

ROUNDTABLE REPORT

Asia-Informed Student Mobility In The Indo-Pacific Era: Case Studies From Japan

A cross-sector discussion on experiences, learnings
and visions for student mobility in our region.

Presented by

JAPAN FOUNDATION 
BRINGING JAPAN TO YOU

With the support of


Australian Government

 **NEW COLOMBO PLAN**
Connect to Australia's future - study in the region

ECU
EDITH COWAN
UNIVERSITY


pwc

In cooperation with

 Asian Studies
Association
of Australia

This discussion was held on July 2, 2018 as part of the Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA) 2018 Conference.



JAPAN FOUNDATION 
BRINGING JAPAN TO YOU

March 2019

Published by
The Japan Foundation, Sydney
Level 4, Central Park
28 Broadway
Chippendale NSW 2008
Australia

+61 2 8239 0055
jpf.org.au

Editor/Writer
Elicia O'Reilly

Designer
Kevin Vo

Cover photo
Ivan Kovac via Unsplash

© The Japan Foundation, Sydney, 2019. All rights reserved.



With the exception of images or other material identified as copyright of a third party, this content is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International Licence. All other rights reserved.

Permission requests for usages outside those governed by this licence should be directed to the Japanese Studies Department at The Japan Foundation, Sydney via jstudies@jpf.org.au.

Note on statistics

Statistics represented in this report are correct as at the time of discussion.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the speakers and do not necessarily coincide with those of The Japan Foundation, Sydney.

Photo: Meric Dagli via Unsplash



Contents

- 04 — **Executive Summary**
- 05 — **Overview: Student Mobility**
- 07 — **Case Studies**
- 14 — **SWOT Analysis**
- 20 — **Paradoxes**
- 21 — **Future Challenges & Directions**
- 22 — **Speaker Profiles**

About The Japan Foundation, Sydney

The Japan Foundation, Sydney is the Australian arm of The Japan Foundation, a non-profit cultural organisation established by the Japanese government in 1972 to promote cultural and intellectual exchange between Japan and other nations. The Japan Foundation's global network incorporates 25 offices in 24 countries. The Japan Foundation, Sydney was established in 1978 and is active in the areas of Arts and Culture, Japanese Language Education, and Japanese Studies, and runs a diverse portfolio of activities under these umbrellas. Located in Sydney's Central Park, the premises include a gallery, which hosts exhibitions throughout the year, and a library housing over 18,000 Japan-related items.

Acknowledgements

This roundtable was made possible by the invaluable time and enthusiasm given by each of the speakers, whom we thank wholeheartedly. In particular, we thank Professor Kent Anderson for his suggestion of student mobility as a worthy and timely area of discussion, and for his guidance as we put together this program. We also thank the organisations who provided support for this project: the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Edith Cowan University, PwC Australia and the Asian Studies Association of Australia. Finally, we thank Ms Meira Chen for kindly volunteering her time to scribe for this event, and the numerous professionals who attended the roundtable and contributed questions and perspectives to the discussion.

Executive Summary

This report summarises a roundtable discussion on the theme, “Asia-Informed Student Mobility in the Indo-Pacific Era: Case Studies from Japan”. The event was organised by The Japan Foundation, Sydney and held on July 2, 2018 as part of the Asian Studies Association of Australia’s 2018 conference.

The roundtable brought together public, private and tertiary stakeholders, including exchange alumni, to share practical knowledge earned through direct experience with student mobility. The aim was to produce recommendations for student mobility programs and providers with relevance to the broader Asian Studies community, and with the ultimate goal of enriching exchange between Australia and other nations in the region.

Since the New Colombo Plan began in 2014, the Australian government, universities and industry alike have been co-operating to increase student mobility between Australia and its neighbours in Asia and the broader the Indo-Pacific region. Over this period, Japan has consistently been one of the most popular destinations for New Colombo Plan scholars. Drawing on case studies from the Japan-Australia relationship, the discussion focused on challenges, successes and learnings, as well as their implications for future student mobility initiatives.

This report is structured in five parts:

- Overview of the Australia-Japan student mobility landscape
- Case studies profiling organisational and alumni perspectives
- SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of student mobility, with an Australia-Japan focus
- Summaries and other points of interest
- Speaker profiles

The Opportunities (in the SWOT analysis) and the summaries (throughout) represent the recommendations derived from the discussion.

There is a significant volume of literature on student mobility. The purpose of this report is not to reproduce findings or statistics presented elsewhere, but to serve as a record of the roundtable discussion. It collates key points and observations made during the discussion, attributing these where possible in order to credit individual contributions and facilitate follow-up by interested scholars and practitioners.

We hope that this project serves as a springboard to deeper regional and cross-sector cooperation in the increasingly important area of student mobility.



Listen Now

Download or listen to audio from this event via The Japan Foundation, Sydney website.

jpf.org.au/student-mobility/

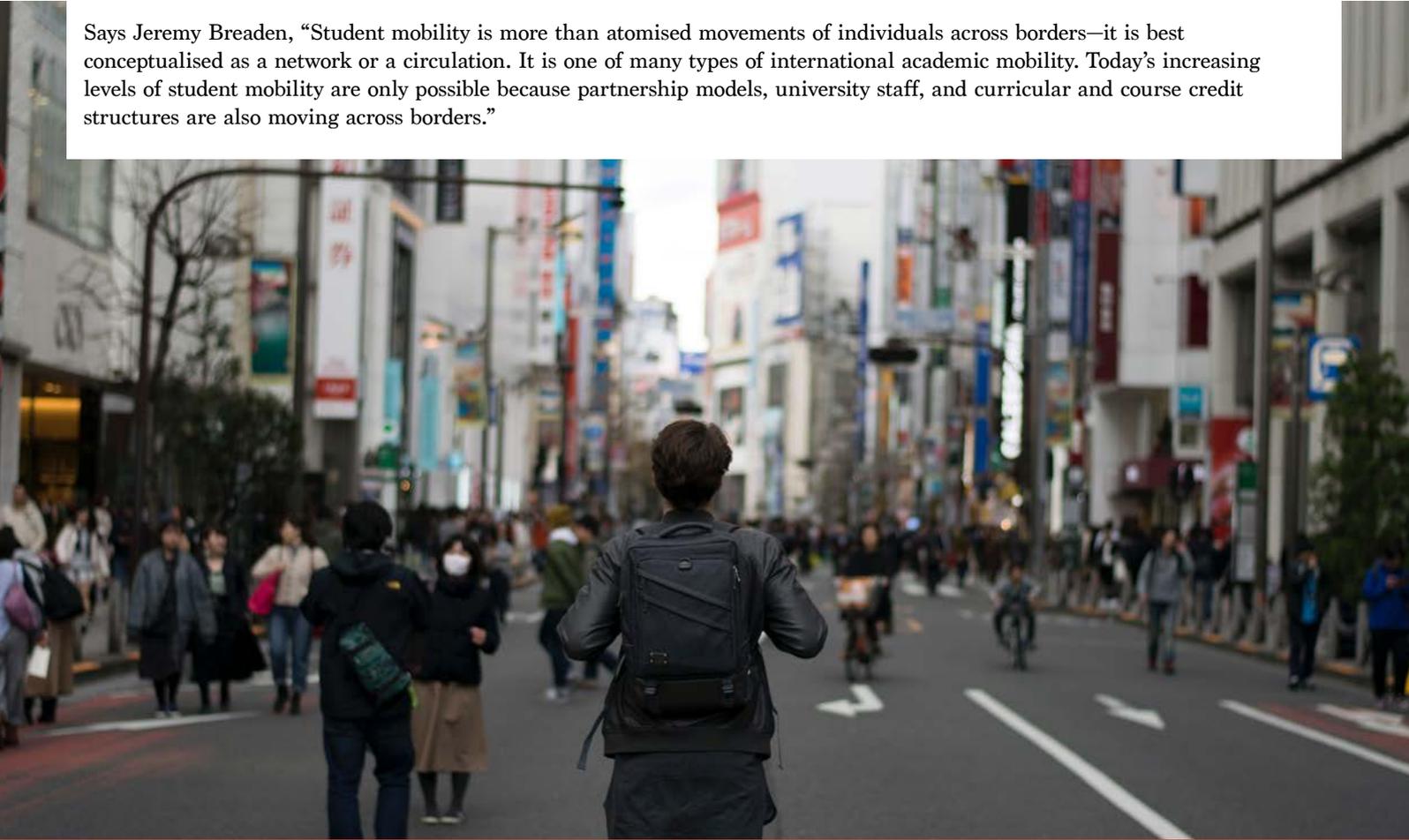
Photo: Ryoji Iwata via Unsplash

Overview: Student Mobility

Defining Student Mobility

Student mobility is the phenomenon of university students engaging in-country experiences overseas for learning purposes, often facilitated by their universities. Student mobility experiences can vary widely in duration, from 2-week to year-long programs and beyond, and can encompass a variety of credited and uncredited learning modes including language study, internships, volunteer work and work-integrated learning in addition to research and coursework.

