tourists has increased in both directions. But the majority of the visitors from ROK to Australia are on short term group tours and most visitors from Australia to Korea have been Korean-Australians.
 - Education of overseas students from Korea has been one of the important channels of non-government and non-business relations in the two countries. Australia is perceived to provide a clean and safe environment for study and offer quality education for overseas students, including the study of English. However, Australia is also perceived to consider education as business opportunities not as a means to create and maintain a long-term relationship between the two countries.
- Therefore, establishing strategies for long-term cooperation is urgently required considering the significant imbalance between the recognition of its importance on a national level and the lack of recognition among the general public.
 - Korea has been the 3rd or 4th largest trading partner of Australia for more than ten years. Yet, the awareness of Korea in Australia has not improved significantly during the past ten years.
 - The negative image of Korea created in Australia is not conducive to long-term relations and cooperation between the two countries. Recently, the image of Australia in Korea has been negatively affected as well.

1.3 The Focus of the Submission

- A long-term partnership between the two countries, including diplomatic, economic and strategic cooperation can be established and maintained effectively, only when it is supported by the social, cultural and educational understanding and interaction between the two countries.
- Based on these view points, this report addresses the need to establish the socio-cultural and educational structure that would be conducive to the creation of current and future partnerships between the two countries.
- This submission is prepared by the Korea-Australasia Research Centre (KAREC) and the University of New South Wales. Since its establishment in 2000, KAREC has been working to create networks for collaboration for research and education in Korean studies in Australia and the neighbouring region and to assist in expanding the human and intellectual resources for Australia-Korea relations.

2. Education in the Korean Language and Studies

2.1 The Current Status

- Since the early 1990s Korean Language and Studies Education in Australia has expanded rapidly over a very short period of time.
 - Behind the rapid growth, the support for teaching positions at Australian universities by the Korean government was indispensable. Most universities received grants from the Korean government in establishing teaching positions related to Korean language and studies.
- In the beginning of the 1990s, Korean language was one of the fastest growing subject areas within the Australian education system. However, enrolments in the Korean programs decreased following the 1997 financial crisis in Korea, after which its growth stagnated. Current enrolment levels have remained unchanged from enrolment levels in the mid-1990s.
- Considering the importance of Korea to Australia on the national level, the current status of Korean language education has proven to be inadequate compared with other major Asian languages.
 - As of 2002, approximately 2000 students studied Korean language in 26 primary schools and 37 high schools in Australia.
 - Approximately 500 students undertook Korean language courses at seven Australian universities.
 - Only a few hundred graduates with a Korean Studies major have joined the Australian work force in the last fifteen years.
- Due to this stagnation in enrolments, the majority of Korean language/studies programs in Australia currently face difficulties in keeping the momentum for further growth and development. Due to the uncertainty in future enrolments, it

is difficult to form a clear vision for the future and some institutions are questioning future viabilities.

2.2 The Issues to be resolved

- In 2002 the first national strategic conference on the Future of Korean Language Education in Australia was held immediately after the Government's decision to drop the NALSAS Strategy was announced.
 - Participants of the conference included educators and administrators in Korean language and studies from all levels of Australian educational institutions.
 - The participants identified the imbalance between the recognition of the importance of knowledge on Korea professed at the national level and weak motivation to undertake Korean language studies at the individual level.
- The support for Korean language programs under the NALSAS strategy was also discussed, and the following issues were identified:
 - The Korean language program was a new area compared to the other three language programs under the strategy. However, a separate strategy was not established and no specific measures were taken to warrant the satisfactory development of the early stage program.
 - Concerns were also expressed relating to the management of support for the Korean program under the NALSAS strategy at the state government levels.
- The following issues were also identified:
 - The most pressing issue is an absolute shortage of qualified teachers and the professional development opportunities for existing teachers.
 - Inadequate employment opportunities for graduates.
 - The marginalised status of Korean language and studies education in forming and implementing government policies, including Commonwealth, state and local.
- In sum, long-term strategies are urgently required for the development and support for Korean language studies in order to cater for the desperate need to promote understanding and awareness of Korea in Australia.

2.3 Need for Support

- The most pressing issue related to Korean Language and Studies education is the training and retraining of teachers.
 - A long term national strategy needs to be established.
 - Collaborative efforts can be explored with institutions in Korea.
- Short term visiting programs to Korea for school students and teachers need to be encouraged.

- Compared with a long-term visit by a small number of students, a short-term visit by a large number of students is considered to have more favourable impact.
- Institutional links between schools in the two countries may be utilised to warrant the success of the program and its long-term impact.
- Scholarships need to be created to support such programs.
- Support needs to be given to assist the development and management of internship programs for university students in Korean language and studies.
 - Opportunities to gain this support should be explored among companies located in both Australia and Korea, including Australian companies established in Korea.
 - Support might be given to participating companies to facilitate the internship programs.

