



Submission No 12

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

Organisation: Department of Education, Science and Training
(DEST)

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Australian Government

Department of Education, Science and Training

Our Ref :
Your Ref :

Mr John Carter
Secretary
Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Carter

With reference to your request for a submission to the inquiry into Australia's relationship with the Republic of Korea (ROK) from the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), we would like to make the following contribution:

Australia has a developing education and training relationship with the ROK. Recent years have seen significant growth in the number of students from the ROK which now ranks second among the top ten source countries for international student enrolments in Australia in 2004.

DEST has a formal science relationship with Korea, comprising a treaty level agreement on cooperation in science and technology signed April 2000. It provides a framework for cooperation, including priority areas, and outlines the intellectual property rights protection that should be afforded to collaborative research. Australia and Korea do not have an agreement to formalise the education and training relationship.

DEST's submission on Australia's bilateral education, science and technology relationship with Korea is at [Attachment A](#).

If you have any queries regarding this submission, please contact Mr Jimmy Jamil from the North Asia, Trade Agreements and APEC Unit by phone on 6240 7068 or via e-mail at jimmy.jamil@dest.gov.au

Yours sincerely

Shelagh Whittleston
Branch Manager
International Cooperation Branch

May 2005

**Department of Education,
Science and Training**

**Submission to the Joint Standing
Committee on Foreign Affairs and
Trade's Inquiry into Australia's
Relationship with the Republic of Korea**

1. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The role of AEI, DEST

Australian Education International (AEI) is part of the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). AEI uniquely integrates the development of international government relations with support for the commercial activities of Australia's education community. To do this, AEI liaises with all sectors of the education and training industry and all levels of government.

AEI develops Memoranda of Understanding and facilitates dialogue on the issues of education, science and training with governments around the world, as well as managing Australia's education interests in major international and regional strategic fora. It has an International Network of staff including an AEI Office located in Seoul.

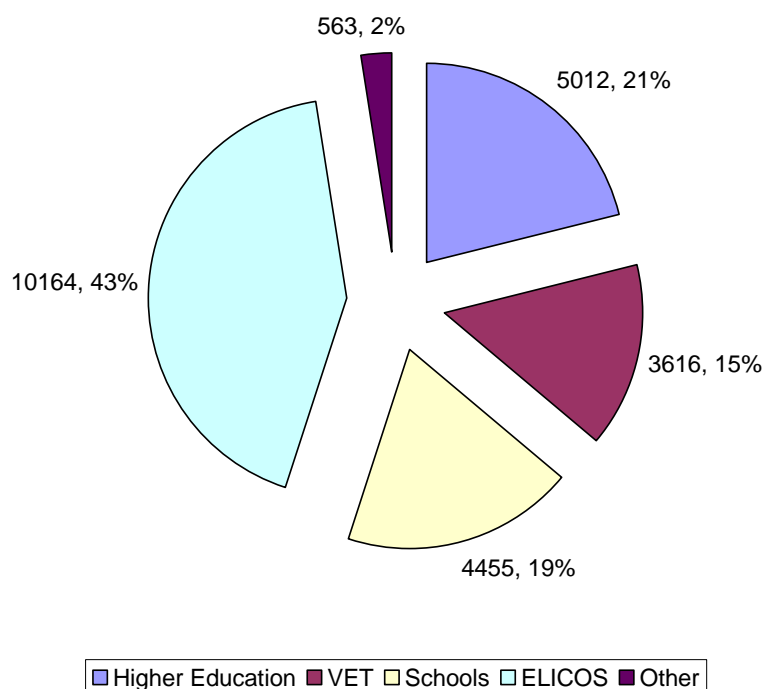
AEI promotes Australia's education and training capabilities through a range of strategies including brand positioning, promotional events, marketing materials, the multilingual Study in Australia website and in-country communications campaigns. AEI also administers national legislation for financial and tuition assurance mechanisms and codes of practice such as the Education Services for Overseas Students Act (ESOS) and the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS). AEI provides assessment services, information and advice on the recognition of educational and professional qualifications and skills from around the world through the National Office for Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR).

