

Education and research

Introduction

- 6.1 Witnesses have pointed to cross-cultural understanding as a requirement for a successful and expanding relationship between Australia and the RoK. Underpinning such understanding is education and, in an era of life-long learning, research. This chapter discusses educational and research issues.
- 6.2 There is a direct benefit to the Australian economy in the provision of educational services to Koreans wishing to study in Australia. Broader long-term benefit comes, however, from a greater understanding by Australians of Korean culture. This can arise through contact and collaboration at all stages of the Australian education system – from secondary to postgraduate studies and beyond. Benefits will include increased trade, and international collaboration at both government and business levels.

Providing educational services for Republic of Korea nationals

The education market

- 6.3 Education is high on the list of Korean priorities. The submission from the RoK Embassy noted that Koreans enjoyed a 98 per cent literacy rate, that 40 per cent of 25–34 year-olds were tertiary educated, and ‘private spending on educational institutions as a share of GDP is the highest in the OECD.’¹ A witness from the Research School of Pacific and Asia Studies (RSPAS) told the committee:

I think Korean families are probably the only families that will sell the last little plot of land to send their children to university. I have not seen any other country like this. ... The will of Korean people to go to university and do well is high.²

- 6.4 Figures provided by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) indicated that almost 180 000 Korean students studied abroad in 2004.³ The Korea-Australasia Research Centre (KARC) told the Committee that traditionally, the destination of Korean students studying overseas has been, in order, USA, China, then Canada, Australia, Europe and New Zealand.⁴ Australia has captured a substantial proportion of this market amounting to almost 19 percent.⁵
- 6.5 DEST told the Committee that viewed from the Australian perspective, the RoK represented the second most important source country after China.⁶ Figures provided by the RoK Embassy confirmed the importance of the numbers of Koreans studying in Australia and showed that the trend was rising – following a low after the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the numbers of Korean students had doubled from 2000 to 2004, rising to almost 24 000.⁷

1 RoK Embassy, *Submission No. 18, Vol. 1*, p. 237.

2 Dr Hyung-a Kim, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 59.

3 DEST, *Submission No. 12, Vol. 1*, p. 176.

4 Dr Chung-Sok Suh, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 41.

5 DFAT, *Submission No. 21, Vol. 1*, p. 287.

6 Ms Shelagh Whittleston, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 35.

7 RoK Embassy, *Submission No. 18, Vol. 1*, p. 240.

- 6.6 Korean students studying in Australia enrol in four sectors of the education market:
- English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS), (43%);
 - higher education (21%);
 - schools (19%); and
 - Vocational Education and Training (VET), (15%).⁸
- 6.7 DEST noted that ELICOS was often 'the taster, or the feeder' into the other education sectors.⁹

Promoting Australia's educational services

- 6.8 There are good reasons to promote Australia's educational services to RoK nationals wishing to study overseas. Besides the quality of those services, significant income can be generated for Australian educators. Indeed, OKTA commented that, 'selling one Holden Commodore to Korea is not as easy or as profitable as bringing one overseas Korean student to Australia.'¹⁰
- 6.9 The submission from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) (previously DIMIA) indicated that education was Australia's 'third largest service export after tourism and transportation,' with overseas students contributing more than \$7.5 billion in export earnings annually.¹¹
- 6.10 As well, the education market provides non-financial benefits. DEST told the committee:

One of the things that we find with the students who come here is that they often go back and work in government in the host countries and then can play a major part in the bilateral relationships between countries. We think an education relationship is very important to a national relationship between any two countries.¹²

8 DEST, *Submission No. 12, Vol. 1*, p. 174.

9 Ms Shelagh Whittleston, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 41.

10 Mr Sihyun Paik, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 13.

11 DIMIA, *Submission No. 33, Vol. 2*, p. 451.

12 Ms Shelagh Whittleston, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 43.

- 6.11 DFAT told the Committee that it was raising Australia's profile in RoK schools through the provision of a CD-ROM study kit which had been distributed to about 3000 Korean lower secondary schools. The kit focused on 'Australia's clean and green environmental strengths,' and some of its elements had been incorporated into the Korean schools curriculum.¹³
- 6.12 DEST's activities were more focused on promoting Australia's education market in overseas countries. Its Australian Education International (AEI) program supported the commercial activities of Australia's education community by liaising 'with all sectors of the education and training industry and all levels of government.' The range of strategies it adopted included, 'brand positioning, promotional events, marketing materials, the multilingual Study in Australia web site 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).¹⁴
- 6.13 DEST told the Committee that it was about to upgrade its locally engaged officer to an Australian based counsellor. This, it commented, would allow it to promote government to government relations and also indicate to the Koreans that Australia was interested in furthering the relationship.¹⁵
- 6.14 The RoK Government and Korean businesses are also engaged in promoting educational opportunities in Australia for Korean students. The RoK Ambassador told the Committee that there were many foundations that offered scholarships to Korean students wishing to study in foreign countries.¹⁶

13 Dr Leslie O'Brien, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, pp. 3, 4.

14 DEST, *Submission No. 12, Vol. 1*, p. 174.

15 Ms Shelagh Whittleston, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 35.

16 Ambassador Sang-hoon Cho, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 26.

Impediments to expanding the education market

- 6.15 Various impediments to expanding the education market were identified during the inquiry. These can be grouped under:
- the perceptions of Korean students; and
 - the issuing of visas to Korean students.