Says Jeremy Breden, “Student mobility is more than atomised movements of individuals across borders—it is best conceptualised as a network or a circulation. It is one of many types of international academic mobility. Today’s increasing levels of student mobility are only possible because partnership models, university staff, and curricular and course credit structures are also moving across borders.”



Snapshot: Student Mobility between Australia and Japan

Exchange between Australia and Japan is long-running, and Japan enjoys a high level of popularity among outbound Australian students. Both the Australian and Japanese governments are keen to increase levels of student mobility and have programs in place to do so.

Australian Student Mobility to Japan

“Japan is one of the top five destinations under the New Colombo Plan (NCP), but it doesn’t look like the other countries in Asia. There have been big increases in mobility to China, Indonesia and India, but these have almost all been short-term programs of less than 6 weeks. Japan, meanwhile, is the heaviest of international exchange partners for semester-length stays at 24% [see table, p. 6], showing that students are seeking longer and deeper engagement there” (Kent Anderson).

For many students, preference for Japan as a mobility destination is driven by personal interest in Japanese culture. “When I applied to go to Japan on the NCP, I was travelling there at the time and found myself starry-eyed, amazed by the minutest things and wanting to discover more” (Patrick Gan). “A growing number of students at Australian universities have prior exposure to Japan and continue engaging with Japan before, during and after their mobility experiences” (Jeremy Breden).

Japan is a practical destination for students based in Australia. “Japan is often seen as expensive, but that is not the case. Also, the availability of funding for Asia-engaged programs is a massive drawcard. It’s close, so flights are cheap, plus it’s safe and has a high degree of public health. Japan is regarded as very culturally different to Australia, and Japanese as a difficult language, but it is strong in respect to other considerations” (Stephanie Newman).

Photo: Tycho Atsma via Unsplash

Japan's Mobility Focus

Japan, like Australia, is placing increasing importance on student mobility. "Global human resource development is critical to Japan's survival. Business needs to look at markets overseas and find innovative solutions to social problems, and overseas experience is crucial to building the next generation of leaders who can do this" (Takamichi Mito).

Challenges for Diversity

Considerations of language proficiency tend to dominate the landscape, and pose challenges for broadening mobility cohorts beyond traditional language and area studies disciplines. "Engineering and science students want to go on exchange but identifying suitable subjects is a problem, as their language is not good enough to study science and engineering in Japanese" (Attendee, University of Wollongong). Language is also a barrier for Japanese students seeking to study in Australia: "There are high language proficiency requirements on the Australian side" (Takamichi Mito). Balancing participation across the socioeconomic and urban-rural spectrums is also a challenge.

Structural Limitations

"The 'orthodox' forms of student mobility between Australia and Japan are exchange and short-term language study" (Jeremy Breden), in part because "the Japan model is based on exchange, balances and identified partners, so it runs into an obstacle when it meets an Australian model or almost anyone

else's model" (Kent Anderson). From a Japanese perspective, "there are structural difficulties in building partnerships. Unlike their Australian counterparts, Japanese universities don't have continued studies or extension. They have very limited places for enrolment and cannot accommodate business-oriented programs. Plus, our respective academic years are different and staffing is changeable" (Takamichi Mito). "There are also differences in terms of available funding, as well as language abilities and requirements. Some universities are flexible, but others operate within strict constraints" (Jeremy Breden).

The dominance of traditional mobility models may also be due to "Australian universities' preoccupation with increasing international student enrolment rather than developing innovative international programs" (Takamichi Mito). "There is a disconnect between boosting one's university on an international stage, versus supporting students who want to study overseas. We need to work on bridging the gap between the demand and strategy levels" (Jeremy Breden).

These challenges form a backdrop to the overarching question, "if we are going to increase student mobility, how do we break the old models and allow new models to emerge?" (Kent Anderson).

Table: Proportion of study abroad participants by host country and length of stay

Duration	China (2162)	Indonesia (1234)	Japan (1074)	India (1032)	Cambodia (728)
More than 2 but less than 4 weeks	55.9%	65.4%	44.2%	61.2%	70.3%
More than 4 but less than 6 weeks	10.5%	7.6%	5.3%	25.8%	20.9%
A semester/term	14.1%	11.9%	24.0%	3.0%	1.0%
Other	10.1%	8.5%	7.9%	1.1%	0.7%
More than 6 but less than 10 weeks	4.8%	4.3%	4.3%	6.5%	3.8%
An academic year	2.1%	0.7%	10.9%	0.1%	0.1%
Unknown	0.7%	0.5%	1.2%	1.8%	1.1%
More than a semester but less than an academic year	0.8%	0.9%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%
More than 10 weeks but less than a semester/term	0.4%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	1.6%
Unspecified	0.6%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%
A trimester	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: Monash University, AUIDF Benchmarking in Learning Abroad Report 2017 (figures for 2016).



Monash University *Market Leader: Examining the Norm*

Monash University is Australia's largest university, and as a Group of Eight member is also a leading institution. It has over 70,000 students, and mobility figures average 16% per graduating cohort—just over the national average of 13%. Monash has partnerships with twelve universities in Japan. Its student mobility is predominantly via established programs and is based on either exchange (mostly outbound) or short-term language study (mostly inbound).

The dominant form of outbound mobility at Monash is university-facilitated and for-credit student exchange, which is connected with the Japanese Studies program. However, there is an increasing focus on independent short-term, non-credit programs such as study tours and work-integrated learning. Says Jeremy Breden, “This emerging end of student mobility is part of a push to democratise and make it possible for more students to participate.” Further to this, the Monash Faculty of Arts has recently launched an initiative promising all students a fully-funded mobility experience.

Monash sees less inbound than outbound movement in its student exchange programs with Japan. “Reasons for the inbound shortage from Japan include high English language proficiency requirements and the comparatively high cost of living, although these factors do not deter short-term students.”

The majority of the Japanese inbound cohort—around 700 students annually—undertake short-term language study at Monash College, which is a separate entity under the Monash umbrella. “One of our challenges is to connect inbound experiences with outbound, and with the experiences of our on-campus students as well, to foster recurring interactions.”

“We’ve had success working with Osaka University, where Monash students are paired with buddies and given opportunities to interact with Osaka students on short-term programs. Some of the Osaka students then participate in short-term language study at Monash College, while some Monash students who experience recurring interactions opt for semester- or year-length exchange at Osaka later in their degrees.”

“This emerging end of student mobility is part of a push to democratise and make it possible for more students to participate.”

Photo: Monash University

Case Studies



Edith Cowan University *Going Deeper: Student Mobility at Scale*

Edith Cowan University (ECU) is a young university with approximately 30,000 students. It is home to the Tokyo City University Australia Program (TAP), which is both the largest Japanese-Australian student mobility program and the largest outbound program in Australia.

Annually, TAP sees up to 200 Tokyo City University (TCU) students coming to ECU, with smaller cohorts of ECU students studying short-term programs at TCU (50 students to date). Says ECU program head Helen Vella Bonavita, “TAP responded to an observation that traditional one-for-one exchanges were no longer adequate for increasing mobility, and that opportunities existed for a step-change in cooperation models.”