Australia-Korea bilateral Education and Training Relationship

Australia's education and training relationship with Korea is significant, but relatively recent, with education and training ties established in the early to mid-1990s. This coincided with the Korean Government's prioritisation of education and training policy to enable Korea to respond positively to the challenges of a globalised society in the 21st century. The education and training relationship is not formalised through an agreement at the federal/national level although recently the Korean Ministry of Education has approached the AEI Office in Seoul with an informal proposal for an MOU with Australia. However, at the state level, there exist several MOUs for cooperation between State Government Education Departments and Metropolitan Offices of Education in Korea.

Korea is currently ranked second among the top ten source countries for overseas student enrolments in Australia with just under 24,000 enrolments in 2004. This represents an upward trend of 7.5% from 2003. The largest number of enrolments is in the English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) sector (43%) with 21% in the Higher Education sector followed by 19% enrolments in Schools and 15% in Vocational Education and Training (VET).

Korean Enrolments in Australia by Sector (%) - 2004



Major areas of involvement between Australia and Korea with support at a Government-to-Government level include collaboration under the University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) programme to increase mobility in the higher education sector through the credit transfer scheme, and collaboration under APEC.

The Korean Education Market

An international education experience is now one of the top desirables for Korean youth, as can be witnessed by the vast number of students who travel abroad for education each year. A long-term United States presence is evident in the structure of Korea's education system, and is reinforced by the ongoing preference of Korean student to select America as their number one international education destination. As such, the American influence is pervasive and American alumni still dominate many of the key decision-making and academic positions in Korea.

Over the past few years this trend, while still entrenched, is subject to increased competition from other English speaking countries, including Britain, while the desire to study in Japan is declining in favour of China.

Australia in the Korean Market

Australian education providers have had a long history in the Korean market. Korea was originally an ELICOS market but has since diversified with good performance across all sectors.

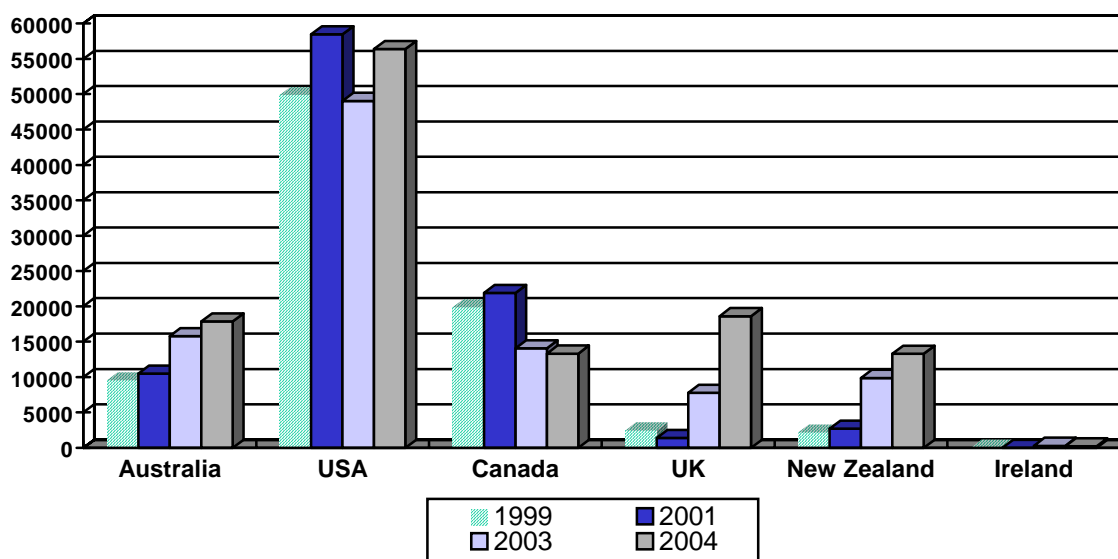
During the Asian financial crisis, student numbers in Korea took a severe downturn and visa non-compliance became a problem. Korea was dropped to visa Assessment Level 3, thereby dampening the market. The raising of Korea to Assessment Level 2 for all areas except VET has since ameliorated this situation.