Perceptions of students from the Republic of Korea

- 6.16 The RoK Embassy noted in its submission that Australia provided:
- ... a high-quality education in a safe and friendly environment at a reasonable cost and hence is one of the most popular destinations for Korean students.¹⁷
- 6.17 An element of caution was, however, introduced by OKTA when it said:
- ... one of the major concerns of overseas students these days is safety related. ... before they choose their final destination for overseas study they seriously discuss how safe a place it is. There have been a few instances of robberies and attacks on overseas students ... which have had a big impact. A number of Korean students decided to shift to other parts of Australia. Sometimes they just pack up and leave this country. That is currently happening not just in Australia but in other parts of the world, such as the United States.¹⁸
- 6.18 OKTA also highlighted the speed at which adverse information can spread on the Internet to and throughout the RoK:
- A couple of months ago a Korean student had an accident in the middle of Liverpool Street and she was dying. That was on the internet – on the broadband – in Korea. Even in primary school the students there saw the day's news information on this.¹⁹
- 6.19 There are also web sites in the RoK for students returning from overseas. KARC told the Committee that these carried comments from former students who had studied in Australia. Some of these comments had been 'quite negative'. The witness added that

17 RoK Embassy, *Submission No. 18, Vol. 1*, p. 240.

18 Mr Sihyua Paik, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, pp. 15–16.

19 Mr Williams Bae, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 17.

comments from students who had returned from other countries had been 'slightly more favourable.'²⁰

- 6.20 The perception of status of qualifications gained through study in Australia may also be an important factor in the competition for overseas students. OKTA told the committee that Canada, a major competitor, was regarded as 'less business orientated and more educationally' orientated than Australia.²¹
- 6.21 The submission from the RoK Embassy added that 'the perception of Australian degrees in Korea has room for improvement as there exists a tendency to prefer degrees from the US or Europe.'²²
- 6.22 DEST suggested that developing an MoU was a way to overcome these perceptions. While there were 'several MoUs for cooperation between State Government Education Departments and Metropolitan Offices of Education in Korea,'²³ there was no MoU at national government level:
- The idea of the MoU is that there would be an agreement between the Republic of Korea and Australia in terms of recognition of each other's qualifications. That does not exist at the present time. That would be something that we could develop.²⁴
- 6.23 The Committee notes advice from DFAT, that recently the Korean Ministry of Education had approached the AEI office in Seoul with an informal proposal for an MoU with Australia.²⁵

The issuing of visas to students from the Republic of Korea

- 6.24 Koreans wishing to study in Australia are issued with a student visa by DIMA. In addition, since January 2004 DIMA was able to issue a student guardian visa to a parent, legal custodian or relative who was accompanying a student visa holder who was under 18 years of age, or who had a physical or cultural need for an adult companion. The submission from DIMA noted that interest from Korean applicants

20 Dr Chung-sok Suh, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 41.

21 Dr Chung-sok Suh, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 41.

22 RoK Embassy, *Submission No. 18, Vol. 1*, p. 241.

23 DEST, *Submission No. 12, Vol. 1*, p. 174.

24 Ms Shelagh Whittleston, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 41.

25 Mr Peter Baxter, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 8.

had been high, with over 40 per cent of all student guardian visa grants going to parents of Korean students as of 30 June 2005.²⁶

6.25 A supplementary submission from the RoK Embassy was critical of the assessment process which DIMIA used in assessing applications for student visas. The submission complained that the risk assessment levels for processing Korean student visa applications was too high, especially when compared to applications from Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Poland, and Portugal. The submission added that downgrading the assessment risk levels would encourage more Korean students to apply for student visas thereby leading to a substantive increase in numbers.²⁷

6.26 DIMA responded that its assessments levels were:

- a statistical analysis of risk indicators in each education sector by citizenship, with risk weighting assigned according to the degree of concern each risk indicator poses to the overall integrity of the student visa program; and
- analysis of specific country issues and broader regional concerns, allowing relevant environmental, political, economic or other influences to be objectively assessed and incorporated into the statistical analysis.²⁸

6.27 The submission identified the risk indicators used in the statistical analysis:

- the percentage of student visas cancelled where the student was at fault;
- the percentage of fraudulent documents detected by the Australian overseas mission;
- the percentage of former student visa holders who became unlawful and did not obtain a visa to regularise their status;
- the percentage of applications by student visa holders for permanent residence visas;

26 DIMIA, *Submission No. 33, Vol. 2*, p. 452.

27 RoK Embassy, *Submission No. 44, Vol. 2*, p. 544.

28 DIMA, *Submission No. 58, Vol. 2*, p. 609.

- the percentage of student visa applications which were refused by the Australian overseas mission; and
- the absolute number of international students applying for a protection visa for each country and education sector.

DIMA added that the assessment levels for international student visa applications were reviewed on an annual basis.²⁹

Committee comment

- 6.28 The provision of educational services to Koreans is a substantial export earner. The Committee considers it is important to maintain and, if possible, increase Australia's market share. The Committee believes it is important for Australian educators to be aware of any adverse comments made by returning Korean students and to seek to address those concerns.
- 6.29 Citizens of the RoK are highly internet-aware and the Committee considers that a task for AEI in Seoul should be to create an internet-based forum where Korean students returning from overseas are able to provide feedback on their Australian experiences. AEI should regularly review comments posted to this internet forum and advise Australian educators so they are able to tailor their services to meet the needs of their Korean students.