On the ECU side, the cornerstones of TAP are English-language and academic programs, plus integration strategies including mixed living arrangements and a buddy program that fosters interaction between local and inbound cohorts. Buddies are recruited across ECU and undergo a training session addressing roles, boundaries and safety, as well as basic Japanese language and cultural practices.

Inbound TCU students have varying language abilities, which are taken into account when they are paired with their buddies. “Isolation and loneliness impact on success, so student-to-student connections are crucial. At the same time,

safety is paramount and it’s important to make sure that buddies aren’t expected to take a counselling or teaching role. We’re very conscious of our students’ capabilities and vulnerabilities, so we have firm guidelines.”

Buddies commit to a quota of planned social inclusion activities, although interactions often extend beyond these. “A big driver for us is the ability to give our students—particularly those who aren’t studying Japanese—opportunities for internationalised experiences on campus.”

Significantly, the program enjoys high satisfaction rates and retention of buddies over different cycles. “Surveys show that 82% of buddies believe the program is valuable in helping them to enhance communication, leadership, problem-solving, employability and inter-cultural engagement skills. ECU’s Japanese language learners also benefit, with Japanese levels increasing significantly.” Results are similarly positive on the inbound side, with 82% of TCU students reporting that they enjoyed their time at ECU.

What are the key learnings from a mobility program of this scale? “Classroom learning is probably the least important element of any large-scale mobility program. Learning and development come through building connections between local and international students, but these connections require structure to succeed.”

“*Classroom learning is probably the least important element of any large-scale mobility program.*”

Photo: Edith Cowan University

Case Studies



Kwansei Gakuin University *Breadth of Opportunity*

Located between the thriving cities of Osaka and Kobe in western Japan, Kwansei Gakuin (KGU) is a liberal arts university with approximately 25,000 students. KGU ranks among Japan's top 10 private universities, and performs highly in terms of student satisfaction, job placement rates and media profile.

International exchange is in KGU's DNA: it was established by an American doctor and missionary in 1889, with all tuition in English. While Japanese is the main language of tuition today, KGU offers English-language degree programs in international studies, business and science.

KGU is rapidly expanding its mobility portfolio. Says Professor Takamichi (Tam) Mito, "We had 1,570 outbound and 1,243 inbound students in 2017. By 2023 we plan to be sending 2,500 students overseas and receiving 1,500 each year. For Australian universities these are small numbers, but for Japan they are quite high."

The university is remarkable for the breadth of its networks (it has over 230 exchange partners, with 12 in Australia) and the innovative nature of its many programs. Inbound programs include outreach scholarships for disadvantaged overseas students, a US-Japan joint summer school program, and an intensive immersion program called Cross-Cultural College

(run in partnership with three Canadian universities), which Mito describes as "an around-the-clock cross-cultural study experience."

Outbound programs include a sports-related language immersion program, opportunities with Cross-Cultural College, and global internships with business, NGOs such as Red Cross, and the United Nations (UN). "KGU is one of only three universities worldwide with a formal partnership with the UN, and the only one in the Asia-Pacific."

KGU's student mobility initiatives receive extensive support from the Japanese government, which recognises the need to nurture a globally literate workforce to take Japan into the future. Says Mito, "For industry and government, global human resource development is critical to survival given Japan's declining population. Business needs to look at markets overseas to find innovative solutions to social problems." KGU's international programs respond to this social context: "They offer hands-on experiential learning, which is a major tool for training international leaders."

To further encourage mobility, KGU has adopted an approval system which allows students to receive course credit for all study undertaken overseas, and is introducing a buddy program to better support inbound students and offer increased internationalisation opportunities to local students.

“Hands-on experiential learning is a major tool for training international leaders.”

Photo: Kwansei Gakuin University

Case Studies



Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia *Cross-Sector Networks*

The Australian government launched the New Colombo Plan (NCP) in 2014 to boost international student mobility between Australia and its neighbouring nations in the Indo-Pacific region.

Over the past five years, under the management of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, this foreign policy initiative has offered financial support to individual students and university classes seeking learning experiences in international contexts. Says Brian Borgonha, Assistant Director of Partnerships and Private Sector Relations at DFAT, “Since its inception, the NCP has provided support for over 30,000 Australia students to live, study and undertake placements in the region, including more than 2,300 Japan-bound students. In 2018, the NCP will support a further 800-plus students to travel to Japan for in-country learning.”

A hallmark of the NCP is that it “brings together entities across the government, private, NGO and tertiary sectors to create an ecosystem that supports a broader government agenda.” Specifically, this “ecosystem” is a network of partnerships and programs designed to cultivate regionally literate future leaders.

One such partnership recently saw six Queensland University of Technology students participate in a two-week immersion program at Mitsui & Co., a broad-base Japanese enterprise which has hosted over 60 NCP students to date. The immersion program “allows students to explore Japan-Australia industry relations and gain insight into Japanese business etiquette, customs and culture, through direct engagement with Mitsui’s employees, mentors and executives as well as site visits to other multinational organisations.”

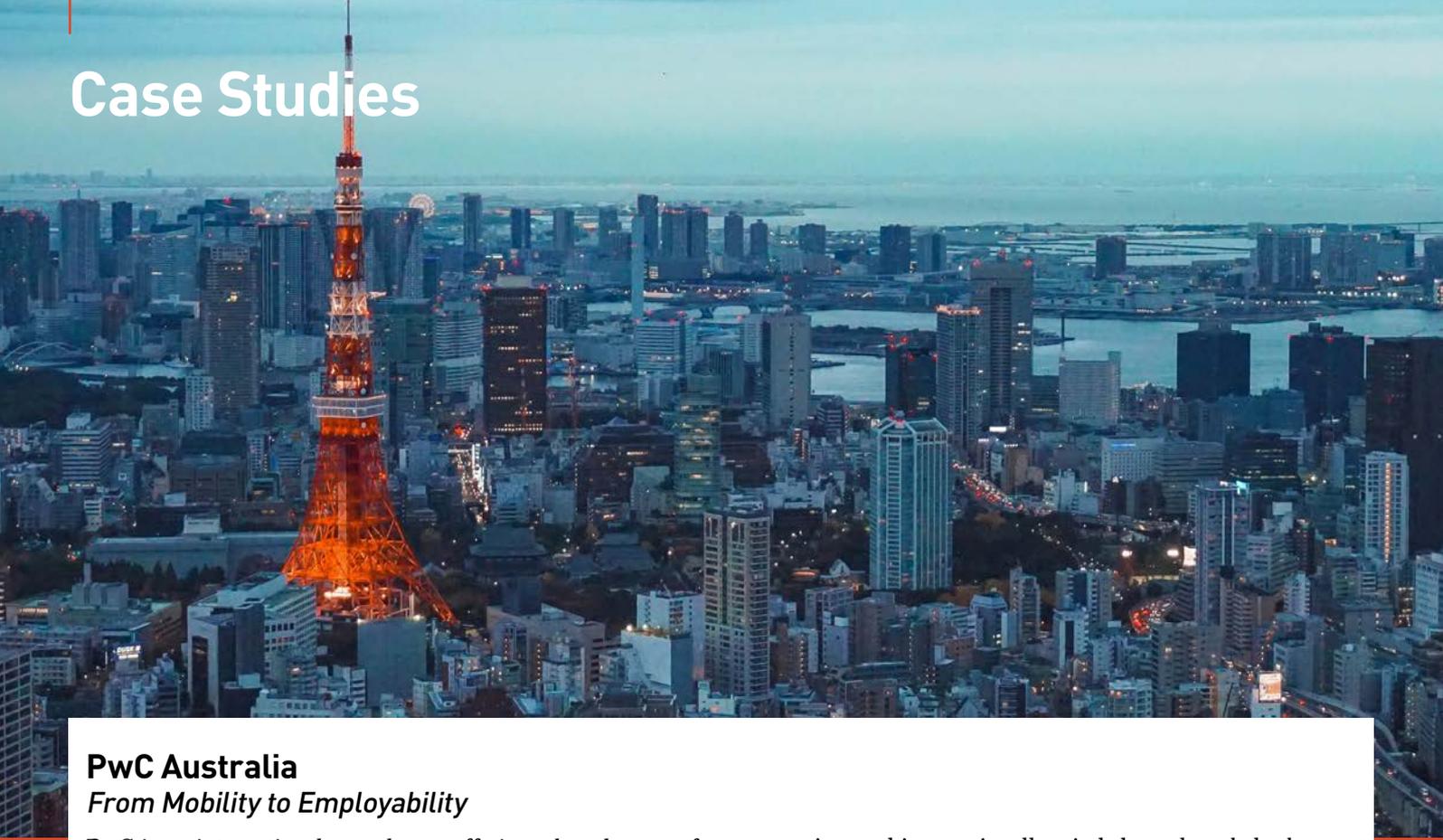
While matching students with employers is not an end goal in itself, it can be an outcome of the program. “One of our business champions has said to us, ‘If we’re looking at high-performing NCP scholars, it’s a no-brainer: we’d like to have them as future employees.’ Employers in-country need people, so they’re offering to help our scholars gain background knowledge and work experience.”