3. Research on Korea and Research Collaboration

3.1 The Current Status

- The research activities that can assist Australia-Korea relations can be categorised in two areas; the research on Korea and the research collaboration among scholars in Australia and Korea.
- Research on Korea or Australia-Korea relations will enhance the understanding of Korea in Australia and assist in deepening the relationship between the two countries.
 - The research outcomes will provide the Australian public and the government with a deeper understanding of Korea.
 - The research outcomes has great potential to assist in policy formation
- Research collaboration among scholars in the two countries will bring together complementary human resources in the two countries.
- As the research outcome is published internationally, it is very difficult to quantify both the research outcomes on Korea conducted in Australia. A more comprehensive analysis, including a search among international publications would provide a more accurate figure.
 - Table 1 shows the projects on Korea supported by the Australian Research Council from 2000 to 2005.
 - The ARC grants are prestigious and very difficult to receive. However, during this period, only 5 research projects supported by the ARC were directly related to Korea, while 8 projects dealing with a wider region had Korea-related components in them.
 - There have been other projects conducted in Australia including those carried out by research centres and individual scholars.

- Collaborative research projects between the two countries have been organised through the following routes; (1) through direct contacts among scholars in the two countries, (2) through former research students who returned to Korea as academics, (3) through institutional collaborative arrangements.
- Table 1 also shows the number of collaborative research projects funded by the ARC during the past five years.
 - The ARC has a scheme to support research visits of scholars between the two countries.
 - However, considering the importance of the two countries to each other, the research collaboration must still increase.
 - Since 2002, there has been an increase in the number of projects which involves research collaboration, but in 2005, it showed a sharp decrease.

3.2 The Issues to be resolved

- There has been an absolute shortage in research on Korea among Australian scholars.
 - This indicates that Australian academics and policy makers have been relying on the research outcomes and policy reports produced elsewhere.
 - In particular, there has been an absolute shortage in research on Australia's relationship with Korea.
 - There has not been an effective linkage between the academic research and the policy formation in relation with Korea.
- Active research collaboration between the scholars in the two countries have gained momentum only very recently.
 - However, there is a sharp decline in the number of collaborations between the two countries.

3.3 Need for Support

- Special support needs to be provided to encourage research projects on Korea and on the Australia-Korea relationship to fill the gap between the need for research on Korea and the current inadequate level of research.
 - A committee needs to be established in order to identify the priority areas for research support.
- Policy formation on Korea needs to be linked and supported by the research activities in Australia.
 - Special research funds needs to be provided to encourage policy studies on Korea.
- The key areas of research collaboration between the two countries needs to be identified and support needs to be strengthened for research projects and visits.

- In conjunction with and/or addition to the International Research Exchange (IREX) program provided by the ARC, additional support needs to be given in research collaboration.

4. Human Resources for Research on Korea

4.1 The Current Status

Korean Studies Scholars

- The Korean Studies Association of Australasia (KSAA) was established in 1994. Its current academic membership consists of 67 Australian scholars. Table 2 shows a regional distribution of the KSAA members.
 - The Korean Studies Association invites members conducting research in relation to Korea from all academic disciplines including Humanities, Social Sciences and Business and Economics.
- Considering that the membership of the Japanese Studies Association recorded more than 300 at its peak and the Chinese Studies Association more than 250, there exists both an absolute and relative shortage in the number of Korean scholars. Considering the importance of Korea to Australia, the research pool is considered not adequate.
- The distribution of KSAA memberships indicates a heavy concentration in three institutions while 50 percent of the members are spread too thinly.
 - The University of New South Wales (UNSW), Australian National University, the University of Sydney and Griffith University have 57 percent of all scholars in Korean Studies. 18 members are based at UNSW, while seven members are based at Griffith and six based in ANU and USYD respectively.
 - The remaining universities have zero to four scholars, showing that Korean studies scholars do not form a critical mass which would assist research collaboration.
 - As scholars in Korean studies have been thinly spread in wide geographical regions, there has been an absolute need to establish a regional network for research collaboration across Australia.
- The first KSAA conference was held at the UNSW in 1999. Since then, has been held biennially. Table 3 shows that on average, 37 papers have been presented at the KSAA conferences to date.

Research Centres in Korean Studies.

- Currently, there are three research centres focusing on Korean Studies in Australia:
 - ANU centre for Korean Studies at the Australian National University,
 - Australian Centre for Korean Studies (AKSC) at Griffith University and
 - Korea-Australasia Research Centre (KAREC) at the University of New South Wales.
 - AKSC and KAREC were established with funding from the Korean government. Academic positions for most active researchers at the ANU centre for Korean studies were also established with funding support from the

Korean government.

- National Korean Studies Centre (NKSC) was established in the early 1990s by four universities in Melbourne with large funding from the Commonwealth government, but ceased to function after operating for ten years.
- The major research strength of ANU Centre for Korean Studies lies in History and North Korean Studies, while that of ACKS lies in Business and Economics.
- KAREC was established in 2000, jointly by the Korea Research Foundation and the University of New South Wales, with a view to support research collaboration for scholars in Korean Studies in Australia and Korea.
 - In addition to scholars based at UNSW, scholars in other institutions in Australia have been invited as adjunct members. Table 4 shows the number of members belonging to KAREC. Table 5 shows the number of research projects conducted.
 - As an inter- and multi- disciplinary research centre, its research domain covers a wide area. However, the current research focus is given to the inter-Korean relations, Culture studies, International Business and Korean Language Education.
- KAREC has also been linking scholars in Southeast Asia (Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia) with those in Australasia and Korea through collaborative research projects.
 - This has been recognised as important contributions in the debates within Korea, related to the formation of ASEAN plus 3. This can be an important opportunity in which Australian participation and leadership in ASEAN plus 3 might be fostered.

