INDO-PACIFIC INSIGHT SERIES

From Export to Engagement: Australia's Knowledge Diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific

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Volume 26, November 2025

Perth USAsia Centre
INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY

KEY MESSAGES

1. Higher education remains Australia's strongest and most recognisable soft power instrument in the Indo-Pacific and is an increasingly important diplomatic tool in a challenging strategic landscape.
2. However, to date Australia's international education policy has been shaped by domestic pressures rather than a coherent diplomatic vision.
3. A narrow focus on the sector's export value and policy volatility risk is eroding the very trust Australia's soft power depends upon.
4. By reframing education as knowledge diplomacy – through inclusive scholarships, long-term institutional partnerships and alignment with foreign policy goals – Australia can transcend this paradigm.
5. Such a shift would not only sustain Australia's regional influence but strengthen the country's capacity to shape, rather than merely respond to, regional dynamics.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hangga Fathana is an Assistant Professor of International Relations at Universitas Islam Indonesia, with more than 15 years of experience teaching Australian politics and foreign policy. In addition to his academic role, he serves as the Executive Secretary at the university. His research focuses on the political economy of higher education as a global public good and its influence on the wider global landscape. He has participated in programs such as the Australia Awards Short Course on Strategic Equilibrium in the Indo-Pacific and the Emerging Indo-Pacific Leaders Program hosted by the Perth USAsia Centre, reflecting his engagement with key issues in the region.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In an era of profound global uncertainty, Australia's foreign policy is under renewed scrutiny. The return of Donald Trump to the White House has unsettled confidence in Washington's reliability, while China remains an indispensable economic partner, yet a strategic rival marked by mistrust. For a middle power such as Australia, these dynamics revive the country's longstanding "fear of abandonment" – the anxiety that its security and prosperity ultimately depend on others' choices.[1] Traditionally, Canberra has sought reassurance through alliances and hard power commitments. Yet these tools alone cannot secure the trust and influence that Australia needs across the Indo-Pacific.

Amid this shifting landscape, higher education stands out as Australia's most consistent and recognisable instrument of soft power.[2] The record 839,199 international students enrolled in 2025, including 450,580 in universities, illustrates its enduring scale and reach.[3] Students from across Asia, the Pacific and beyond engage daily with Australian classrooms, research centres and communities, creating webs of relationships that extend long after graduation.

> These networks represent an enduring source of goodwill and mutual understanding—assets no military alliance or trade deal can replicate.

Yet influence does not automatically translate into legitimacy. Australia has not articulated a deliberate soft power strategy for higher education, leaving policy shaped largely by domestic political debates about migration, housing and labour.[4] This narrow focus risks casting international education as a commercial export industry rather than a shared endeavour in knowledge. Regional perceptions already reflect this fragility, with concerns about costs, scholarships and visa caps feeding the suspicion that students are treated less as partners and more as revenue sources.

Without recalibration, Australia risks squandering its strongest soft power tool.[5] The challenge is to move beyond the export logic and frame higher education as a form of knowledge diplomacy – one that can anchor trust, reduce dependency on alliances, and reinforce Australia's role in sustaining equilibrium across the Indo-Pacific.[6]

2 SCALE AND DEPENDENCE

Australia's higher education sector today operates at an unparalleled scale. In June 2025, a record 839,199 international students were enrolled across the country, including 450,580 in universities.[7] This volume reinforces education as the primary channel through which Australia projects influence into the Indo-Pacific. No other national institution engages daily with such numbers of future leaders, professionals and decision-makers from the region.

Yet scale also breeds dependence. The financial model of Australian universities rests heavily on revenue from international fee-paying students, particularly in metropolitan Group of Seven institutions. While this dependence has enabled universities to fund world-class research and infrastructure, it also exposes vulnerabilities.[8]

> When education is framed primarily as an export industry – valued at more than $40 billion annually – perceptions shift from partnership to transaction.

This commercial framing intersects with domestic political pressures. Debates over housing affordability, labour markets and migration policy frequently draw international students into contentious national discussions. Proposals for caps on student visas or restrictions on post-study work rights are often advanced with limited consideration of their regional implications. Such moves risk undermining Australia's reputation as a stable and welcoming education destination, replacing goodwill with uncertainty.