DFAT hopes to further enrich the NCP by strengthening alumni networks and forging connections between mobility cohorts. “We’d like to see a mentorship model where Japan-bound NCP scholars meet with inbound Australia Award scholars, creating people-to-people and institutional linkages.” Again, this dovetails with the guiding ethos of the NCP’s partnership focus: “We do a lot of good work in isolation, but we can always achieve more when we reach out and work with others.”

“*We can always achieve more when we reach out and work with others.*”

Photo: Wendy Holdenson of Mitsui & Co. (Australia) with 2016 NCP Scholar to Japan, Kingsley Nguyen, and 2016 NCP Fellow to Japan, Alexander McLeish. (Courtesy: Mitsui/DFAT.)

Case Studies



PwC Australia

From Mobility to Employability

PwC is an international consultancy offering a broad range of services. Asia Practice is one of several areas where the firm's Australian branch is active, providing advice to businesses seeking to localise in Asia and become successful players in its markets. PwC is a sponsor of the New Colombo Plan (NCP) scholarship program and hosts NCP scholars at its offices in Japan, as well as in Singapore.

Underpinning PwC Australia's support of the NCP is a core belief that Australia needs to develop better cross-cultural literacy if it is to engage effectively with Asia, particularly in business. PwC Australia's Asia Practice Division Leader Jason Hayes says, "By 2030, four of the world's five largest economies will be in Asia—namely, China, Japan, India and Indonesia. Even so, Australia has very little investment in Asia and our cultural understanding of Asia is lacking. We need to do more to foster, prepare and deploy talent in the region."

Young outward-looking graduates with mobility experience are well-positioned to be part of the growth and changes that are happening now in Asia. "The number one megatrend at the moment is the globalisation of Japan. Business sees that Japan's future is outside of Japan, and a lot of Japanese

companies need internationally minded people to help them achieve those objectives. Equally, there are a lot of global brands doing business across Asia that need similar people."

As business opportunities continue to grow in the Asia region, so too do employment opportunities. "Most Australians, even if they do go and study abroad, are ultimately seeking jobs back in Australia—often with Australian companies. The mindset needs to be, 'my employment is in a global market, beyond Australia's borders'".

While looking outward may help students turn mobility experience into employability, cross-sector collaboration at the program level may also be worthwhile. "Students often struggle to explain to employers how their mobility experience can help the organisation. How could we help them with that? This requires employers to work with mobility programs and say, 'let's give you the script of things that will grab our attention if you want to play your Asian experience drawcard.' Students need to be able to articulate the value of mobility to truly benefit from it."

“The mindset needs to be, ‘my employment is in a global market’”

Photo: Louie Martinez via Unsplash

Case Studies Alumni Stories

Patrick Gan

“ I started university in 2013, before the New Colombo Plan (NCP) began. I knew from the end of high school that I wanted to go on exchange. I didn't know where, but I was influenced by stories from friends who had gone abroad and the regrets of those who hadn't.

It was quite difficult to source information about exchange opportunities. I originally applied for Canada because the resources were easiest to find and it was easy to get approval for my units. I was waiting for confirmation when an email invited me to apply for the NCP, which was about to launch. There were four destinations at the time: Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan or Indonesia.

I thought I wouldn't be able to go to Japan because I couldn't speak Japanese, but my university's international department encouraged me to apply and see. It showed me that you can do exchange without language skills, which universities could push more.

I spent 23 months in Japan. I got my Japanese to a level where I could study all of my units there, and then interned for three different organisations which gave me insight into how the Japan market operates.

Upon returning, I worked for my university, trying to interest students in exchange. Students get overwhelmed by the sheer number of programs, so it's important to communicate which programs will deliver the most according to each student's needs. It's also important to engage students early in their degrees, as it gives them time to reflect on how they can use their international experience effectively.

In job interviews, no-one really asks if you have done exchange. When I mentioned this roundtable to my manager, he said, “Exchange? What can you really do with it? Isn't it just a bunch of students going overseas to party?” In my experience, that's the mentality that companies have and there's no value given to it in the workplace. Even in university, they'll celebrate you coming back, but then they'll only reach out if they're trying to recruit new students. It leaves you very isolated, and you come back wondering, ‘does anyone really value what I did?’”

Photo: Erik Eastman via Unsplash

Spotlight: Recurring Themes

The following points were raised by multiple speakers over the course of the discussion.

- Short-term experiences can lead to long-term experiences
- Imbalances between inbound and outbound student numbers are common
- Increasing student mobility numbers will require solutions to multiple diversity issues (including disciplinary biases, socioeconomic status, urban/rural divide, language proficiency and opportunity cost)
- Exposing local, non-mobile cohorts to intercultural experiences on campus is desirable
- Democratising intercultural experience may require shifting focus to on-campus internationalisation opportunities
- More interaction between inbound, outbound and local on-campus students is desirable
- Recurring interaction with a culture engenders interest and incites students to try the next level of interaction
- Meaningful interaction requires structure



Case Studies Alumni Stories

Stephanie Newman

“ Since commencing university in 2014, international exposure has been a priority for me. This is based on personal interest as well as recognition of the professional benefits.

I first went on exchange during second year—to Italy for two months, and later to Japan for a two-week study tour. The following year, I went to Thailand for two months, and then to Japan again for 15 months to study at university and complete an internship.

I wasn't sure whether I wanted to commit my entire degree to Japanese studies, but the study tour helped me make an informed decision. Without that experience I wouldn't have gone on the long-term program either, because signing up to something unknown for 16 months is scary, and it's hard convincing parents. In this way, short 'taster' programs can be good gateways to longer-term experiences.

The initial considerations for students are time and cost, and the next big thing is information. There are so many different sources, it's difficult to know where to start looking and sometimes there is conflicting advice. It would be great to have a single cohesive information hub for this.

I'd also like to see greater flexibility for universities to nominate students for exchange who don't necessarily meet the classic criteria of having volunteer experience or speaking other languages. My friend works two jobs to cover the cost of being at university and has no time left for internships and volunteering. Similarly, students in rural areas travel large distances to get to university—where are they supposed to find 200 hours a year for extracurricular development? There are massive equality and equity issues that need to be addressed.

Looking at what happens after exchange, I think helping students to understand how they can show employers the value of their experience is really important. My university offers a workshop that does this very well, but not all universities have such support available.

Similarly I think it would be worthwhile looking at longitudinal feedback from returnees to see how their experiences affect them down the track. Students will have thoughts when they first come back, but if you ask them again in six months, they will probably have a better understanding.”

