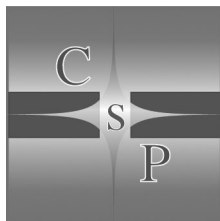


Higher Education in the Asia Pacific

Higher Education in the Asia Pacific Challenges for the Future

Edited by

Peter Kell and Gillian Vogl



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PREFACE

HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE ASIA PACIFIC: CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The global higher education sector has undergone unprecedented transformation in the last decade. The growing demand for higher education amongst Asia's newly industrialised nations has resulted in an expansion in the numbers of public and private universities and colleges operating in the region. The environment in which these institutions operate has also undergone significant change. New accountability regimes imposed by national governments and, in some cases, international agencies, have resulted in changing governance structures and the introduction of new management systems borrowed from the corporate world. At the same time, the application of information and communication technologies to teaching and learning practices has resulted in a fundamental shift in higher education pedagogies. Staff face a number of other competing demands, including the need to demonstrate their competitive edge while at the same time building international collaborations with their peers. The inevitable power imbalances that emerge between institutions in developed and developing nations, and the role of English as a global language, also raise concerns about neo-colonial attitudes amongst some international partners. As they seek to address these issues, higher education administrators, academics and policy-makers are confronted with an array of challenges.

The contradictions and tensions that emerge from their responses to these issues are the focus of this collection. Through a combination of both macro-level policy analysis and local-level case studies the authors explore the ways that universities throughout the Asia-Pacific are responding to the challenges of globalisation and internationalisation. The papers in this collection emerged from two conferences co-organised by the Australian Research Council Key Centre for Asia-Pacific Social Transformation Studies (CAPSTRANS) based at the University of Wollongong in Australia, and the National Higher Education Research Institute (IPPTN) based at University Sains Malaysia in Penang, Malaysia. The first of these conferences "Malaysia-Australia Higher Education

Forum” was hosted by CAPSTRANS at Wollongong from 2-4 November 2005, with co-sponsorship from the International Centre of Excellence for Asia-Pacific Studies (ICEAPS). The second conference “Higher Education in the Asia Pacific and Networked Society” was hosted by IPPTN and USM, with support from the Ministry of Higher Education, in Penang from 8-11 November 2006. The conferences brought together academics, university administrators, and higher education policy-makers to discuss the key challenges currently facing higher education providers in the Asia-Pacific. The backdrop for these conferences is the long-term history of education links between the two countries. Malaysia is one of the top ten countries of origin of international students studying in Australian universities. And at the same time, Australia is also a major provider of transnational higher education services in Malaysia. The collaboration between CAPSTRANS and USM is built on longstanding personal and professional relationships between key staff members in both institutions, and is a model for what Kell and Vogl call ‘authentic internationalisation’.

The papers that form this collection do not seek to provide answers to all the issues currently facing universities in the Asia-Pacific. Instead, they challenge those of us who work in the higher education sector, whether as academics, administrators or policy-makers, to re-think the meaning of ‘the university’ in the new century, and to question our deeply entrenched ideas about ‘teaching’, ‘learning’ and ‘research’. I commend the editors and authors for facilitating such a thought-provoking exchange of ideas.

Associate Professor Lenore Lyons
Director, CAPSTRANS
University of Wollongong

March 2007

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE ASIA PACIFIC: CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

PETER KELL AND GILLIAN VOGL

Higher Education in the Asia Pacific Challenges for the Future is an international collection of contributions from Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, China and the United States. The volume emerged from a forum entitled 'The Malaysia Australia Higher Education Forum' held in Wollongong Australia in 2005 and involved a meeting of scholars and researchers to explore issues about

- The internationalisation of higher education in the Asia Pacific and the development of transnational markets.
- The role of universities in the social, economic and cultural development of the nation state in the Asia Pacific.
- The changing nature of teaching and learning in the contemporary university and the emergence of new technologies of learning.
- The changing nature of work in universities and the changing role of academics.

The forum was held in November 2005 and grew principally from a developing collaboration between the University of Wollongong and the Universiti of Sains Malaysia (USM) where the Insitut Penyelidikan Pendidikan Tinggi Negara (IPPTN) is hosted.

Using funds from the Centre of Asia Pacific Social Transformation Studies (CAPSTRANS) at the University of Wollongong and the Centre for Excellence in Asia Pacific Studies (ICEAPS) at the Australian National University several Malaysian scholars and researchers were able to explore contemporary issues in Australia.