Recommendation 5

- 6.30 **Australian Education International create an Internet-based forum for Korean students returning from Australia. Comments on this forum should be regularly reviewed and followed up if necessary with Australian educators.**
- 6.31 The Committee believes that DEST should take steps to address Korean misconceptions of the value of Australia's education qualifications through the negotiation of an MoU with the Korean Government. Given there already has been an informal approach from the Korean Government, and an MoU has received support from DEST witnesses, the Committee considers this should be a matter of priority and be completed within 12 months.
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²⁹ DIMA, *Submission No. 58, Vol. 2*, pp. 609–10.

Recommendation 6

- 6.32 **The Department of Education, Science and Training develop a memorandum of understanding with its Republic of Korea counterpart with a view to the mutual recognition of educational qualifications.**
- 6.33 The Committee is satisfied that DIMA has adopted objective risk assessment indicators when it assesses the risks presented by students from the RoK studying in Australia.
- 6.34 The Committee notes, however, that DIMA's risk assessment includes an analysis of 'specific country issues.' DIMA's evidence suggests that a substantial percentage of student guardian visas are for adults accompanying students from the RoK. The Committee considers, therefore, that the issuing of a student guardian visa constitutes a 'specific country' factor and this factor should be incorporated into DIMA's risk assessment for students from the RoK.

Recommendation 7

- 6.35 **The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs review the risk presented by students from the Republic of Korea who are accompanied by a guardian when they study in Australia. The result should be incorporated into the overall risk assessment for such students.**
- 6.36 Finally, the Committee notes the comment from Mr Mack Williams that Australia was not 'getting the best students from Korea,'³⁰ and from OKTA that the graduate business management course sector presents a potential growth sector for Australia's overseas student education market.³¹ The Committee believes AEI should look to promote this aspect of the market.

30 Mr Mack Williams, *Transcript 7 November 2005*, p. 9.

31 Mr William Shields, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 25.

Interaction at secondary school level

The study of the Korean language in Australia

- 6.37 The teaching of the Korean language is regarded by KARC as the 'backbone of all Korean studies.'³² ABC Asia Pacific went further, noting that the RoK was such an important market that it should receive more emphasis at all levels including education and government.³³ The ABC's representative in the RoK added that 'Koreans always welcome any foreigners who are eager to learn Korean.'³⁴ DEST too agreed, noting Korean was one of the languages 'that the Commonwealth does seek to promote.'³⁵
- 6.38 The largest population of Korea-born Australians resides in NSW, predominantly in Sydney, and it is for this reason that the support for the teaching of Korean is focused on that State.³⁶ Currently, the NSW education syllabus allows for Korean to be taught in kindergarten, for the NSW School Certificate, and for the Higher School Certificate (HSC). In 2005, three HSC courses were available: Beginners, Continuers, and Background Speakers.³⁷
- 6.39 In 2005, there were 18 schools in NSW with a Korean program (in Melbourne there were six schools).³⁸ In addition, Korean was available at the NSW Government's Open High School, and Saturday School of Community Languages.³⁹
- 6.40 In 2004, The RoK Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development signed an MoU with the NSW Department of Education to jointly support a Korean language consultant position based at the Korean Education Centre (KEC).⁴⁰
- 6.41 The Committee received a submission from the KEC which raised several criticisms of the support for teaching of Korean in NSW. These criticisms included:
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32 Dr Chung-sok Suh, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 38.

33 Mr Jim Styles, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 49.

34 Mr Elliott Lee, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 49.

35 Ms Shelagh Whittleston, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 42.

36 Mrs In-soon Park, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 7.

37 Office of the Board of Studies NSW, *Submission No. 32, Vol. 2*, p. 442.

38 Mrs In-soon Park, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 7. a list of NSW schools can be found at: Korean Education Centre, *Submission No. 3, Vol. 1*, p. 26.

39 Mrs Sook hee McRoberts, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 2.

40 Mrs In-soon Park, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 3.

- the level of resourcing of Korean language teaching;
- the lack of fellowships open to teachers of Korean; and
- the deletion of the HSC Korean Beginners course.

Resourcing of Korean language teaching

6.42 The KEC stated that Commonwealth funding for Asian languages under the National Asian Languages Studies in Australian Schools program (NALSAS) had not been equitably distributed. The program ran from 1996 to 2002 and had identified four priority languages: Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, and Korean. Korean language programmes, however, which were introduced in 1994:

... did not benefit from any start-up funding or nurturing. It [was] clearly the case that a relatively insignificant portion of the available NALSAS funding was allocated to the Korean program. This severely limited the development of an appropriate level of resources.⁴¹

6.43 A witness from the KEC explained that when she had sought funding under the NALSAS she 'was denied, because of [low] student numbers.' She added that teachers of the other priority languages were provided with lots of resources, but that teachers of Korean had to produce their own.⁴² Consequently, teachers facing a lack of proper resources compared to those of other well-established languages were 'withdrawing from the Korean language program.'⁴³

6.44 Since the 2004 MoU, however, and the establishment of the Korean language consultant position, the KEC had 'supported Year 9 material and HSC online material for the Korean language.'⁴⁴ The RoK Embassy also noted that it provided information on Korea in the form of educational magazines which it distributed to secondary schools.⁴⁵