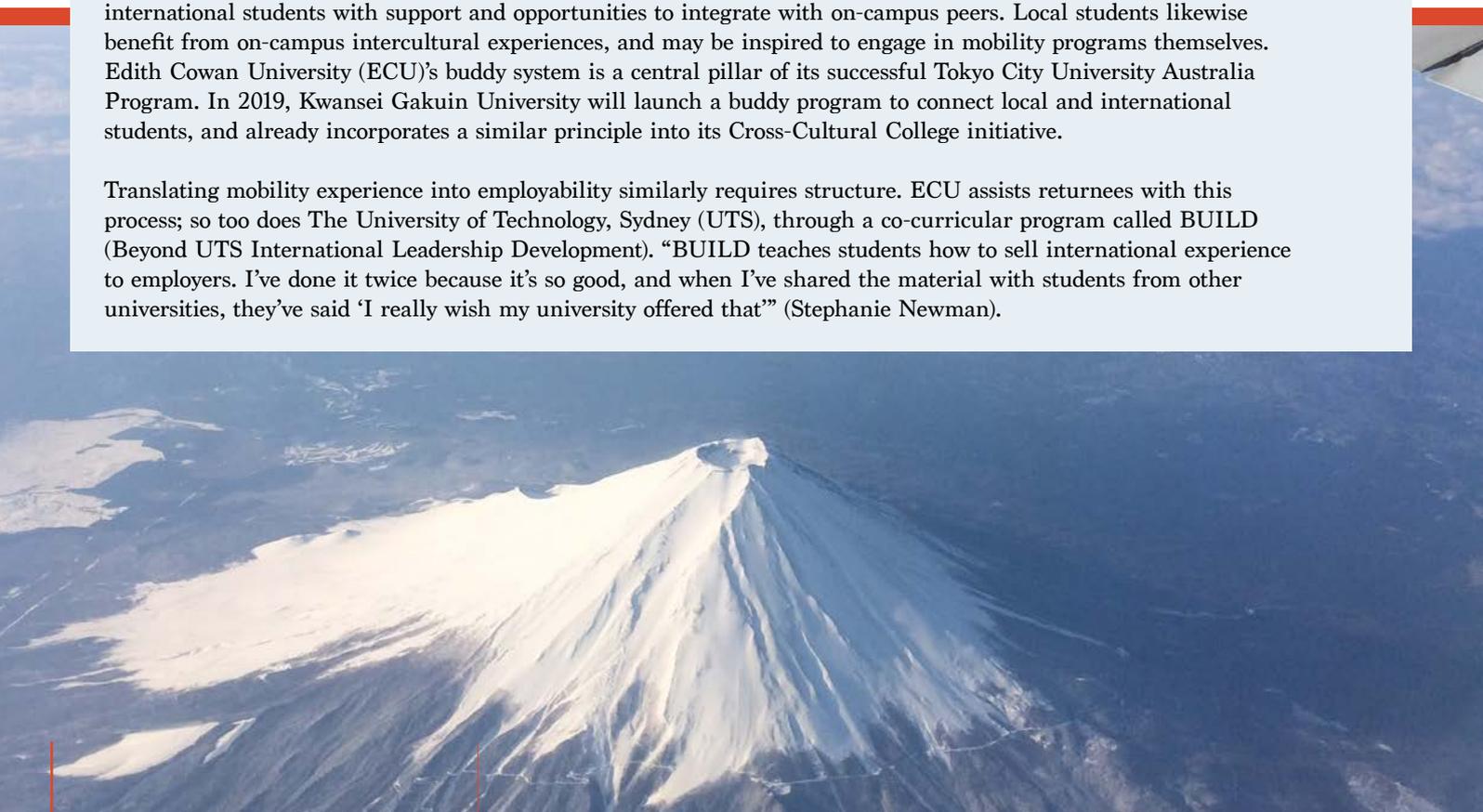
Photo: Stephanie Newman

Spotlight: Successes & Best Practices

Standout practices from the discussion include buddy programs and employability workshops for returnees.

Buddy programs have multiple advantages. They encourage interaction between local and inbound cohorts, providing international students with support and opportunities to integrate with on-campus peers. Local students likewise benefit from on-campus intercultural experiences, and may be inspired to engage in mobility programs themselves. Edith Cowan University (ECU)'s buddy system is a central pillar of its successful Tokyo City University Australia Program. In 2019, Kwansei Gakuin University will launch a buddy program to connect local and international students, and already incorporates a similar principle into its Cross-Cultural College initiative.

Translating mobility experience into employability similarly requires structure. ECU assists returnees with this process; so too does The University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), through a co-curricular program called BUILD (Beyond UTS International Leadership Development). “BUILD teaches students how to sell international experience to employers. I've done it twice because it's so good, and when I've shared the material with students from other universities, they've said 'I really wish my university offered that'” (Stephanie Newman).



SWOT Analysis: Student Mobility

This section collates the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to international student mobility that emerged in the discussion. Many points are specific to the Australia-Japan relationship; others refer more generally to mobility between Australia and its Indo-Pacific neighbours, or can be applied more broadly.

Strengths

- **Bilateral support:** “Both Australian and Japanese governments proactively support cooperation between universities to boost student mobility” (Helen Vella Bonavita). Japan does this through government grants for international program development, and Australia through the New Colombo Plan (NCP).
- **Leverages prominent national discourses:** “For Australian students, study in Japan is associated with policy discourse on Asia literacy. For Japanese students, study in Australia addresses Japan’s ‘global talent’ discourse on cultivating outward-looking, cosmopolitan and English-speaking citizens” (Jeremy Breaden).
- **Students are seeking internationalisation:** “We’re seeing an upswing of students considering an international experience” (Helen Vella Bonavita). Messaging from government and universities, growing awareness of the outside world, stories from peers and perceptions of what employers want are leading more students toward mobility.
- **Cross-sector recognition of value:** Mobility experiences are valued by students, universities, governments and employers for enhancing personal development and employability. “International programs provide hands-on experiential learning and are a major tool for training international leaders” (Takamichi Mito). “The case for its importance for universities, government and business is rock-solid” (Kent Anderson).
- **Increased opportunities in the landscape:** “Prior to the NCP, there were few short programs (2-6 weeks), and of these, very few in Asia. There are many more options now” (Patrick Gan). The NCP has spawned an increase in both short-term and Asia-bound programs.
- **New mobility models:** “The NCP has made it possible for providers to think more creatively and for new types of programs to emerge” (Jeremy Breaden). In particular, these include short-term programs (e.g., study tours, embedded study abroad) and immersion programs in collaboration with employers.
- **Established exchange programs:** In addition to new programs, “many Australian institutions have long-running exchange programs with Japan which are embedded into curricula and act as pathways to high-level Japan literacy” (Jeremy Breaden).
- **Decreasing barriers to participation:** “Cost was traditionally one of the biggest barriers for students, but the NCP has changed this. Plus, Australian universities are now investing more in international departments, and the improved access to information helps students make more informed decisions” (Patrick Gan). “Opportunity cost is often a greater obstacle than finances, particularly for older students—carer duties, part-time jobs, all that messiness of life. The increasing availability of short-term programs helps to address this because people can more easily take two or four weeks off” (Kent Anderson).
- **Japan is a practical destination for Australian students:** In comparison with Europe and the US, Japan is an accessible destination for Australian students due to availability of Asia-focused mobility funding, low cost of living, relative closeness (cheaper flights; minimal time difference) and safety. “These factors can tip the balance in favour of Asia if a student is comparing locations, which was certainly true for me. Japan’s low crime rate coupled with high-level economic development makes it an appealing location for first-time travellers and students nervous about dipping their toe into Asia” (Stephanie Newman).