The Malaysian contingent was led by Prof Morshidi Sirat Director of IPPTN and involved the participation of Professor Ambigapathy Pandian, Associate

Professor Shanti Balraj Bahboo and Dr Rozinah Jamaluddin who were all from the Universiti of Sains Malaysia. In addition, Associate Professor Koo Yew Lie of the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Associate Professor Vincent Pang from the Universiti Malaysia Sabah also came to the forum from Malaysia. Additional contributions to the forum came from speakers from Thailand and China, as well as Australian participants. These include Professor Michael Singh from University of Western Sydney, Associate Professor Yuping Wang from Yuncheny University of China and Dr Michelle Lunn from Massey University in New Zealand. The forum provided a foundation for issues that were common to higher education in all the countries in the Asia Pacific as well as issues that were specific to individual countries, such as, Malaysia and Australia. The open nature of this forum and the wide participation enabled a regional engagement that went beyond the participating nations of Australia and Malaysia. The forum concluded with the development of two significant future events, the first being a further forum planned for 2006 to be held in Penang, Malaysia. The other significant event was an approach from Cambridge Scholars Publishing to publish the papers and discussions that emerged from the forum in Australia in 2005. This book is the culmination of all these events and the support of many people who made this book possible. The support of Associate Professor Lenore Lyons, Director of CAPSTRANS, Dr Tim Scrase, Deputy Director of CAPSTRANS and Professor Andrew Wells, Dean of ARTs at the University of Wollongong is acknowledged. The nucleus of the book emerged through the presentations and discussions that happened in Australia in November 2005 but have been modified and revised into a form that is suitable for an edited volume.

The background of change in the Asia Pacific

This book, through authors' contributions, explores some of the contradictions and tensions that emerge from the response of universities in the Asia Pacific to the changes that have characterised the internationalisation and the globalisation of higher education.

These contradictions include tensions between the pressures of competition and the requirements for collaboration across the region. These tensions have been more starkly evident as the demand for higher education has grown. The explosive growth of an affluent middle class in many of the nations of the Asia Pacific and the growing participation of these nations in the global economy has also stoked an acceleration in demand for university education. As many of the systems in the Asia Pacific experience this dramatic growth for places, they are in the process of having to change from managing an elite system to

negotiating a shift to a mass system. Not all nations have managed this demand through the public system of universities and there has been a dramatic growth of private higher education providers in many countries. This new environment has seen competition between the public sector and the private sector, as well as the increased participation of foreign providers in meeting the exponential demand for higher education.

These developments have witnessed a growing transnational market in higher education that is no longer monopolised by countries such as Australia, New Zealand and the United States but has seen new entrants, such as Malaysia seeking to secure a market share in international higher education. In the context of this global transnational market there has been increasing commodification and commercialisation of higher education as these countries move to secure a slice of the action in the Asia Pacific market. These developments have also produced a new rationale for innovation in management, teaching and research. This has included the deployment of new technologies, such as online learning that provides enhanced opportunities for a global spread of operations to capture new markets that include offshore operations. There has also been pressure on universities to reorganise and reform their own governance internal operations to be more responsive in reflecting the demands of these transnational markets and to capitalise on the opportunities that have emerged from them. These changes are not unproblematic and have introduced a number of tensions and dilemmas that this book explores through a series of contributions.

Tensions in negotiating the transnational market and the national objectives of higher education

This first section explores how the demands for systems to simultaneously respond to the “global” and the “local” is reflected in the tensions between active participation in global markets and the need for universities to promote national development and social unity. The contribution by Peter Kell and Gillian Vogl explores the way in which Australian universities have engaged with the Asia Pacific region in the context of transnational markets. The authors chart the engagement of Australian universities from the colonial era and the engagement with the Asia Pacific as a consequence of under investment in universities by the Australian government. Kell and Vogl argue that Australia’s engagement is typified by an ambivalence to Asia and that is a legacy of Australia’s racist past. They also cite several examples of a declining commitment of Australian universities to the region in the shrinkage of teaching of Asian languages, the residual nature of study abroad schemes to Asia and the imbalanced nature of international collaborations with Asian partners.

The topic of international collaborations is also the subject of a contribution by Michael Singh and Yuping Wang who explore the possibilities emerging from bi-lateral research collaborations between Australia and China. Their contribution critiques the unproblematic and taken for granted assumptions that many university policies have about the internationalisation of higher education. Like Kell and Vogl, they identify and question some of the neo-colonial legacies that make transnational collaborations a challenging enterprise. Using examples from their experience of bilateral research collaborations they explore the dilemmas and contradictions of internationalisation identifying some of the benefits but also the difficulties. These include incompatibilities across systems, such as differences between financial and administrative systems. There are also cultural differences in the valuing of research as well as the social and linguistic challenges of working transnationally to create partnerships. However, the authors stress the importance of relationship building and long-term engagement rather than superficial money making ventures. Borrowing from their experience, Singh and Wang suggest some actions for ensuring that bi-lateral collaborations are productive individually, as well as structurally.