41 KEC, *Submission No. 3, Vol. 1*, p. 18.

42 Mrs Sook Hee McRoberts, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, pp. 6-7.

43 Mrs Sook Hee McRoberts, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 3.

44 Mrs In-Soon Park, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 3.

45 RoK Embassy, *Submission No. 18, Vol. 1*, p. 240.

Teacher fellowships for the teachers of Korean

6.45 A similar neglect existed, suggested the KEC, with the training of Korean language teachers. The KEC explained that a teacher exchange program existed between the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education and the NSW Department of Education and Training. The exchange programme was currently inactive due to a funding deficiency or lack of interest of the NSW Department, the KEC suggested. This was despite the keenness of the Korean Department to reactivate the program.⁴⁶

6.46 The program was jointly funded by the NSW and RoK governments,⁴⁷ and commenced in 1995. The KEC provided further details:

We had seven teachers on each side, so that each teacher had a counterpart. The Korean teachers visited Australia and our Australian background Korean language teachers hosted them and then, the following year, the Australian Korean language teachers visited their counterparts in Seoul. That was continued until 1998, when funding was completely stopped. Funding was restarted in 2001 and lasted a couple of years. In those days, the Korean government wanted to have 10 teachers exchanged, but the New South Wales department said it had to be limited to four teachers. Four teachers were exchanged for a couple of years.⁴⁸

6.47 There are two other potential sources of support for Korean language teachers:

- the Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowships (ELTF); and
- the Australia-Korea Teacher Exchange (AKTE) program.

6.48 The ELTF enables 'Australian language teachers to participate in a three-week in-country cultural and language program in the language that they teach.' Eligible languages for the program are the top 10 languages studied at Year 12.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, Korean is not one of those top 10 languages.⁵⁰

46 Mrs Sook Hee McRoberts, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, pp. 2-3.

47 Mrs Sook Hee McRoberts, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 6.

48 Mrs Sook Hee McRoberts, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 5.

49 These languages are, alphabetically, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

50 DEST, *Submission No. of the 40, Vol. 2*, p. 509.

- 6.49 DFAT told the Committee that the AKF, together with the Asia Education Foundation, provided support for teacher exchanges under the AKTE program. When teachers visited the foreign country they were given classroom exposure, cultural visits and home stays.⁵¹
- 6.50 The AKF 2003–04 annual report noted that in August and October 2003, 12 Korean teachers travelled to Australia, and nine Australian teachers travelled to the RoK. As well, 10 principals and deputy principals from South Australian schools travelled to the Chongju District in the RoK.⁵²

Deletion of the Higher School Certificate Korean Beginners course

- 6.51 The submission from the KEC advised that from 2006 the NSW Board of Studies would 'delete the HSC Korean Beginners course from the Korean language program in NSW.' The reason provided was due to low candidature. The submission emphasised that the Korean Beginners course was also not available on the NSW education department's distance learning vehicle, the Open High School.⁵³
- 6.52 A witness from the KEC provided further comment:
- the reason for low candidature for the Korean Beginners course had not been addressed – 'low access to the course, no protocol for expressions of interest, no logging or recording of inquiries ... and, critically, no access to the Open High School distance education mode;'
 - teachers in remote areas, responding to the needs of parents with adopted Korean children, could not form a Korean language class (a school needed at least 10 students to form a class);
 - some adoptive parents were purchasing private lessons at \$5 000 per year; and
 - while the NSW Government's Saturday School of Community Languages made Korean available, many students were unable to attend Saturday classes.⁵⁴

51 Dr Lesley O'Brien, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 4.

52 AKF, *Annual Report 2003–2004*, pp. 19–20.

53 KEC, *Submission No. 3, Vol. 1*, pp. 19, 25.

54 Mrs Sook-Hee McRoberts, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, pp. 2–5.

- 6.53 The thrust of the KEC evidence was that there was a demand for the Korean Beginners course and that the NSW Board of Studies' reason for suspending the course could not be justified.
- 6.54 The Committee sought a response from the NSW Board of Studies. The Board responded that the eligibility rules for the Korean Beginners course were designed to provide 'opportunities for genuine second language learners with no background in Korean to study a course commensurate with their experience in and knowledge of Korean'.⁵⁵
- 6.55 Unfortunately, the candidature for Korean Beginners had averaged less than one per year (in four of the previous six years there had been no candidates). The Board followed the policy proposal by the Australasian Curriculum Assessment Certification Authorities, and had a policy of suspending courses when the candidature fell below '15 on a national basis in each of three consecutive years'. Because the course had been suspended, not deleted, there was opportunity for schools to offer Korean Beginners as a Board Endorsed Course.^{56,57}
- 6.56 The submission added:
- If the numbers increase and there is clear evidence of ongoing demand for and sustainability of the course, the Board of Studies would consider reactivating Korean Beginners as a NSW HSC course.⁵⁸
- 6.57 The Committee sought further comment from the Board on how it would measure whether demand was sufficient to reactivate a course, and whether it could provide examples of suspended courses which had subsequently been reactivated.
- 6.58 The Board responded:
- In reviewing suspended courses the Board of Studies would consider such issues as:
- enrolment trends up to the time that the course was suspended. In the case of Korean Beginners there has never been a viable candidature since the course's inception. ...

55 NSW Board of Studies, *Submission No. 32, Vol. 2*, p. 443.

56 NSW Board of Studies, *Submission No. 32, Vol. 2*, pp. 443–4.

57 Board Endorsed Courses, unlike Board Developed Courses, cannot be used in the calculation of the University Admission Index.