Photo: Superidol via Unsplash

SWOT Analysis: Student Mobility

Weaknesses

- **Limited number of mobile students:** “On average, only 13% of Australian students are having mobility experiences. Are we satisfied with this?” (Jeremy Breaden).
 - **Asymmetry of movement:** Australian outbound student mobility outnumbers inbound (to and from Japan). “Factors limiting inbound movement include high English-language proficiency requirements and high cost of living, although short-term inbound movement from Japan appears unaffected” (Jeremy Breaden).
 - **Incompatible frameworks:** Institutions seeking to increase mobility often face structural hurdles. “The Japan model is based on exchange, balances and identified partners, so it runs into an obstacle when it meets an Australian model or other nations’ models” (Kent Anderson).
 - **Focus on isolated experiences:** “Analysis of student mobility as a single experience no longer means much. Mobility experiences are part of a larger network of activity; we need to see the big picture in order to make it better” (Jeremy Breaden).
 - **Business as usual:** Traditional exchange programs are central to Japan-bound student mobility in Australia. “These are crucial for their durability and long-term outlooks, but as the least innovative form of mobility, their success can discourage new thinking and a business-as-usual mindset can easily prevail” (Jeremy Breaden).
 - **Disconnect between inbound and outbound cohorts:** Inbound and outbound movement is often institutionally separate, and interaction between international and domestic students is limited. “Student learning and development can come through building connections between Australian and international students, but connections require structure to succeed” (Helen Vella Bonavita).
 - **Disconnect with traditional learning:** “Classroom learning is probably the least important element of any large-scale mobility program” (Helen Vella Bonavita). “Little is understood about how mobility experiences can be effectively integrated with other aspects of learning at universities” (Jeremy Breaden).
 - **Cultural literacy not guaranteed:** “Engagement with local communities entails more than just living in-country: developing cultural literacy requires critical reflection.
- How can this be better integrated into existing programs, including the NCP?” (Attendee, The University of Technology, Sydney).
- **Limited returnee advocacy:** Opportunities for prospective students to hear and learn from returnees in structured settings remain limited in Australia. “At Waseda and Kwansei Gakuin, we have international study abroad fairs with around 2000 students, where returnees and current exchange students can help other students who are interested. It’s an important end platform” (Takamichi Mito).
 - **Lack of student diversity:** Participation is dominated by affluent urban students, often from a language or area studies background. “We’ve tracked the students who go on exchange—they are disproportionately of the upper socioeconomic sector” (Kent Anderson). “At my regional university, I can get students to go to Japan, but it’s very difficult to convince them and their parents in terms of finances and so on—much more than when I was at an urban university” (Attendee, The University of Wollongong).
 - **Urban focus:** “Everyone wants to go to Tokyo. How do we encourage students to have experiences beyond urban centres?” (Kent Anderson).
 - **Limited interaction with host culture and peers:** “Our research found that students in regular exchange, short-term and faculty-led programs often experience Japan in isolation and with less interaction with local people and community, so we’re trying to address these shortcomings” (Takamichi Mito). “Given the limited time students have, the push to have cultural activities in short programs is too strong. Students learn the most from the people they interact with, but they need a schedule that allows this” (Patrick Gan).
 - **Uncertain outcomes:** Critical literature on student mobility “highlights the potential of international experiences to foster stronger ethno-nationalist sentiment rather than cosmopolitanism. Do mobility experiences truly foster cultural competency, and if so, how?” (Jeremy Breaden).
 - **Limited alumni engagement:** “What can we do to better support the alumni group of future leaders and decision-makers?” (Brian Borgonha).

Photo: Alex Block via Unsplash

SWOT Analysis: Student Mobility

Opportunities

- **Bilateral government initiatives:** “For partnerships to evolve, governments have to work together to provide leadership and funding, and cooperate on the regulatory front. The twin challenges of better understanding and increasing student mobility call for more government-level intervention, dialogue and joining of the dots between national funding programs” (Jeremy Breaden).
- **Increase cross-sector collaboration:** “We need to focus on how the private sector can contribute to the experience of scholars and mobility students, and how we can work collaboratively with academia, business and not-for-profit on a bigger scale, because there are opportunities” (Brian Borgonha).
- **Increase the institutional importance of language:** “The majority of our mobility students come from Europe. It’s compulsory for European university students to spend at least one semester outside Europe, but Australian universities do not have that condition so students aren’t taking advantage of the programs on offer” (Takamichi Mito).
- **Increase employers’ awareness of benefits:** “Corporate Australia needs to be much better about recognising the achievement of Australians who have worked in Asia, rather than penalising candidates with overseas experience when it comes to the recruitment process” (Jason Hayes).
- **Enhance communication between partner institutions:** Smooth communication lines are crucial for mobility at scale. “We have offices set up in each other’s campuses” (Helen Vella Bonavita).
- **Think beyond individual destinations:** “More and more students are having in-country experiences in multiple destinations, and Japan-bound mobility benefits from strong across-the-board promotion of study abroad” (Jeremy Breaden).
- **Think beyond student mobility:** “Thinking creatively about academic mobility and infrastructure-building in general, within the bigger picture of transnational education, may foster new pathways for student mobility. There is a conspicuous lack of engagement between Australia and Japan at this level” (Jeremy Breaden).
- **Democratise student mobility:** “It’s important to aim for 100% participation in mobility because it prompts us to confront difficult questions about equity” (Jeremy Breaden). These include relative advantage and disadvantage in terms of socioeconomics, life stage, discipline and locale (rural vs urban). “I’d like to see greater flexibility for universities to nominate students who don’t meet the classic NCP criteria of volunteer experience, because not everyone can afford that time” (Stephanie Newman). “Short-term mobility participation data more closely reflects the demographics of universities than does long-term” (Kent Anderson).
- **Global employability focus:** “Most Australians are ultimately seeking jobs back in Australia. The mindset needs to be, ‘my employment is in a global market’. How can we encourage young people to have broader visions of their futures?” (Jason Hayes). “Employers in-country need people, so they’re offering to help our scholars gain background knowledge and work experience” (Brian Borgonha).
- **Build intercultural capacity at home:** “How can we join the dots between big transformative student mobility experiences and day-to-day intercultural experiences within classrooms, given that Australian society is so multicultural?” (Jeremy Breaden). “If universities institute more sensitive study abroad programs where Australian students and, say, Japanese and Indonesian students live together and study together in Australia, local students can have experiences like study abroad without going to Indonesia or Japan” (Takamichi Mito).
- **Link inbound and outbound mobility:** “There is an opportunity to connect institutionally separated large-scale inbound mobility with outbound mobility experiences and the experiences of our on-campus students” (Jeremy Breaden).
- **Structure interaction across cohorts:** “Our buddy program facilitates student-to-student connections, and buddies attend a compulsory training session that covers their role, confidentiality, safety, culturally appropriate practice and guidelines for handling problems” (Helen Vella Bonavita).

Photo: Chris Barbalis via Unsplash

SWOT Analysis: Student Mobility

- **Reciprocity through recurring interaction:** “We need to engineer more recurring interaction between local students and students at partner universities in Japan. We’ve had some success with this recently, where local student buddies on the Japan side have gone on to enrol in short-term language programs here” (Jeremy Breaden).
- **Leverage broad influences:** “From government to university level and even at my high school there’s been an ongoing message of ‘internationalise your degree, internationalise yourself, make yourself more valuable’” (Stephanie Newman). “I was influenced by stories from friends who had gone abroad and the regrets of those who hadn’t” (Patrick Gan). “Student societies are influential in terms of exposing students to different cultures while in their home country and campus” (Attendee, UNSW).
- **Guide the sense-making process for returnees:** “Working at the individual and institutional level is important: showing students how to sell their CVs, and why mobility differentiates them from the crowd” (Helen Vella Bonavita). “Students need to be able to articulate what they’re getting out of mobility experiences, beyond just ‘it was a good time’. And I think we need to be looking at this at a government-university level, not just at the individual university level” (Attendee, The University of Wollongong).
- **Boost institutional support:** “The more university support available for things like travel insurance, medical support and regular contact, the easier it will be to persuade students and their parents that long-term, expensive programs are possible” (Stephanie Newman).
- **Develop information hubs:** “There are so many different sources of information, and students often receive conflicting advice. It would be lovely to have a cohesive information hub so that students can find all the answers they need about programs, destination profiles, funding, course credits and other university support all in one place” (Stephanie Newman).
- **Emphasise the Asia advantage:** “The availability of special funding for Asia-engaged programs is a massive drawcard and could be emphasised a lot more than it already is. I don’t think that anyone is doing enough to say, Asia is a really cheap place to study, there is so much funding available, and it’s really close which means that flights are cheaper” (Stephanie Newman).
- **Engage students early:** “Timing is key in terms of maximising the value of exchange, because it’s easy for students to get swept up in work and lose sight of their experiences. Students need to be engaged in their first or second years of study to allow time to reflect on how they might best use that experience” (Patrick Gan).
- **Short-term programs as gateways:** “The growth in short-term mobility is a wonderful enabler—it’s encouraged my students to consider long-term programs” (Attendee, The University of Wollongong). “It’s really important for students to have access to short programs, because short programs are an opportunity to go into longer-term programs. It would be great to see more one- to two-week programs available” (Stephanie Newman).
- **Ensure recognition:** “It’s not always possible to get credit for overseas programs, but physical symbols of recognition, such as certificates or references, will add to a CV and can entice students to do a program. It also helps universities, staff and parents to better consider the merits of these experiences” (Stephanie Newman).
- **Rethink language prerequisites:** “I thought I wouldn’t be able to go to Japan because I couldn’t speak Japanese, but my experience showed me that you can do exchange without language skills, which universities could push more” (Patrick Gan).
- **Increase alumni engagement:** “We need to find ways to leverage and support the collective strength of the alumni group, and create opportunities for them” (Brian Borgonha).