Viewpoints on internationalisation are most commonly presented from the perspective of large and well established universities from the North American-European-Australian connection and often the perspectives of smaller developing nations in the Asia Pacific are missing.

The contribution from Vincent Pang from Malaysia documents and identifies the nature and character of internationalisation in Malaysia. This contribution documents the way in which the planning processes of the Malaysian state have sought to integrate the ambitious plans for the internationalisation of the economy with the role and functions of higher education. The growth of international linkages and the presence of international students in Malaysian universities has been a consequence of systematic planning by the Malaysian government and suggests a state directed approach rather than a market driven approach. This chapter also highlights the way in which the governance of universities is shifting away from a bureaucratic public service model.

This shift is explored in detail by the Malaysian team from the IPPTN consisting of Abdul Razak Ahmad, Sarjit Kuar and Morshidid Sirat. This chapter identifies the rationale for change and the nature of change in the governance of Malaysian universities that has promoted the corporatisation of governance in Malaysian universities. These changes are motivated by a need to enhance responsiveness and flexibility to the external environment but the

authors suggest that universities will still be subject to some central direction owing to the politicised nature of the state building role of universities in Malaysian society. The authors identify the importance of accountability and the need for management and leadership systems to promote innovative practices but also to maintain high academic standards and promote the business of universities as offering teaching, learning, research and community services. These questions about the balance between creativity and innovation, as ways of meeting the new transnational markets and the need to maintain academic standards is explored in the next cluster of contributions of the book

Tensions between traditional and alternative views of teaching and learning in higher education

These key developments explored in the first cluster of contributions describes a new environment where higher education has created what is arguably at a “turning point” and the next group of contributions by Peter Kell and Tony Herrington, Mary Kalantzis, Marilyn Kell and Robyn Gregson, Ambigapathy Pandian, Suthagar Narasiman and Shanthi Balraj and Rozinah Jamaluddin document and analyse some of the dilemmas that emerge from this turning point in the Asia Pacific.

The internationalisation and globalisation of the workplace and the civic space also requires that the new professional will have capabilities to work in globalised settings typified by diversity. Responding to diversity will require authentic and grounded experiences where students are challenged and presented with opportunities associated with diversity. This now means that within any learning setting, learners will experience a “borderless education” that goes beyond the confines of the nation-state.

Combined with this is the revolution in the new technologies of learning under the broad umbrella of what has been termed the “cyber classroom” making the opportunity for a borderless education and training experience feasible. The web and online learning interactive multimedia also facilitate opportunities to link the academy, the workplace and the community in direct and immediate ways. Learning will be increasingly multi-modal and multidimensional and involve integrated forms of communication including graphics, hypertext, simulations and game technology (Kress 2000). One of the challenges of the new technologies of learning is to develop learning frameworks that sustain work related learning, respond to diversity, enhance student engagement in collaborative and authentic tasks and also lead to

improvement and transformational opportunities as well as preserving the integrity and value of university education (Herrington and Herrington 2006).

The chapter by Peter Kell and Tony Herrington explores the implications of a borderless education with a discussion on the development of offshore programs. Devised as a response to the marketisation of higher education, offshore programs have grown in the last 10 years as many Australian universities, often in partnership with local providers, have established a range of programs and activities in the Asia Pacific, as well as other continents. As described by Singh and Wang the operations of these have experienced tensions and ambiguity over business, financial, assessment standards, staffing and academic matters, as well as the logistics of conducting overseas operations. The chapter considers several case studies where controversies over “standards” have eroded confidence in offshore operations, and indeed the system overall.

The authors consider that nostalgic and often out-dated views of standards need to be considered against the continuing need for more engaging and innovative learning and that offshore and in particular, online learning programs used offshore have potential to offer substantial innovative opportunities. In restoring confidence in such programs and ventures, they suggest some strategies that include stronger relationship building and the use of learning frameworks that promote diversity rather than import inappropriate cultural products.

Some of the controversial questions about academic standards and assessment are discussed in the contribution of Marilyn Kell and Robyn Gregson who investigate the issue of plagiarism in higher education. The authors critique stereotypes that plagiarism is a practice exclusively undertaken by “international” students and look at some of the contributing factors that emerge both as a consequence of the social conditions of the marketisation in higher education and the changing nature of teaching and learning in universities. The authors propose some different perspectives on viewing plagiarism as an important starting point in reviewing technical aspects about academic work. They also detail a web-based program called “Get it Write” to assist students to develop self-directed strategies to succeed in the more complex learning environment.