Building Future Generation of Scholars in Korean Studies

- The number of postgraduate research students undertaking Korean studies is very small.
 - In order to ensure long-term continuity in research on Korean studies, it is necessary to recruit and support postgraduate students.

4.2 The Issues to be resolved

- The research centre established by the initiative of the Australian government ceased to function in the early 2000s.
 - Since then, there have been no major initiatives undertaken by the Australian government with regard to Korean Studies research or Korea-specific research activities.
- For the establishment of other research centres, Australian universities have tended to rely on funding from Korea.

- Australia needs to provide more funding for research centres.
- Scholars in Korean Studies are thinly scattered throughout Australia.
 - Out of 39 universities, only 20 universities had KSAA members. Among the 19 universities that have KSAA members, 15 universities have less than three members in Korean Studies.
 - Research networks needs to be strengthened to assist these scattered scholars.

4.3 Need for Support

- Research networks needs to be maintained efficiently to link the scattered scholars.
 - Research support for projects linking scattered Korean studies scholars is urgently required.
 - Activities of research centres needs to be encouraged to provide a research network and increase the number of collaborative research projects.
- Research centres can be used to conduct policy studies for the Australian government.
 - So far, a small number of projects conducted by Northeast Asia Analytical Unit (DFAT) and KAREC were related to policy studies.
 - Therefore, more policy studies need to be commissioned in Australia, to support the policy formation
- Scholarships should be created to encourage postgraduate research on Korean Studies

5. Strategic Opportunities and Concluding Remarks

5.1 The importance of Korean Language Education and Support

- A steering/vision group needs to be established by the government:
 - to develop and implement medium to long-term national strategies to encourage young Australians to study Korean language and to improve the understanding of Korea.
 - Korean educationalists, school administrations, government agencies and relevant parts of the Australian workforce must to be consulted in the process.
- A task force needs to be established in order to implement the vision and strategy made by the steering/vision group
 - Adequate funding needs to be provided for this activity.

5.2 The importance of Research on Korea and Research collaboration between Australia and Korea

- Long term strategy to support research activities related to Korea.
 - Considering the absolute shortage in research related to Korea, generous funding needs to be provided to encourage research projects. For example, Research on Korea might be designated as one of the priority funding areas in the ARC or other funding bodies.
 - For this purpose, a research centre might be designated or created as a Key Centre for Korean Studies. This will strengthen the research hub and encourage collaboration among scattered scholars in Korean studies.
 - A series of policy studies need to be commissioned by the government to support the policy formation related to Australia-Korea Relations.

5.3 Building Human Resources for Australia-Korea relations

- In order to improve the quality of academic collaboration and other long term links between the two countries, post graduate scholarships needs to be provided to assist top students from Korea to come to Australia.
- Short term visits and internship programs needs to be established to assist in building the Australian expertise for the future.

Appendix

TABLE 1

Research Projects on Korea and the Collaborative research projects funded by ARC (2000-2005)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
Projects on ROK			1	1	1	2	5
Projects on Asia, in which ROK was analysed			1	3	5	0	8
Projects which included collaboration with scholars in ROK	1	2	14	22	31	12	83
Total	1	2	16	26	37	14	96

Source: Australian Research Council, February 2005

TABLE 2

Australian Members of Korean Studies Association of Australasia

ACT	Australian National University	6
	ACT Total	6
NSW	Macquarie University	2
	University of Sydney	6
	University of New South Wales	18
	University of Newcastle	1
	University of Wollongong	3
	University of Western Sydney	1
	NSW Total	31
Victoria	Monash University	4
	The University of Melbourne	2
	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology	2
	Victoria Total	8
Queensland	The University of Queensland	2
	Queensland University of Technology	1
	Griffith University	7
	James Cook University	1
	University of Southern Queensland	1
	Queensland Total	12
WA	Curtin University of Technology	2
	Edith Cowan University	1
	WA Total	3
SA	Murdoch University	1
	University of Adelaide	1
	University of South Australia	2
	SA Total	4
Australia Total		64

Source: The membership details held at KSAA.

TABLE 3

The number of papers presented at KSAA conferences.

Year	1999	2001	2003
NO of papers presented	32	43	35

Source: KSAA conference proceedings, 1999, 2001 & 2003.

TABLE 4

KAREC Membership Details

	UNSW members (Full members & Associate members)	Adjunct Members in Australia & NZ	Adjunct Members in Southeast Asia	Total
Number	29	35	22	86

TABLE 5

Research projects carried out by KAREC (2000 – 2004)

	Short Term research project	Medium to Long term projects	Project commissioned by external institutions
Number	47	9	7