

# IRU factsheet

## Building links with Asia-Pacific

IRU members are at the forefront of knowledge and cultural exchange with Asia, offering study and in-country experiences with many Asian countries.



IRU members have a foundational commitment to engagement with Asia, enjoying long-established links with Asian counterparts.

We educated 48,000 international students in 2018, which is around 10% of all international university students in Australia.

IRU members regularly collaborate with researchers and universities across the Asia-Pacific region, enabling both sides of the partnership to benefit from cross-country research projects, cultural exchange visits and overseas placements for Australian students.

A selection of recent IRU activity in the Asia-Pacific region is outlined below.

### IRU activity in Asia-Pacific

#### IRU Asia Centres

IRU universities include specialist Asia-focused study centres that support teaching, learning and cultural exchange for students and the wider community. They include:

- Griffith Asia Institute, Griffith University;
- Centre for International Trade and Business in Asia (CITBA), James Cook University;
- China Studies Research Centre, La Trobe University;
- Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University;
- Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture, Western Sydney University.

## IRU Scholars in Asia

IRU Scholars in Asia is a program to enhance outward student mobility across the IRU network, providing opportunities to students at IRU member universities to travel, collaborate and interact with students from other Australian universities.

## New Colombo Plan (NCP)

The Government's New Colombo Plan is a mobility program established in 2014. NCP has since helped increase mobility participation at IRU members by increasing the awareness of short-term mobility opportunities for Australia students to travel to the Asia-Pacific region and embedding these opportunities within the curriculum. Importantly, NCP has made it clear all students should have the opportunity to participate in Asia-Pacific mobility programs, not just the elite.

## IRU Pakistan in-country manager

In the first collective activity of its kind for the IRU, members have banded together to employ an in-country manager in Pakistan to raise the profile of IRU members through with schools, colleges and the Pakistan Government.

The IRU's in-country manager will also provide IRU members with support in training agents, intelligence gathering and identifying new opportunities for the region such as scholarships and research opportunities.



## Malaysia Research Universities Network (MRUN)

From 2014 to 2017, the IRU partnered with the Malaysia Research University Network (MRUN) to deliver a series of cross-country research projects running across two streams: Teaching and Learning; and Research. In addition to the outputs of the joint projects, the collaboration established close and continuing partnerships between the two groups and their respective universities.

The MRUN partnership is proof of the value of international collaboration. As well as producing dozens of joint projects, it has laid the foundations for ongoing relationships and information exchange between the participating institutions and individual researchers.

## What the Government can do

A small number of funding programs already support collaborative and mutually beneficial research between Australia and the Asia-Pacific region, such as the *Australia-China Science and Research Fund* and the *Australia-India Strategic Research Fund*.

Some individual scholarships also exist, though most target research students rather than established researchers.

The Australian Government should work with the Governments of interested countries to:

- establish an Asia Research and Innovation Network
- invest in information and communication technologies that allow research projects by geographically dispersed teams
- encourage international research and innovation through government research programs
- support researcher mobility between countries, including at the postgraduate student level, building on the growing undergraduate interchange highlighted by the New Colombo Plan.