Part of the reason that a return to the traditional institutional and fact based passive learning strategies that have characterised university learning are inappropriate is the emergence of the work place as a site for learning. In this new environment there is a need for development of learning frameworks that

integrate experience, theory and policy. This now means that an increasing number of professionals will be seeking to explore developments in the workplace and theorise their experience across a range of disciplines and this interface requires a different response from higher education providers. The new learning environment will require providers to respond to the grounded and situated environment of the learners where opportunities for transformed practice are enhanced. This is in contrast to static and generic methods of learning that are de-contextualised and are reliant on generic approaches to learning. New relevant and engaging forms of learning are required that integrate with the challenges of the workplace and the community (Kell, Singh and Shore 2005; Cope and Kalantzis 2000).

Mary Kalantzis explores these epochal shifts in education and proposes a way in which universities need to respond to the changes in professional learning. Kalantzis identifies how work in the professions, where most preparation and training is university based, has changed and thus the need to develop new frameworks that include an epistemological framework that spans experiential, conceptual, analytical and applied knowledge. Part of the need for this new framework is contextualised in the need to develop teaching and learning responses that incorporate cultural and linguistic diversity and also incorporate contexts and views of discipline knowledge that goes beyond the narrow conceptualisations that predominate in the Anglophone world.

The debates around the growing integration of work and learning are also taken up by Ambigapathy Pandian, Suthagar Narasiman and Shanthi Balraj in the Malaysian context where there is growing concern about the capabilities of graduates to meet the needs of the new economy. In Malaysia there is a growing concern about graduates from universities who do not have effective English proficiency, communication skills, knowledge processing and thinking skills that are essential for the global knowledge economy. These skills include broad capabilities around processing information and making judgments, as well as demonstrating proficiency in English that goes beyond simplistic notions of good grammar and good work habits. This chapter surveys Malaysian employers and asks them what they see as important skills and knowledge for their industries. The results have implications for the preparation of graduates and the way in which English for specific purpose programs are taught with a shifting emphasis on facilitating graduates who are capable of “thinking” and problem solving, as well as using the new technologies effectively to be workers that demonstrate greater autonomy.

How students respond to these new ways of learning is a crucial question that Rozinah Jamaluddin takes up and explores in the context of a Malaysian University. This contribution documents some research on the experience of university students undertaking courses using the new technologies of learning. Contrary to many views and stereotypes about how Asian students learn, the research finds that the potential for autonomous learning that new technology promotes is valued by students but that the “human” touch of a good teacher or mentor is also regarded highly

Tensions around quality, access and participation in transnational markets

The next and final cluster of authors, explore questions about language, culture and gender and are contributions from Koo Yew Lie, Peter Kell and Gillian Vogl and Michelle Lunn.

Some views of globalisation have argued that globalisation has eroded the power and influence of the nation-state. Accompanying these views is a suggestion of a homogenising affect that is seen as threatening authentic aspects of localism, including the overwhelming of local language and culture by “global cultural products”. Many reactions to globalisation are often futile attempts to defend mono-ethnic, mono-lingual and mono-religious state structures in the face of growing complexity and diversity (Beck, 1999). This response to globalisation has, in some cases spawned hyper-nationalistic responses that reify and valorise notions of authentic localism. There has been a balancing act between reaffirming aspects of the nations state and promoting responses to the nation that are based on racism, divisive “wedge” politics and a culture of blame (Singh, Kell and Pandian, 2002). These developments are damaging in many of the countries of the Asia Pacific that are characterised by ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity.

Universities have a particularly problematic positioning in this, as traditionally they have been one of the most influential state projects in affirming the identity of nation state projects but they are also influential institutions in promoting and preparing nations for globalisation. How tensions between the cultural projects of the nation such as language and culture are merged with aspects of what is seen as global culture is explored by Koo Yew Lie in the setting of a Malaysian university. This contribution explores how Malaysian Chinese students, a minority in Malaysia, negotiate a landscape of language that includes Mandarin and other Chinese dialects, and the national language of Malaysia, Bahasa Malaysia, as well as the global language of learning which is now widely accepted as English. Koo investigates and

analyses the language and learning practices of students through the notion of pluriliteracies that enables people to negotiate linguistic diversity. This contribution describes how language provides individuals with a range of identities and how they mediate tensions around the politics of language and maintain their cultural and linguistic identities.