SWOT Analysis: Student Mobility

Threats

- **Mobility will never be universal:** It is unlikely that all barriers to international student mobility can be overcome. “We know it’s never going to be 100%, so we need to find other ways to leverage all forms of mobility and build meaningful intercultural experiences into university education locally” (Jeremy Breaden).
- **Diverse barriers to participation:** These include finances and funding availability, availability of and eligibility for programs, personal circumstances, course progress and future goals.
- **Inbound deterrents (Japan to Australia):** “Our students want to go overseas, but because of language and other barriers, they cannot participate” (Takamichi Mito). Key barriers include language proficiency requirements, cost, and time away from home country.
- **Outbound deterrents (Australia to Japan):** “There are many opportunities but not many Australian takers. Why?” (Takamichi Mito). Key barriers include low awareness of opportunities, and perceptions that Japan is expensive and the lifestyle is gruelling (“exam hell and death from overwork”). Further, “Japan is regarded as very culturally different to Australia, and Japanese as a very difficult language” (Stephanie Newman).
- **Low awareness of opportunities:** “Many students are simply not aware of the kinds of financial support they can receive, and as a result write off exchange as something that they cannot do” (Patrick Gan).
- **Disparate sources of information:** “Students need to be able to refer to one source of information, not be scrambling to sort fact from fiction or basing decisions solely on the anecdotes of others. Also, what order do we do things in? Should I start by looking at HELP loans or scholarships, or should I start at my student office? Cohesive information hubs would be helpful” (Stephanie Newman). “I applied to go to Canada because the resources were the easiest to find” (Patrick Gan).
- **Information overload:** “There are too many programs to choose from, so students get overwhelmed. It’s important to communicate about programs based on outcomes, so students can choose effectively to meet their needs” (Patrick Gan).
- **Parental concern:** Parents’ perceptions of expense and risk can pose barriers. “My university covers the cost of travel insurance and provides access to 24-hour medical assistance; NCP is similar. This reduces the financial burden on students and helps to convince parents” (Stephanie Newman). “It’s difficult to convince rural students and their parents about exchange, financially and so on” (Attendee, The University of Wollongong).
- **Institutional challenges:** These include “difficulty cementing partnerships, changeable staffing, different timing of academic years, and Australian universities’ preoccupation with increasing international student enrolment over developing innovative programs” (Takamichi Mito).
- **Differing priorities for clients and providers:** “There is a disconnect between universities wanting to boost their profile on the international stage, versus students who want to study overseas. We need to bridge the gap between demand and strategy” (Jeremy Breaden).
- **Language proficiency requirements:** While often central to selection processes, language ability is not a predictor of success. ECU’s program reports high satisfaction levels even though “[inbound] students have varying English-language abilities” (Helen Vella Bonavita). This is echoed by alumni experience: “I thought I wouldn’t be able to go to Japan because I couldn’t speak Japanese, but ended up spending 23 months there studying and interning” (Patrick Gan). KGU similarly “found that Japanese language proficiency is not a critical factor for satisfaction, nor is achievement. The more interaction with local students, the happier” (Takamichi Mito).
- **Limited study options:** Students participating in Japan-bound exchange programs are often from language or area studies backgrounds; study options beyond this are limited, posing barriers to students from other disciplines. “We have engineering and science students wanting to go on exchange, but it’s hard to identify suitable subjects because their language isn’t good enough to study science and engineering in Japanese” (Attendee, The University of Wollongong). “Exchange students are enrolled by default in intensive Japanese-language programs at their host universities; opportunities to study other subjects are limited unless students are proactive in seeking them out” (Jeremy Breaden).

Photo: Sindre Boyum via Unsplash

SWOT Analysis: Student Mobility

- **Long-term effects unknown due to lack of follow-up:** “If you ask students six months after they come back, ‘How do you think that experience has affected you?’ the answer will probably be different from immediately after their return—especially so if they’ve made the transition to work since” (Stephanie Newman). “We need an understanding of the transnational impact of international student mobility among all stakeholders, including students” (Takamichi Mito). “There is a tendency to assume that exchange itself will be the definitive experience, so there is little organised follow-through. We need to look at the whole continuum, and funding and scaffolding are needed for that to happen” (Jeremy Breden).
- **Limited opportunities for sense-making:** Many students struggle to make sense of mobility experiences and have limited opportunities to share their stories in meaningful contexts. “You come back and your international department might have a party to celebrate, but that’s the only time you’re able to share that story, and you’re only sharing it with students about to go on exchange and students who have returned” (Patrick Gan). “We need to recognise that the student mobility experience continues after exchange when they’re trying to make sense of their experience, particularly regarding employability” (Jeremy Breden).
- **Disconnects between mobility and employability:** “In job interviews, no-one really asks if you have done exchange. There’s no value given to it in the workplace” (Patrick Gan). “Students need to articulate the value of their international experience to employers, otherwise it’s not sold to us. How could we give you the script to talk to an Australian bank or professional services firm and show how your Asia-related skills and experience are relevant? We don’t actually have that conversation, but we should” (Jason Hayes).

Photo: Sindre Boyum via Unsplash



Paradoxes

Employability

The links between mobility and employability are unclear. The widespread perception that student mobility is valued by employers is at odds with the realities that some returning students experience, which include not being asked about international experience in job interviews, and struggling to articulate the value of their experience to employers. This suggests a need for increased dialogue between universities and employers on the design and outcomes of programs, to improve the way that mobility experiences are understood by all stakeholders from an employability perspective.

Structural issues may also be at play. Says Kent Anderson, “I was having lunch with an NCP business champion who is the CEO of one of Australia’s top 10 listed companies, and I asked, ‘In job interviews, does your company ask whether applicants have studied overseas?’ I was hoping that they at least asked that question, because my sense is if the question was asked, then it would reverberate through the community and show that it’s valued. But the answer was, ‘I’ve got no idea. My HR department is a bunch of people of one demographic slice who see their job as replicating themselves. For this company to succeed in future we need to completely change who’s in it, but what they’re good at is reproducing the past.’”



Photo: Ryoji Iwata via Unsplash

Language

Some speakers noted that language proficiency does not predict success in a mobility context, and is not necessarily a barrier to participation. However, other speakers pointed to language ability as a core criterion for mobility candidates, and noted that program structures overwhelmingly favoured language and area studies students. The relationship between mobility and language ability appears to differ between programs and institutions, which may be a source of confusion for some stakeholders.



Photo: Thijs Slootjes via Unsplash

University Learning

While student mobility is frequently mediated by universities and often embedded in curricula, speakers identified a disconnect between mobility and university learning, agreeing that classroom learning is the least important aspect of mobility.

Regional Engagement

Particularly in the case of the New Colombo Plan, support for student mobility is driven by a vision of candidates continuing relationships with their host countries, ultimately contributing to Australia’s broader regional and global engagement. However, mobility experiences may not necessarily lead to continued relationships.