BOX 1: **Australia's student visa caps - balancing sustainability and stability**

Background:

In 2024, the government proposed a bill to cap international student enrolments, but it was ultimately rejected by the Senate. Since then, Australia has implemented a "soft cap" system, under which visa applications are delayed once an education provider reaches 80 per cent of the government's target maximum for new international students.

Objective:

Manage international student growth amid pressures on housing, labour markets, and migration numbers.

Policy intent:

Ensure the "sustainable growth" of Australia's international education sector after the post-pandemic surge.

Issues raised:

The cap has raised concerns that it may deter high-quality international students and reduce Australia's competitiveness, with universities warning of lost revenue and reputational risks, while regional partners perceive mixed diplomatic signals and growing policy uncertainty.

Regional perception:

Often seen less as technical migration management and more as a reflection of Australia's domestic political anxieties, raising doubts about long-term openness to students from the Indo-Pacific.

The dependence on fee-paying students also magnifies reputational risks in times of crisis. The 2020 pandemic revealed the fragility of an over-reliance on international enrolments, as border closures left universities exposed to severe revenue shocks. More recently, abrupt changes to visa policy have created confusion and frustration among students and partner governments alike.

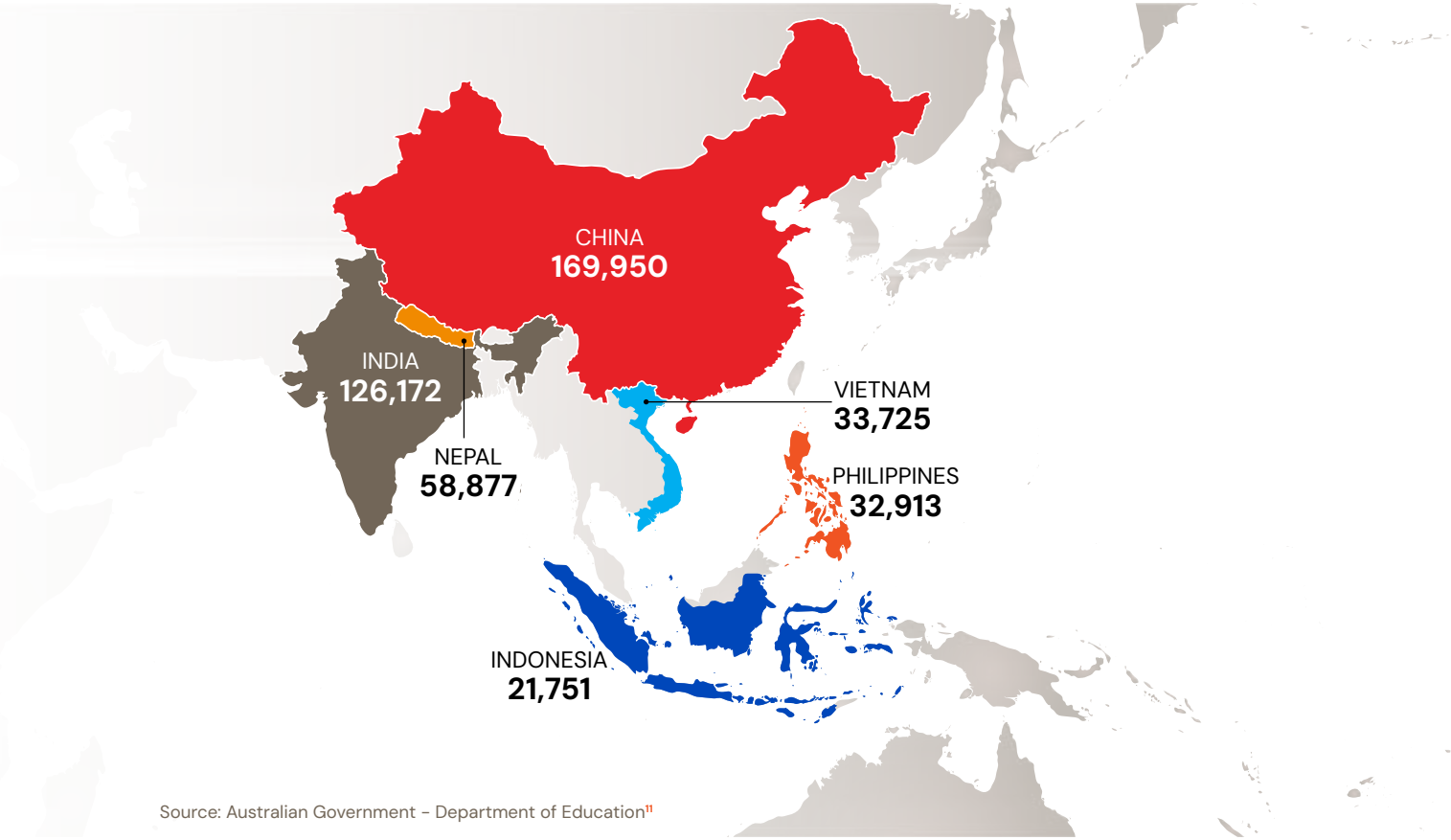
These dynamics highlight the precarious balance between financial sustainability and diplomatic credibility.