Questions about the English language in higher education in the Asia Pacific are also discussed by Peter Kell and Gillian Vogl who document the experiences of international students in Australia. Their chapter explores how their English proficiency and usage influences their experience. In this chapter Asian students describe their experiences of Australia, their interactions within and outside the university and how they have found their knowledge of English had prepared them for academic and community life in Australia. Kell and Vogl find that expectations that students will “get on” without assistance from institutions is misguided and a product of the *laizze faire* approach to higher education in Australia. They also find contradictions around claims of the internationalisation of Australian universities and their continued role as promoting an authentic “Australian experience”. The authors propose alternatives that provide students with programs and support that deal with academic, as well as social support and suggest some rethinking is needed about how internationalisation and nationalism are positioned in the lives of international students.

One feature of higher education in the continued feminisation of both the student population and the workforce and this is a growing trend in the Asia Pacific. Michele Lunn’s contribution explores the career objectives of academic women in Malaysia. The contribution questions how careers of women in universities are influenced by feminism, identity politics and Islam as well as describing how women have negotiated the work and family life balance. This chapter using the experience of several Malaysian women academics documents in detail the multiple and diverse ways in which they strive for equality with their male colleagues. The discussion provides a perspective that challenges some of the stereotypical views about Muslim women and provides examples of agency, autonomy and negotiates the tensions of policy and practice.

This volume represents the collaboration of a range of partners and is a living example of how new forms of partnership and collaboration emerge as a feature of the internationalisation of higher education.

This volume has identified the flawed approaches to the processes of internationalisation that have promoted competition. This volume has been a co-operative venture and the authors in this contribution are proposing a critical, but positive engagement with the processes of internationalisation. Such an engagement that recognises the need for more collaborative and co-operative

approaches that builds on, as well as recognises, mutual experiences and expertise that people from different systems and backgrounds can contribute. Perhaps if there is a unifying theme that is encapsulated in this volume it is the continued need for a regional engagement in the Asia Pacific that develops meaningful long-term and enduring relationships characterised by reciprocity and exchange. It is hoped that this collection of international perspectives can continue to contribute to such initiatives in an active and meaningful way.

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PART I:

**TENSIONS IN NEGOTIATING
THE TRANSNATIONAL MARKET
AND THE NATIONAL OBJECTIVES
OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

CHAPTER ONE

INTERNATIONALISATION, NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETS: KEY DILEMMAS FOR LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

PETER KELL AND GILLIAN VOGL

This chapter explores the changing relationships between the state and universities in Australia and higher education in the Asia Pacific. The chapter argues that Australia has operated with a hybridised policy involving a combination of interventions by the Australian government, as well as a commitment to the growth of market forces to the higher education sector. This hybridised policy mix of strong state intervention and a commitment to neo-liberal market ideology has also influenced the nature and character of the engagement of universities with the Asia Pacific region.

This contribution explores an evolving shift in policy in Australian higher education from that of cluster of elite universities under the umbrella of limited state sponsorship to a mass system under a more unified and interventionist government. In contradiction to the state's presence as a steering agent, the Australian government has also stressed themes of choice, diversity, competitiveness and autonomy as being needed in Australian universities to compete in a transnational higher education market. This seemingly contradictory role of the Australian government in steering higher education is referred to as "a centrally regulated deregulation", which is of course in keeping with a state dependent tradition (Marginson and Considine 2000, 58).

The shifting boundaries between the state and the market in higher education has sparked the engagement of Australian universities in the Asia Pacific and this chapter will seek to explore aspects of the origin and character of Australia's engagement and identify some critical issues. The authors will

present evidence that Australia's engagement is typified by contradictions and ambivalence about Asia and that the core rationale of neo-liberalism will not sustain an enduring relationship based on reciprocity and equality between Australian and Asian partners. The chapter identifies several areas which illustrate the ambivalence and neglect of Australian universities in connecting with Asian universities. This chapter suggests an important need for leadership that resituates the relationships within a framework based on the needs of the region rather than a neo-liberal market framework.

Australia and the international market

Australian universities have become some of the most active participants in a growing transnational market in higher education. The presence of Australian universities in this transnational market has been rationalised under the generalised term of "internationalisation".

In terms of the market share of students in higher education across the globe, Australia on 20% is only exceeded by New Zealand on almost 30% (Economist 30 Sept 2006) Australia is according to the OECD figures ahead of traditionally strong global participants such as Britain, Germany, Canada and the United States.

The importance of higher education to the Australian economy cannot be underestimated as it has overtaken tourism in 2006 to be the third highest export earner behind coal and iron ore exports. The total contribution to export earnings by international students in Australian education was estimated at \$9.8 billion (Morris 2006).