Table 1: Student Numbers – Number of Korean Students Studying Overseas

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2003	2004
Overseas Students in Korea	1983	2143	4753	5326	6,279	6,160	11,646	12,314	16,832
Korean Students Abroad	106,458	n/a	133,249	n/a	120,170	n/a	149,933	159,903	187,683

(Note: These figures are from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and are not strictly comparable with Overseas Students Statistics (OSS) figures.)

Figure 1: Korean Students by Country (English Speaking)



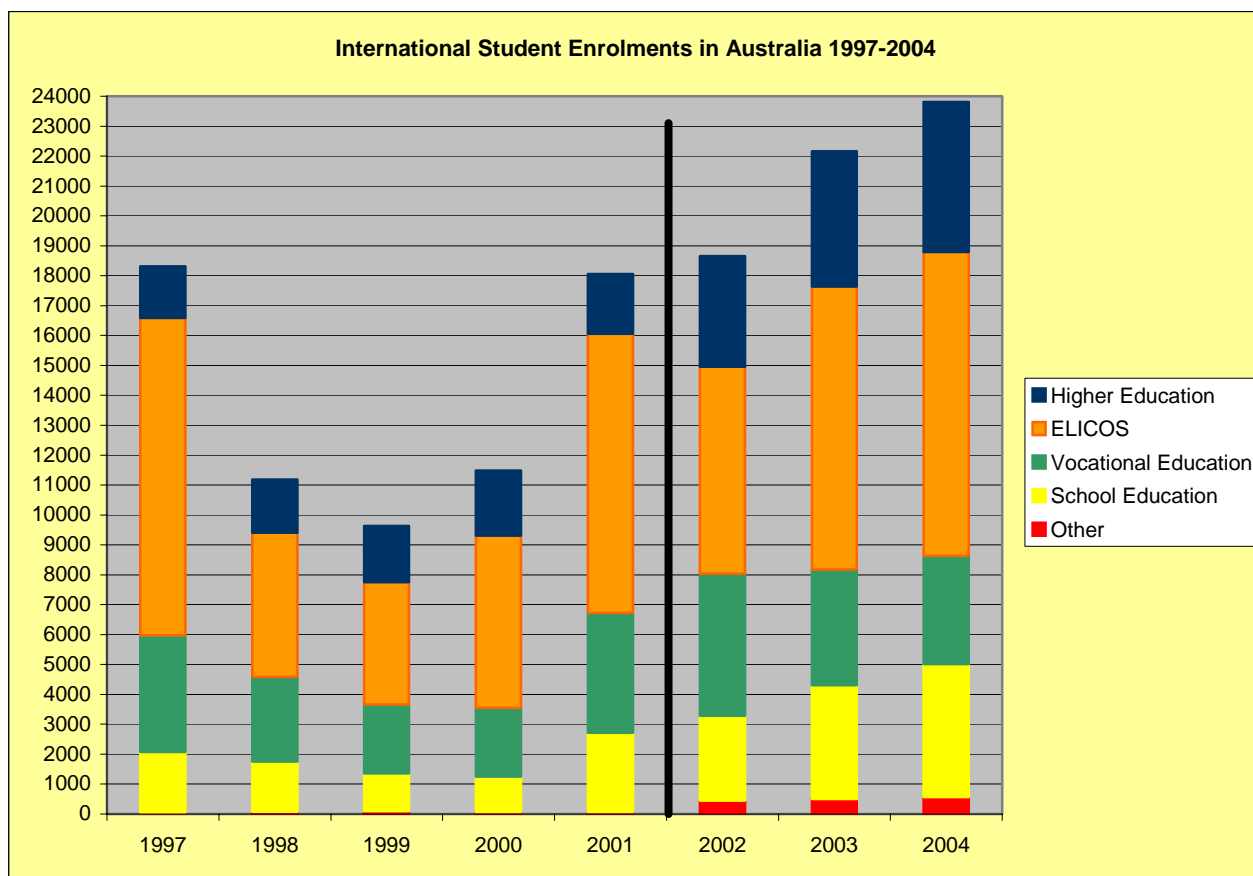
(Note: These figures are from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and are not strictly comparable with Provider Registration and International Students Management System (PRISMS).)

