

Australia's Japanese academia today.

#### 4.4 Developing Programs to Meet Australia's Need

The *Tsunami* phenomenon was a dramatic expression of the Australian community's demand for increased numbers of graduates with Japan skills and literacy. Japanese academia throughout Australian universities was well aware of this. As seen in Chapter 3, Australia's particular requirements for Japan skills and literacy have already been defined amongst Australian academia. In order to satisfy the requirements, students have to be trained in the three areas of intellectual development as articulated by Stockwin: language competence; broad-based understanding of Japan and its society; and at least one relevant specialisation in Japan-related fields.

At most universities, the training of students in the first and second area were available, or expected to be available within the Japanese studies department. Not many Japanese studies departments, however, had the facilities or resources, staff resources in particular, to provide students with sufficient opportunities for training in the third area.

Different universities explored a variety of approaches to find possible solutions for this problem. At a number of universities, successful solutions were found in intra-and inter-institutional cooperation. These solutions were, however, only available at the major centres of Japanese studies that already had well established programs.

At Monash University, intra-faculty arrangements made possible the introduction of a major or honours degree in Japanese with Law, and a combined degree in Engineering and Japanese. Postgraduate students were able to work towards a diploma or a Master of Arts degree which combine Japanese with other Asian studies. The course leading to a diploma in Australian tourism also included Japanese as a component.

Monash was in a more fortunate position than many other universities in that a number of departments and faculties outside Japanese offered Japan-related courses. These included the Departments of History, Music and

Visual Arts, the Faculty of Economics and Politics, the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Education.

The Australian National University has always enjoyed a concentration of Japan scholars with diversified fields of expertise. At the time of the *Tsunami* of 1988, undergraduate courses involving Japan were offered in the Faculty of Asian Studies, the Faculty of Arts, and the Faculty of Economics and Commerce.

The Japan Centre and the Asian History Centre within the Faculty of Asian Studies conducted undergraduate teaching of Japanese language, linguistics, literature and history. As the undergraduate Asian studies degree required students to acquire a major in a discipline outside the faculty, it became possible for students to combine Japanese language with a major in a variety of disciplines, such as economics, accounting or law. On the other hand, students outside the Japanese discipline would be able to take Japan-related courses as part of their own degree structure.

The possibility of combining Japan specialisation with other disciplines expanded further at the post-graduate level. The Australia-Japan Research Centre coordinated graduate research on Australia-Japan relations in the fields of economics, international trade, and political and international relations. The 1989 report listed the wide ranging research topics undertaken by students at AJRC. The areas covered in this list included Japanese foreign economic policy issues, Japanese agricultural policy, the information technology industry in Japan, private economic diplomacy in Australia-Japan relations, the strategic dimensions of Japan-United States military high-tech collaboration, and Japanese resource acquisition (Skryzypczak, E. R. 1989:32).

In 1988, the University of Queensland recorded six hundred and twenty (620) students enrolled in Japanese, making it the largest Japanese department in Australia in terms of student numbers. The Japanese studies program at the University of Queensland drew its major strength from language teaching. In 1989 Rix described that the strength had been nurtured in a favourable environment including 'rich staff resources, a

supportive institutional framework, and a recognition within the institution of the importance of language teaching, and the language-culture interface' (Rix 1989:79).

The particularly well-recognised program offered by the University of Queensland was the Japanese interpreting and translation course, which was offered both at the Honours and Masters level. The aim of the course was to provide training for students with a strong grounding in the language so that their skills would be brought up to the standard suitable for simultaneous interpreting at international conferences, or specialised interpreting in professional fields such as science and law. The course received an accreditation at Level Four by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters, making it the only such program at that level in Australia.

In terms of responding to the specific needs of the state of Queensland, Rix stated that the University of Queensland curriculum was designed to enhance vocational relevance by focusing on the graduate studies in interpreting and translation, tourism-related language studies, and by placing the importance of Japanese language study in other professional faculties (ibid.:79).

The Japanese programs in the three universities described above are, however, amongst the fortunate ones which were relatively well placed when the first expansion in Japanese studies occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. By the time of *Tsunami*, they were all well-established departments in major universities in the major cities, each having more than twenty years of history. Academic members there had sufficient experience to recognise immediately the national importance of the second and major wave of expansion, which was the *Tsunami*. They had resources, firstly to cope with the *Tsunami* shock, and secondly to take advantage of it to develop new initiatives. Consequently, they were able to advance their programs to meet the national demand.

The situation was not so favourable for the Japanese programs in many other universities. Even if the Japanese studies academic members at the

university demonstrated strong determination and dedication to meet both challenges, coping with the influx of students and responding to Australia's particular need of Japan-related education, the support within the institution was not always forthcoming. In these universities, the coordinator of the Japanese program had the most difficult task of sorting out priorities. The majority of the program coordinators, however, managed to put forward some initiatives to expand their program beyond the perimeter of language and culture teaching, and to provide students with opportunities to develop vocationally relevant skills.

In 1992 Marriott surveyed the general picture of Japanese programs in Australian universities. In her article, she reported that the integration of a Japanese language program with other disciplines was largely proceeding in three ways (Marriott 1992:21-32). First, an increasing number of universities began to allow students to undertake Japanese studies courses with a major study offered by another faculty, such as economics or law.

Second, a double or combined degree program was increasingly available. These programs allowed students to study two programs concurrently, resulting in many cases of an extended period of study beyond the normal three years at undergraduate level.

Third, an increasing number of vocationally oriented programs offered by various universities began to include Japanese units in their programs. Examples included the Griffith University's program leading to the degree in International Business Relations. This requires a compulsory Asian language component, one of which is Japanese. Another is Monash University's program leading to the degree in International Trade which requires a study of Japanese or Chinese as a component.

#### 4.5 Teacher Education

The rapid growth in national demand for Japanese language and literacy was felt not only at universities. Significant impact had been felt for some time at secondary schools and, in some districts, primary schools. Under the environment in which Australia was trying to forge ever stronger links