In 2002 over 18% of students in Australia were international students with 12% residing in Australia and another 6% residing overseas. The growth area in Australian universities has been with international students and the total growth in the sector of all students was only 20% from 1997 to 2002 but the growth in international students in the same period was 123% (DEST 2004).

From 2002 the growth in international students has moved upwards from a total of 116,236 in 2002 to 163,930 in 2005. The percentage change from 2004 to 2005 has been a growth of 8.3% (AEI 2006). The growing participation has been almost exclusively from countries in the Asia Pacific region. The top ten countries of origin of students in Australian higher education are China, India, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, USA and Singapore.

This pattern is not uniform and there has been a change in the country of origin of international students in Australia. Some countries have recorded reductions in the period 2004 to 2005 such as Indonesia (-11.1%), Hong Kong (-7.6%), Singapore (-8.7%), Malaysia (-3.2%) and Japan (-3.4%). The fall of many of the enrolments from these countries are attributed to the growth of the national capacity in higher education in these countries and many are becoming competitors for Australia.

Other countries such as India (33.5%) and China (17.8%), Philippines (21.9%), Vietnam (15%) and South Korea (10.9%) have recorded strong growth in the same period. Interestingly, those Asian countries on the bottom of the international economic indicators, such as Laos (-23.2%), East Timor (-21.1%) and North Korea (-24.7%) have also recorded shrinkages. The trend is showing strong growth from some countries outside the former British Commonwealth and includes countries where there is not a heritage or background in English. The growth also represents the changing pattern of Australia's international trade with expansion in the North Asian and South Asian region.

Not all students are Australian residents and many are off shore students studying in their home country. This offshore market is estimated at a \$US30billion global industry and 33% of Australia's overseas students are in that category. These students have tended to be clustered in the fields of information technology, management and health. These fields represent 80% of Australia's overseas students. Many of these students have enrolled through offshore campus operations established by Australian universities in such locations as Malaysia (Monash), Vietnam (RMIT), Dubai (Wollongong) and South Africa (Monash). Many off shore programs involve international partners who are either public universities or private universities or education providers.

Internationalising Australian higher education

Australia's earliest engagements with Asia were associated with the Colombo Plan that was developed as a post war assistance plan for British Commonwealth nations in Africa and Asia. The plan's name came from the location of the meeting of Commonwealth foreign Ministers in Colombo in January 1950 that proposed the plan. One of the major areas was study opportunity for people from less developed nations in the dominions of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, as well as in the United Kingdom. During the 35 years of the plan's existence some 40,000 people from Asia came to study in Australia and the impact of the Colombo plan in the post war years is described by Australia's current foreign Minister Alexander Downer saying that:

It is difficult to imagine today that most Australians up until the 1950s rarely encountered people from Asian nations and near neighbours in their daily lives in Australia. Furthermore the limited nature of people to people exchanges between Australians and the countries of South and South East Asia no doubt had an impact on Australian engagement with Asia at the time but the Colombo Plan helped change this state of affairs by introducing students from many parts of the region to our society (Downer 2006)

The higher education component consisted of scholarships and assistance for members of the Commonwealth nations to undertake studies in the UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Aside from the Colombo plan, training and assistance programs to Pacific nations were also developed through institutions, such as the Australian School of South Pacific Administration. Although seen as preparing the nations for independence the Colombo Plan has the advantage of maintaining links with the social elites in the new nations in the post colonial era.

The engagement with other nations was also shaped by the utilitarian nature of the Australian higher education sector. In contrast to the tradition of other nations the traditions of Australian universities were not rooted in what Marginson and Considine describes as “notions of knowledge or personal cultivation” (p54). Australian government involvement in universities, which were constitutionally a state government responsibility, was consistent with this instrumental orientation. In the 1960s Federal government funding was mostly directed to science and engineering and saw the government provide funding for the development of the industrial potential of Australia to build a secure and prosperous Australian state.

The Martin Report, in the early 1960s, also shifted the character of Australian higher education from an elite semi private activity directed towards a limited number of professions to a mass system with ambitions toward nation building. International connections were limited to the cultural and structural linkages with the British university traditions and until the 1970s Asia was largely ignored other than as a source for studies in anthropological and linguistic disciplines. With the election of the Whitlam government and the recognition of Communist China, the withdrawal of Australia from Vietnam and the introduction of a non-discriminatory immigration in the 1970s, Asia assumed a new importance in the scope of Australian public and economic policy. Australian trade relations shifted in the 1970s and 1980s from the former colonial markets in Europe from which Australia was excluded to the Asian region where Japan, Korea and China became the chief trading partners with Australia. This shift of Australian universities towards Asia tended to be limited

until the late 1980s and early 1990s when Australian universities entered Asian markets as an aggressive competitor under the banner of the internationalisation of higher education.