58 NSW Board of Studies, *Submission No. 32, Vol. 2*, p. 444.

- inquiries relating to the course. There have been very few inquiries from schools or individuals concerning Korean Beginners. There seems to have been little interest in the change.
 - monitoring of demographic and immigration trends. Frequently the interest in studying a language comes from first generation immigrants. By the time a second generation comes to HSC study there is often a significant decline in the candidature.⁵⁹
- 6.59 Regarding reactivating courses, the Board of Studies noted that ‘the process of suspending languages has been in operation for only two years.’ The Vocational Education and Training Curriculum Framework Courses, however, provided examples of the Board of Studies’ responsiveness to changing circumstances:
- There has been a substantial decline in the number of Board Endorsed Course applications as content areas have been absorbed into the Board Developed curriculum areas.⁶⁰

Student exchanges and visits

- 6.60 Earlier in this chapter the Committee noted the support provided by the AKF for various teacher exchanges and teacher visits to the RoK. An outcome of such teacher exchanges, DFAT stated, was that the interest engendered often led to applications for student exchanges.⁶¹
- 6.61 For example, following the visit of Australian teachers to the Cheongju District in 2003–04, there was an exchange visit of students from the Cheongju Elementary School and Barmera Primary School in South Australia.⁶² Also in 2003–04, 14 school students and two teachers from the McKinnon Secondary College visited the RoK; subsequently students from the Dong Rae High School were invited to visit Australia.⁶³
- 6.62 The support for secondary school exchanges, however, remains limited. DEST told the Committee that the Commonwealth Government did not fund student exchanges. The department added

59 NSW Board of Studies, *Submission No. 53, Vol. 2*, p. 582.

60 NSW Board of Studies, *Submission No. 53, Vol. 2*, p. 583.

61 Dr Lesley O’Brien, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 4.

62 AKF, *Annual Report 2003–2004*, pp. 21–2.

63 AKF, *Annual Report 2003–2004*, pp. 20–1.

that it was 'giving further thought to how we might encourage more Australians to go offshore.'⁶⁴

Committee comment

- 6.63 The Committee agrees with witnesses that the teaching of the Korean language in Australian schools enhances cultural links and, in the long term, can benefit Australia's trade performance with the RoK. The Committee considers that at the heart of the decline in the teaching of Korean is a decline in student interest. If more students were attracted to Korean language courses, the subject could compete more successfully for resources, cater for a diverse range of abilities at secondary school, and justify a HSC Korean Beginners course.
- 6.64 The Committee believes there are two main reasons for low student interest in Korean language studies:
- Despite rising imports to Australia, the RoK has a low profile which leads to student perception that the study of Korean does not provide them with long-term benefit – in particular, prospects for employment or further study.
 - Korean born adoptees, who are a significant potential source of language students at the beginners level,⁶⁵ are distributed widely across Australia. This prevents the creation of the critical mass needed for forming a Korean language class.
- 6.65 The low demand from students and the inability to form viable classes dampens the demand for Korean language teachers. This further exacerbates the situation because schools without a qualified Korean language teacher are unable to offer a Korean language course.
- 6.66 The Committee understands the reasons for the NSW Board of Studies cancelling the Korean Beginners course. Offering courses at HSC level entails a cost which cannot be justified if there are very few candidates. The alternative of Board Endorsed Courses is not a satisfactory alternative to many senior secondary school students because such courses are not able to be used in the calculation of the University Administration Index. Consequently, Board Endorsed

64 Ms Shelagh Whittleston, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 39.

65 Korea is the source of the second-highest number of adopted children per year, after China. In 2003–04 there were 98 adoptions. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Adoptions Australia 2003–04*, p. 14.

Courses are not seen by senior students as being as worthy of study when compared to Board Developed Courses.

- 6.67 The Committee is not convinced that the Board of Studies has an effective method of recording the potential demand for discontinued Board Developed Courses. Creating and maintaining a database, however, to record evidence of demand for a discontinued course entails significant costs. As well, due to equity issues, any system would need to be able to record demand for other discontinued courses and this would increase costs.
- 6.68 The Committee believes that any strategy to progress the teaching of Korean in Australian schools should focus on the following:
- creating demand through:
 - ⇒ initially focusing on the K-10 syllabus;
 - ⇒ providing teaching materials for junior and junior secondary classes;
 - ⇒ facilitating school exchange visits at junior and junior secondary level;
 - demonstrating demand through:
 - ⇒ more effective recording of interest for discontinued courses at the education department level;
 - ⇒ coordination of demand at the parent level (the Committee encourages the KEC to play an active role in this aspect);
 - fostering existing and generated demand through:
 - ⇒ providing better access to Korean language courses through distance learning via the Internet (the Committee considers that Korean born adoptees represent a potential market for Internet-based learning of beginners level Korean);
 - meeting the additional costs, in particular of Internet-based Korean language teaching, through:
 - ⇒ additional government funding; and
 - ⇒ seeking financial support from non-government bodies.

- 6.69 In 2004 the Committee reviewed Australia's relationship with Indonesia and discussed the then discontinued NALSAS program. The Committee recommended that a NALSAS program or an equivalent be reintroduced.⁶⁶
- 6.70 The Commonwealth Government responded in November 2005 advising that it did not support the recommendation. It noted that in 1999 funding for NALSAS was extended for three years on the basis that the program would become self-sustaining by 2002. The response also detailed the support being provided to Asian language teaching and concluded that:
- While the Government takes a leadership role ... it is the responsibility of State and Territory governments to ensure languages and studies of Asia programs ... are adequately funded.⁶⁷
- 6.71 Notwithstanding the Commonwealth Government response, the Committee reconfirms its view there is merit in reintroducing a NALSAS program or an equivalent.**
- 6.72 In the Commonwealth jurisdiction the Committee notes DEST's comment that it 'was giving thought to' how it could encourage more school exchanges. The Committee considers that this would make a valuable contribution to generating demand for Korean language courses.