Table 2: Korean Student Enrolments in Australia by State (1997 - 2004)

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
NT	14	11	10	9	12	15	5	4
TAS	150	106	125	163	212	220	230	275
ACT	320	209	206	211	284	276	323	358
SA	832	469	319	457	661	678	948	987
WA	1,150	589	557	775	1181	1,216	1477	1524
VIC	2,837	1,800	1518	1981	2639	3,045	3753	3808
QLD	3,630	1,970	1659	2207	3494	3,659	5007	6004
NSW	9,371	6,025	5235	5671	9466	9,549	10416	10,802

(Note: Data from 1997-2000 was compiled by AEI using OSS methodology. Data from 2002 onwards was compiled using PRISMS. 2002 to 2004 data from <http://aei.dest.gov.au>,

Figure 2: Korean Student Enrolments in Australia by Sector (1997-2004)



(Note: Data from 1997-2001 was compiled by AEI using OSS methodology. Data from 2002 onwards was compiled using PRISMS.)

Australian Government presence in Korea

Korea offers significant opportunities for Australian institutions but, in the words of many, remains a difficult Market. The Australian Government has held an education section within the Australian Embassy in Seoul since 1996, when ELICOS was the area of choice for Korean Students. The Australian Government has maintained a commitment over the last nine years to raise the profile of Australian Education through representation, marketing, student support, agent development and most importantly support for Australian institutions. During this time, Korea has evolved to be an important source country for all Australian education sectors, taking second place after Mainland China in 2004 in terms of overall student enrolments.

AEI's Korea Office has positioned itself to raise the profile of "Study in Australia" to better communicate Australia's scientific achievements and to discover new opportunities for Australian institutions as Korea moves forward on the international stage.

2. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Australia-Korea bilateral Science and Technology Relationship

There have been, however, a number of formal agreements with Korea involving science and technology (S&T). The most important of these have been:

- a Treaty-level Agreement on Scientific and Technological Co-operation, entered into force 5 April 2000 (Treaty Series 2000 No. 13).

- an Arrangement between the (former) Department of Industry, Science and Resources and the Korean Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy for the Pilot Australia-Korea Industrial Technology Cooperation Fund. Commenced 5 April 2000, expired 30 June 2003.

Several Australian Government agencies and science bodies also have (or are soon to have) formal agreements with Korea that involve S&T:

- The Australian Research Council (ARC), the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE) and the Australian Academy of Science (AAS) (in cooperation) have signed a Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement with the Korea Science and Engineering Foundation.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to be signed between the Korean Institute of Geoscience and Mineral Resources (KIGAM) and CSIRO to provide a framework to support and activate scientific cooperation between the two organisations.

The Korean S&T sector is strong. The growth of Korea's government spending on R&D (15% per year for the period 1995-2003) is the second highest in the OECD and in 2002 Korea's R&D expenditure as a percentage of GDP was fifth highest in the OECD - only slightly less than Japan's and above that of the US and Germany. Between 1994 and 2000 Korea also had the OECD's highest annual growth rate of patenting in both Europe and the US.

Korean Government S&T priority areas include digital TV displays and broadcasting; robotics; next-generation automobiles; semiconductors; networking; mobile communication and biomedicine, and Korea is now considered a world-leader in a certain number of these areas. Korean scientific publishing is, however, low by OECD standards (comparable to Portugal and Hungary's), as is their higher education R&D expenditure.

Given the strength of the Korean S&T sector and the existence of common areas of interest (e.g. biomedicine) and reciprocal strengths and weaknesses (e.g. Australia's strong university-based basic science versus Korea's market-oriented R&D and strength in patenting) there appear to be opportunities for closer early-stage research collaboration. Such collaboration is currently hampered, however, by an inadequate knowledge (amongst both Australian and Korean researchers) of the work being undertaken in the other country, its strengths and weaknesses, and of possible avenues for collaboration.

This knowledge deficit may be partly addressed through the Government's International Science Linkages (ISL) programme, which is designed to assist Australian researchers to collaborate with international partners.