The notion of internationalising higher education that emerged in the 1990s has been described as:

Internationalisation of higher education is the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimensions into teaching, research and service of the institution (Back, Davis and Olsen 1996 p vii).

The early implementation of the internationalisation by Australia stressed a broad approach involving international students, as well as technical assistance programs, research linkages, international support services and study abroad. The emphasis was intended to be global in focus rather than exclusively directed towards Asia and this was incorporated in many institutional plans of universities. Yet activity mostly focused on building international student numbers and the main targeted market eventually being in Asia saw that a growing affluent middle class provided as a source for international students for Australian universities.

This engagement with internationalisation was accelerated in the mid 1990s in response to the declining levels of state support for higher education in Australia. According to Marginson and Considine (2000) funding to Australian universities was not reduced in absolute terms but after 1997 the levels of support for students started to diminish. The combination of the Howard government's reductions in operating grants of 5% over a period of three years and the failure of the federal government to index funding to include academics salary increases meant that universities had, with other pressures, a rapid decline in university finances. The outcome of this was an emerging awareness of the need to create additional sources of revenue through fee paying and revenue producing activities. In this context the culture of universities experienced a shift towards an entrepreneurial orientation directed towards participating in a transnational market.

The approach toward internationalisation of most Australian universities was integrated within the imperative to generate revenue from new sources and to respond to what was seen as "new markets" in the Asia Pacific.

Governance arrangements were also changed to enable universities to respond to the new commercial context. Many universities established private companies owned by the universities to conduct off shore business activities, as

well as recruit international students. One of the first to do this was RMIT University that established a campus in Penang Malaysia and also RMIT International to recruit and process international students. Other independent businesses emerged with English language colleges also emerging and, while having separate identities, these colleges have still fulfilled a role as feeders to the universities. Some of these colleges were used by regional universities in overseas locations as well as in capital cities in Australia.

The approaches to internationalising higher education adopted by Australian universities have tended to be viewed as benign and there has been until recently little criticism of this market-based approach. However, there are a multitude of challenges that emerge for Australian universities and these can be traced to the legacy of Australia's racist past. Singh positions universities as part of the institutional structure of white Australia

Australian universities, which under white Australia's politics were historically separated from rather than integrated with Asia, have come into increasing contact with non-European students seeking to establish ongoing relations. Given the colonialist and post-colonialist encounters these zones of multiple contacts involve coercion, inequality and conflict grounded in an asymmetrical relationship (Singh 2005, 33).

Singh argues that established controls in Australian universities "reserve the centre for Anglo-Australians and the margins for others" (Singh 2005, 33). The way in which universities have preserved aspects of entitlement and privilege for Anglo Australians even though Australia is multicultural and diverse illustrates the durability of the politics of White Australia.

The engagement with Asia has been typified by ambiguity and ambivalence and the developments in higher education have typified this historic legacy. Ambivalence manifests itself in conditional ways of responding to internationalisation. This has been most evident in many of the teaching practices and pedagogical practices of universities where European and Australian products are simply exported without modification for the cultural context of the learners. This ambivalence can be seen in the reluctance of Australian universities to teach in languages other than English.

The nature of the engagement in Australian is described by Singh who argues that:

Universities do not exist as a cultural whole. Thus, it is not a matter of bringing a unified Anglo ethnic population into contact with another totally distinct socio-cultural whole, say 'Chinese students'. Rather Australian universities are zones

of contested and contradictory contacts, both positive and negative. Australian universities are now more than ever before zones of multiple contacts that involve blockages and policing as much as permits and transgression (Singh 2005, 32)

This ambivalence is continued with attacks in the media on international students. In mid 2005 and throughout 2006 attacks in the press continued to allege that differential standards were being applied to fee paying international students and that there was soft marking of international students. There were also claims that students were using their student status as a front to gain residency and migrate to Australia.

The claims that international students were illegitimately using their studies to secure permanent residency was strongly criticised by migration researcher Bob Birrell who alleged that universities were also guilty of providing courses to facilitate a fraudulent student status and that standards had dropped in Australian universities as a consequence of the presence of international students from Asia. In a report (cited SMH 18/09/ 2006), Birrell claimed that less than half of overseas students who gain residence in Australia are able to use the qualifications that they have gained in the workplace due to poor English proficiency. Birrell claims that universities enrol overseas students who have inadequate English language skills into courses and then make sure that they are able to continue through these courses despite their academic results (SMH 18/09/2006).