Recommendation 8

- 6.73 The Department of Education, Science and Training promote school exchange visits between Australia and the RoK through direct funding, or by facilitating sponsorship from non-Commonwealth Government bodies.**

⁶⁶ JSCFADT, *Near Neighbours – Good Neighbours, An Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with Indonesia*, Canberra, May 2004, pp. 158–61.

⁶⁷ <<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/indonesia/indonesia.pdf>> November 2005, pp. 11–12.

Interaction at tertiary and post-tertiary level

Student exchanges

6.74 As with secondary school students visiting the RoK, there are relatively few Australian tertiary students studying in that country. A DEST supplementary submission advised of two scholarship programs available to Australian students wishing to study in the RoK. The scholarships were based on an institution-to-institution exchange, with support to the value of between \$4000 and \$5000 being provided for one to two semesters. The scholarship programs were:

- the Australian Cheung Kong Student Exchange Programme; and
- the Australian University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific Programme.

6.75 In 2005, the two programs provided support for a total of 420 student exchanges to various countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Nine Australian students studied in the RoK under the programs.⁶⁸

6.76 The Australian Academy of Science (AAS) explained that the low number of Australian students studying in the RoK was due in part to the difficulty of the language. While many scientific institutions taught their higher degree courses in English, students studying in the RoK would still have the problem of conversing in Korean when living in the community.⁶⁹

6.77 DEST suggested that a further factor was the lack of recognition and accreditation of Korean courses. It advised the Committee that it was upgrading its representation in Seoul and through enhanced government-to-government links, it hoped that the two countries would have a better understanding and recognition of each other's qualification and accreditation frameworks.⁷⁰

6.78 A third factor, suggested by witnesses from the RSPAS, was a lack of career opportunities arising from Korean studies:

Korea has to have a profile where Australian students think that, when they study Korean subjects, they can better their

68 DEST, *Submission No. 40, Vol. 2*, pp. 509–10.

69 Professor Bruce McKellar, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 13.

70 Ms Shelagh Whittleston, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, pp. 35, 38.

careers, so they can be inspired by it, and vice versa. ... Students say, 'There are hardly any Korean researchers who are lecturers, so how do we study?' Then the university would say, 'Because there are hardly any students, we do not need any lecturers.' ... Why do you think Koreans all go to America? It has to be Berkeley or Harvard. They are the ones who make the decisions and who do all the politics.⁷¹

- 6.79 A consequence of this decline in popularity of Korean courses at the tertiary level was the contraction in Korean study programs in Australian universities.⁷²

A Korean studies research centre

- 6.80 The RoK Ambassador told the Committee that his government needed to be 'more energetic in promoting the Korean study program' in Australia and was considering providing funding support for 'a Korean research centre in an appropriate university in Australia'.⁷³
- 6.81 Responding to this idea, the RSPAS commented that the proposal was at an early stage of development, but it would ideally involve the granting of full student scholarships.⁷⁴
- 6.82 KARC noted that in the 1990s a Commonwealth-funded Korean studies centre was established in Melbourne, but it 'disappeared' as soon as the funding ceased.⁷⁵ KARC also commented that funding might be more broadly spread:
- Considering the small number of scholars and considering that there are already three research centres, instead of establishing a new centre I think strengthening one or two of the existing centres might be a more effective way of directing funding.⁷⁶
- 6.83 Strengthening the collaboration between widely dispersed scholars would also be an effective strategy, KARC added.⁷⁷

71 Dr Hyung-a Kim, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 51.

72 Professor James Fox, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 54.

73 Ambassador Sang-hoon Cho, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 21.

74 Professor James Fox, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 60.

75 Dr Gi-Hyun Shin, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 39.

76 Dr Chung-Sok Suh, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 39.

77 Dr Chung-Sok Suh, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 39.

Committee comment

6.84 The Committee notes that the RoK Government supports a number of Australian universities that have Korean study programs,⁷⁸ and welcomes the possible further support of a Korean research centre. The Committee cautions, however, that the creation of a research centre per se will not necessarily create sufficient demand to ensure its long term viability. As noted previously in this chapter, there needs to be sustained support for Korean studies at the junior and secondary school level to create grassroots demand for Korean studies. As KARC said:

... I think that setting up a research centre would be a very good idea but, at this point in time, we need some sort of structure from which we can draw out younger Australians' interest in Korea. I do not just mean for research work; we also need a structure from which we can increase the number of younger people interested in undertaking Korean language studies, at school level as well as university level.⁷⁹

Research collaboration

Benefits of collaboration

- 6.85 The RoK ranks fifth in the OECD in spending on science and technology. DEST told the Committee that in 2002 spending amounted to US\$ 23.5 billion as compared to US\$ 9 billion for Australia.⁸⁰
- 6.86 Research collaboration between Australia and the RoK provides significant opportunities for both countries. Not only can Australians take advantage of the RoK's interest in research and development, but also both countries can benefit from the synergies arising from complementary areas of expertise. Several examples were provided to the Committee.
- 6.87 The submission from DEST drew attention to Australia's strong university-based basic science and the RoK science and technology

78 The institutions are: the Australian National University, the University of New South Wales, Griffith University, and Curtin University of Technology.
RoK Embassy, *Submission No. 18, Vol. 1*, p. 239.