Patrick Gan suggests that mobility experiences undertaken earlier in a student’s degree may have more lasting impact. “A friend who went on exchange to Japan had a plan to increase collaboration between Australian and Japanese startups. They told me, ‘When I first went over on exchange, Japan was my identity—but that was three years ago. When I came back, I started working and now I’ve forgotten so much about it, I don’t associate with it at all’. I found it disheartening that all it took was three years in a work environment to forget that experience as a result of getting caught up with life back home. Personally, I’m also unclear about how to make an impact using my experience, but one thing I do know is that timing is crucial to allowing students to reflect on their experiences before being distracted by work.”

Future Challenges And Directions

A National Approach: Cross-sector and Bilateral Collaboration

The discussion highlighted areas that may benefit from increased government action and cross-sector collaboration, at both national and bilateral levels.

Bilateral

- Increase compatibility of government funding programs
- Increase compatibility of regulatory frameworks
- Create frameworks for large-scale collaboration between government, academia, business and not-for-profit organisations
- Seek and create opportunities for bilateral cross-sector dialogue

National

- Increase the institutional importance of language-learning
- Create frameworks for large-scale collaboration between government, academia, business and not-for-profit organisations
- Increase the perceived value of student mobility among employers (design outcomes-based programs collaboratively; boost desirability by raising awareness of value, etc.)

- Increase opportunities for returnee students (clarify employment pathways; design returnee sense-making programs in collaboration with employers, with a focus on practical applications of mobility experience in an employment setting)

Says Jason Hayes of PwC Australia: “I agree that we need to take a national approach to increasing student mobility. When Japan goes to a new market to get involved in large-scale projects, a corporation will go together with other entities—the business council, a trade organisation, a university—and together they solve the problem, all very clear as to the roles and responsibilities of each member. As a country, we need to get better at approaching common problems as a single unit.”

Theory and Practice

Areas for further research and program development include:

- **Student benefits**
“We need to understand student growth through mobility experiences, and be able to test and verify it in practice” (Jeremy Breaden)
- **Longitudinal effects**
“The timing of feedback is important. A student will have a better understanding of how overseas experience has impacted them after some time has passed” (Stephanie Newman)
- **Long-term engagement**
“More work is needed on how multi-directional experiences contribute to long-term engagement with a specific host country” (Jeremy Breaden)
- **Non-traditional pathways**
“Increasing non-traditional pathways to mobility is key to increasing diversity of participation” (Kent Anderson)
- **Connecting learning with experiences**
“How do mobility experiences connect with other aspects of university learning?” (Jeremy Breaden)
- **Links with employability**
“Not enough is known about links between mobility and employment; this should be explored further as it is a key concern for many students” (Jeremy Breaden)
- **Mobility at scale**
“How can we bring student mobility to scale, and what is the scale we would be happy with?” (Kent Anderson)
- **Alumni networks**
“What can we do to better support alumni groups of future leaders and decision-makers, and how do we create a mentorship model that maximises people-to-people and institutional linkages?” (Brian Borgonha)

Photo: Su-san-Lee via Unsplash

Speaker Profiles



Professor Kent Anderson (Discussant)

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Community & Engagement, University of Western Australia (UWA); President, Asian Studies Association of Australia; Member, Ministerial Council for International Education

Professor Kent Anderson is a comparative lawyer specialising in Asia. He is Deputy Vice Chancellor (Community & Engagement) at UWA, where he is responsible for external relations including international engagement. He has completed tertiary studies in Japan, US and the UK in Law, Politics, Economics and Asian Studies. Prior to UWA, Kent was Pro Vice Chancellor (International) at The University of Adelaide, and a Law and Asian Studies professor at The Australian National University.



Associate Professor Helen Vella Bonavita

Dean, International Relations, Edith Cowan University (ECU)

Helen Vella Bonavita joined ECU in 2010 in the Faculty of Education and Arts, where she began working with Tokyo City University to develop a large-scale, semester-long study abroad program. The project has so far seen over 500 students from Japan undertake a semester's study in Perth. She has a PhD from The University of Western Australia and has held fellowships from the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Australian Academy of Humanities, the University of Wales and the Centre for the History of Emotions at The University of Western Australia.



Brian Borgonha

Assistant Director, Partnerships and Private Sector Relations, Scholarships and Alumni Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

Brian Borgonha is a member of the New Colombo Plan Secretariat at DFAT. His previous roles include First Secretary, Education & Leadership at the Australian Embassy in Papua New Guinea, and Assistant Director, Canada, Central America and the Caribbean Branch. Brian has also worked in the Australian Department of Defence (Washington DC), the Department of Immigration and the private and NGO sectors in senior management positions. He holds a Masters in International Relations from The Australian National University.



Dr Jeremy Breaden

Senior Lecturer, Japanese Studies; Convenor of Japanese Studies, Monash University

Dr Jeremy Breaden is a Senior Lecturer in Japanese Studies at Monash, where he convenes the Japanese Studies program. In this and his former capacity as Japanese Exchange Coordinator for the university, Jeremy has ground-level experience managing student mobility between Japan and Australia. His research interests include higher education policy and administration, internationalisation and organisational change in Japan. His most recent publication is *Articulating Asia in Japanese Higher Education: Policy, Partnership and Mobility* (Routledge, 2018), which explores student mobility between Japan and other parts of Asia.

Speaker Profiles



Patrick Gan

New Colombo Plan Japan Exchange Alumnus, 2014-2016; New Colombo Plan Alumni Ambassador, Western Sydney University

Patrick is the inaugural New Colombo Plan Alumni Ambassador for Western Sydney University, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce (Applied Finance) in 2017. Over the course of his 23-month mobility experience in Japan, he studied economics at Meiji University and interned for Mitsui & Co, National Australia Bank and the Australian and New Zealand Chamber of Commerce in Tokyo. Upon returning to Australia, Patrick commenced work and continues to explore ways in which graduates can contribute to the Australia-Japan bilateral relationship.



Jason Hayes

Japan Practice Leader, Asia Practice Division, PwC Australia

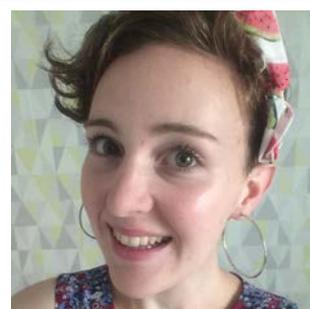
Jason Hayes is the leader of PwC's Asia Pacific Japan Practice, where he is supported by a team of 30 Japanese professionals situated across Australia covering the firm's various offerings. Jason is a Financial Assurance Partner and has more than 25 years of international experience providing assurance and advisory services to companies in a wide variety of industry sectors, particularly Entertainment & Media, Technology and Retail & Consumer. Jason spent eight years on assignment with PwC in Japan and is an active member of the Australia-Japan Business Cooperation Committee.



Professor Takamichi (Tam) Mito

Senior Executive, Center for International Education and Cooperation, Kwansei Gakuin University

Professor Takamichi (Tam) Mito specialises in Interdisciplinary Global Studies at Kwansei Gakuin University, Japan, and has held academic and senior management roles at Cambridge University, Harvard University, SOAS University of London, Waseda University, Monash University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. His extensive leadership experience in student mobility includes founding and directing an exchange initiative between Japan and Canada, establishing a trilateral Asian business leaders' exchange program at Waseda, and founding and directing the Japan Association of International Student Education. Professor Mito has collaborated with global experts on many joint studies of international education.



Stephanie Newman

New Colombo Plan Japan Exchange Alumna, 2017

Stephanie Newman is a fifth-year International Studies student at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). She first visited Japan on a Ministry of Foreign Affairs program in 2014, returning in 2017 to study and interning at the Australian Embassy the following year. She has participated in multiple mobility programs throughout her time at university, including to Thailand and Italy, and speaks both Japanese and Italian. In addition to personal mobility experiences, she has professional experience as a marketing assistant for student mobility programs within UTS.

Photo: Tomoko Uji via Unsplash

JAPAN FOUNDATION 
BRINGING JAPAN TO YOU

jpf.org.au   @JPFSydney  @japanfoundationsydney