Globalisation and dilemmas for Australian universities in the Asia Pacific region

Part of the engagement of the region is shaped by contradictory discourses about internationalisation and the role of the university as a national project. In Australia aspects of the national project are characterised by increased levels of anxiety about global security, terrorism and illegal immigration and this is having an impact on the way in which Australian universities engage with the Asia Pacific region. According to Sidhu (2004, 57) Australia is sold as a study destination to Asia, through a marketing strategy that presents Australia and its universities as friendly, ethnically diverse, safe and free from racism. The notion that Australian education will provide a cultural bridge between Asia and Australia is part of the marketing ploy used to sell Australia as a preferable study destination to the United States and the UK. The United States is perceived to be more dangerous and the UK as less friendly. Developing this construct of Australia as friendly and respectful towards Asia is particularly important considering Australia's past history of exclusion and race-based

immigration. Australian University websites and other promotional materials contain advertisements stressing Australia's ethnically diverse student body.

Sidhu's (2004) research based on an analysis of textual materials including media reports, promotional information used by Australian university recruitment staff and interviews with university staff reveals a large gap in the rhetoric of how international education is portrayed and the reality. In reality, there is very little evidence of Australia's engagement with a deep sense of hybridity. An acceptance of diversity is usually expressed through important but superficial measures such as 'international food days', 'prayer facilities' and the provision of halal and vegetarian food. International education in Australia instead continues to be far from internationalised and the values disseminated are essentially very 'western', ethnocentric and 'corporatised' (Sidhu 2004, 58-60). While University documents present Australia as a friendly and inclusive nation, the Australian media undermines this portrayal by creating conceptual links between international students and illegal immigration, organised crime and declining academic standards (Sidhu 2004, 61).

International education in Australia is situated in a neo liberal framework where the key organising ideas of international education are structured around consumer choice and personal investment (Sidhu 2004, 56). Education is sold on this illusionary notion of choice and of the globe as being a borderless free market (Sidhu 2004,53). However, as James Peck (2004) argues, globalisation is not just based on a free market ideology but is also characterised by social conservatism and an increasing obsession with national security and control in terms of law and order and border protection. Globalisation is in fact about borders that are both permeable and exclusionary (Mitropoulos 2001, 54).

While many nations are increasingly putting in place restrictive measures to prevent asylum seekers from coming to their shores, they are at the same time, increasingly trying to attract highly skilled migrants and international students. According to Kofman (2005, 459) with regard to immigration throughout history, a "distinction is made between useful exploitable human capital and human by-products of global crisis who are accepted grudgingly as a result of an earlier recognition of universal human rights". Viewing globalisation as embodied allows for an understanding of how different subjects experience globalisation (Sidhu 2004, 54). International education has taken place in a context of social inequalities and unequal power relations between developed and developing countries.

Conferences about globalisation overwhelmingly take place in the developed world in English and are published in English language journals (Sidhu 2004, 54). Throughout history the linkages developed between educational institutions in developing countries and developed countries have essentially rested on unequal power relations. In the case of Malaysia, Philip Altbach argues that, linkages between Australian and Malaysian Universities in Malaysia are almost always planned by the Australian institutions (Altbach 2004, 17)¹.

The relatively new environment of international education presents both disadvantages and advantages for developing countries. Arnold (2001) uses the example of India to argue that as more and more Indian students study in Australia the quality of Indian universities is undermined. In addition, even very elite Indian institutions find it difficult to hold on to top class university staff, lured by attractive offers from overseas universities.

In a recent study, Marginson and Sawir (2006, 363) compared two universities, one in Australia, The Australian National University (ANU) and the other in Indonesia, Universiti Indonesia (UI). They were interested in the impact of globalisation on two strong national universities, one in a developing country and one in a developed country. Both these universities shared similarities as they were both nation-building universities with a commitment to globalisation. Both universities networked extensively and efficiently with a range of international universities and there was a lot of collaborative research occurring internationally.

While UI managers were optimistic about the globalisation of their university, they were cautious about what this meant for Indonesian religious, political and family values. They felt that it was important for Indonesia to keep up with what was happening in the West while simultaneously guarding its own cultural identity that was very clearly defined. Australia on the other hand, despite decades of migration from Asia was still very mono-cultural and has exhibited evidence of an ambiguous national identity. (Marginson and Sawir 2006, 355).

The power these universities hold in the global arena differs substantially. While both the Universities spoke of the other with respect, for the Australian University, Indonesia is essentially a location for ANU research, whereas UI leaders look to Australian Universities as a model. All joint research is

¹ In the case of linkages with USM the establishment of International Literacy Research Unit ILRU suggests the Malaysian university is not a silent or inactive partner but arguably the lead partner.