79 Dr Gi-Hyun Shin, *Transcript 20 September 2005*, p. 39.

80 Ms Sarah Cowan, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 36.

sector's strength in market-orientated research and development and patenting.⁸¹

- 6.88 DCITA told the Committee that it was keen to work with the RoK in the broadband technology area:

We see that Korea's main strengths really lie in the deployment and manufacturing of the technology but that Australia has quite complementary skills in the application side of it. ... We can use the example of the internet fridge as something that is very clever but perhaps not the most useful thing in the world. Australia's strengths lie in finding slightly more useful applications for that type of technology ...⁸²

- 6.89 Another example was provided by CSIRO. In collaborating on water resources management, Australia could benefit from the application of RoK water engineering and ICT expertise, whereas the RoK could benefit from the application of 'Australian catchment modelling expertise, ecosystem understanding and water-related public policy expertise.'⁸³

Impediments to collaboration

- 6.90 Witnesses advised the Committee that there were several factors which impeded more extensive research collaboration.
- 6.91 In 2001, the AKF-sponsored report, *Australia-Korea: strengthened economic partnership*, recommended that the two governments adopt common systems for standards and regulations. DFAT told the Committee that while little pressure had been exerted by Australian industry to implement such a system, there had been discussions between CSIRO's Division of Industrial Physics and Korean agencies on harmonisation of scientific standards.⁸⁴
- 6.92 A second impediment identified by witnesses was that, compared to other countries such as China, there are few Korean-born researchers in Australia. Such researchers would naturally initially focus on their country of birth when considering international collaboration.⁸⁵

81 DEST, *Submission No. 12, Vol. 1*, p. 178.

82 Ms Andrea Grosvenor, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 46.

83 CSIRO, *Submission No. 6, Vol. 1*, p. 47.

84 Mr Peter Baxter, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 7.

85 Dr Mandy Thomas, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 15.

6.93 A third and highly significant impediment identified by both DEST and the AAS was the lack of knowledge of potential opportunities for collaboration. As DEST noted in its submission:

... 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 possible avenues of collaboration.⁸⁶

6.94 The AAS provided the specific example of the use of synchrotrons in the Asian region. While Australian researchers had excellent connections with the synchrotron operators in Japan and Taiwan, little use was being made of the synchrotron in the RoK.⁸⁷

Models for collaboration

6.95 The Committee has received evidence of various models of collaboration, ranging from the strategic government-to-government level, to models based on collaboration between individual organisations.

Government-initiated models

6.96 CSIRO told the Committee that, at the treaty level, a science and technology agreement with the RoK came into force on April 2000.⁸⁸ The agreement was designed to provide broad coverage for corporate and research efforts and emphasised the importance of cooperation. Its activities included:

- joint workshops and research projects;
- visits and exchanges of scientists, engineers and other personnel; and
- exchange of information on activities, policies, practices, laws and regulations concerning research and development.⁸⁹

6.97 CSIRO noted that eleven different fields were covered by the treaty, ten of which were relevant to the CSIRO's own collaborative arrangements with Korean institutions.⁹⁰

86 DEST, *Submission No. 12, Vol. 1*, p. 178.

87 Professor Bruce McKellar, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 3.

88 Dr Bob Vertessey, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 2.

89 Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, *Report 30, Treaties Tabled on 8 and 9 December 1999 and 15 February 2000*, Canberra, April 2000, pp. 21--2.

- 6.98 More recently has been the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate agreement in January 2006. The partnership involves six countries: Australia, China, India, Japan, the RoK, and USA. The objectives of the partnership include:
- building the research and development base, and the market and institutional foundations of partnership countries through technology supporting initiatives, such as education, training and skills transfer.⁹¹
- 6.99 Australia and the RoK jointly chair the Renewable Energy and Distributed Generation Task Force. The objectives of the group include:
- promoting collaboration between partnership members on research, development and implementation of renewable energy technologies;
 - supporting cooperative projects to deploy renewable and energy distribution technologies; and
 - identifying potential projects that enable the assessment of the applicability of renewable energy and energy distribution.⁹²
- 6.100 There are also Commonwealth Government initiated activities and programs.
- 6.101 A Broadband Summit, involving Australia, New Zealand, and the RoK was held in 2003, June 2005 in Seoul, and is scheduled for 2006 in Adelaide. The event was designed to enable industries from the three countries to showcase their skills and projects, initiate contacts, and create links with overseas counterparts. The outcome of the 2005 Summit was cooperation in the fields of 'photonics, digital content for film and screen, digital multimedia broadcasting, online and mobile content and e-health.'⁹³

90 Dr Bob Vertessey, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 2.

91 DFAT, *Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, Inaugural Ministerial Meeting – Sydney, January 2006*, <http://www.dfat.gov.au/environment/climate/ap6/work_plan.html>, February 2006, p. 3.

92 DFAT, *Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, Inaugural Ministerial Meeting – Sydney, January 2006*, <http://www.dfat.gov.au/environment/climate/ap6/work_plan.html>, February 2006, p. 4.

93 Senator the Hon. Helen Coonan, List of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, *Media Release, Seoul broadband summit leads to new joint activity*, 15 June 2005.

- 6.102 DCITA told the Committee that a tangible outcome of the summit was the signing of an MoU between the Australian Photonic Cooperative Research Centre and RoK's Electronics and Telecommunications Research Institute with a view to collaborative research on photonics.⁹⁴
- 6.103 In May 2004, the Commonwealth Government announced the Backing Australia's Ability package. Under this package funds were provided for the Science Linkages Program which became fully effective in January 2005.⁹⁵
- 6.104 The AAS told the Committee that Australia's science and technology academies administer the program. Support was provided for the international exchange of scientists, and international workshops. The AAS noted that the exchange program focused on researchers who were establishing their careers. Unfortunately, regarding exchanges with the RoK, interest was less than desired.⁹⁶
- 6.105 On the other hand, CSIRO commented that scientists in the Land and Water Division had found the scheme 'very beneficial', and the program had recently enabled several water resource specialists to conduct a joint meeting in the RoK with their Korean counterparts.⁹⁷

Organisation-initiated models

- 6.106 One aim of government-sponsored activities and programs is the promotion of collaboration by individual organisations. Examples provided to the Committee included:
- biennial conferences conducted jointly by the AAS and the Korean Science and Engineering Foundation (KOSEF), which were held alternately in Australia and the RoK;⁹⁸
 - a reciprocal research fellowship agreement between the Australian Research Council and KOSEF which facilitates exchange visits of scientists;⁹⁹
 - collaborative research projects funded by the Australian Research Council;¹⁰⁰ and

94 Ms Andrea Grosvenor, *Transcript 31 August 2005*, p. 45.

95 DEST, *International Science Linkages*, <<https://sciencegrants.dest.gov.au/ISL/Pages/Home.aspx>> 2 March 2006.

96 Professor Bruce McKellar, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 5.

97 Dr Rob Vertessy, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 5.

98 Professor Roger Tanner, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 4.

99 Australian Research Council, *Submission No. 16, Vol. 1*, p. 196.

- MoUs between CSIRO and four research organisations in the RoK.¹⁰¹

6.107 CSIRO advised that its MoUs were designed to provide a framework to:

- identify areas of mutual cooperation;
- undertake collaborative research, lectures, symposia or conferences;
- undertake scientific exchanges;
- undertake joint research projects of mutual interest; and
- manage the relationship between the parties.¹⁰²

6.108 Witnesses emphasised the importance of MoUs, but cautioned that they should not be an end in themselves:

CSIRO: I think [MoUs] are actually a very important cultural gesture to make an entrée into the country. ... I think they are valued by many of our Asian partners and I think we need to be sensitive and positive about our approach to them. I have found it has improved my access to institutions and researchers by starting the relationship with a high-level gesture with an institution.¹⁰³

AAS: ... but it comes back to the problem that the bedevils MoUs to some extent, which is: is there money to back it up?¹⁰⁴

6.109 The AAS proceeded to provide an example of an MoU which had not been supported by subsequent funding. The University of Melbourne had an MoU with the Pohang Institute of Science and Technology which enabled students to visit the Pohang Institute. The Institute had complained that Melbourne University was not taking advantage of the opportunity provided by the MoU.¹⁰⁵

6.110 The Committee notes advice from the Australian Research Council that it was about to review all its international MoUs. The review would assess the achievements of the agreements, whether objectives

100 Dr Mandy Thomas, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 14.

101 CSIRO, *Submission No. 46, Vol. 2*, p. 552.

102 CSIRO, *Submission No. 46, Vol. 2*, p. 552.

103 Dr Rob Vertessy, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 11.

104 Professor Bruce McKellar, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 11.

105 Professor Bruce McKellar, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 11.

were appropriate, and whether there were areas which needed to be focused on.¹⁰⁶

- 6.111 A broad multifaceted engagement strategy with the RoK has been advocated by AEEMA. The Association identified the similarities between the Australia–RoK relationship and that between Australia and Taiwan—both are based on low value raw materials/high-value manufacturers exchange—and suggested a similar strategy be used for developing the Australia–RoK relationship.¹⁰⁷
- 6.112 AEEMA told the Committee that its relationship with its Taiwanese counterpart was currently into its fourth year. It had arisen from an electronics industry action agenda and was built around five interlinked areas: research and development, ICT manufacture, strategic alliances, trade facilitation and investment attraction. AEEMA’s model involved Invest Australia, Austrade, five state governments, CSIRO and the National ICT Industry Alliance.¹⁰⁸

Committee comment

- 6.113 It is clear to the Committee that significant benefit can arise from Australian–RoK collaboration in science and technology. The Committee also believes that there is a high level of collaborative activity occurring between Australia and the RoK and that many positive outcomes have resulted.
- 6.114 There is a risk, however, of that collaboration being piecemeal and uncoordinated. The Committee considers that the Commonwealth needs to take the lead in providing a strategic direction. The Committee agrees with the witness from the Australian Research Council who, referring to comments of his CEO, said:

He was pointing particularly to the need to look at whether there is enough coordination across those different programs. There is a sense in which perhaps each is working in its own patch and doing very good things, but that we might be able to build on those through some complementarities and people sitting down and talking about ways in which to work in the same direction and reinforce what different agencies

106 Mr Simon Sedgley, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 14.

107 AEEMA, *Submission No. 4, Vol. 1*, p. 34.

108 Mr Angus Robinson, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, pp. 20–1.

are doing. That would be the ARC, DEST, the academy, CSIRO and even the industry portfolio.¹⁰⁹

Recommendation 9

- 6.115 **The Department of Education, Science and Training coordinate a review of the breadth and depth of science and technology research collaboration between Australia and the Republic of Korea with the purpose of providing strategic leadership through the development of an action agenda.**

109 Mr Simon Sedgley, *Transcript 1 September 2005*, p. 5.