Unless recalibrated, Australia's higher education may remain locked in a cycle where commercial imperatives dominate, leaving its most powerful soft power tool vulnerable to erosion. As others have noted, Australia's international education holds latent soft power potential that can only be realised through strategic coherence and diplomatic intent.[9]

2 SHIFTING REGIONAL DYNAMICS

For decades, the story of Australia's international education influence was dominated by two giants: China and India. In 2025, China still accounts for 169,950 students and India 126,172. Yet recent enrolment patterns reveal a more complex landscape. Nepal now sends 58,877 students, Vietnam 33,725, the Philippines 32,913 and Indonesia 21,751.[10] This diversification signals that Australia's soft power reach is no longer concentrated in two major powers but increasingly shaped by smaller states and emerging Southeast Asian partners.

FIGURE 1: **International student enrolments in Australia, 2025**



Source: Australian Government - Department of Education[11]

The implications are significant. Southeast Asia, in particular, is emerging as the decisive arena for Australia's future influence. Proximity, demographic growth and shared regional institutions make it a natural focus for Canberra's Indo-Pacific engagement. Yet the policy and institutional response has often been narrowly commercial. Universities compete for market share in Vietnam and Indonesia, while government strategies highlight offshore delivery and promotional campaigns rather than capacity-building.[12]

This market orientation leaves Australia exposed. Regional competitors such as Japan, Korea and China frame education explicitly as diplomacy, linking scholarships and institutional partnerships to long-term strategic objectives (Box 2). By contrast, Australia lacks a deliberate design. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Soft Power Review, initiated in 2017, was suspended without outcome.[13] International education policy has since been driven primarily by domestic debates on migration and labour supply, with little reference to regional perceptions or diplomatic goals.[14]

The Australian Strategy for International Education 2021–2030 articulates a vision centred on diversification, skills alignment, and the recovery of education exports following the COVID-19 downturn. While framed as an effort to build global connections, its policy instruments remain focused on onshore enrolments, offshore delivery, and market access rather than regional capacity-building.[15]

The result is a widening gap between influence and legitimacy. Numbers demonstrate Australia's scale, but the absence of a strategic framework weakens its ability to convert enrolments into sustained trust. For students and partner governments in Southeast Asia, the impression that policy is dictated more by Canberra's domestic pressures than by a shared regional vision raises doubts about Australia's long-term reliability. Beyond policy rhetoric, Australia's engagement in Southeast Asian higher education remains limited in scope and depth.

Most initiatives have centred on meeting demand for Australian degrees rather than cultivating institutional capacity. The proliferation of offshore campuses—including Monash University's expansion in Indonesia—reflects ambition for presence but not necessarily partnership. While such campuses offer accessibility and branding advantage, they seldom translate into long-term capacity-building or co-designed governance structures that strengthen regional universities.

The emergence of Australian campuses abroad illustrates both the opportunity and complexity of transnational higher education. While these initiatives expand access and visibility, they also reveal the need for greater sensitivity to local institutional diversity and regulatory frameworks. Experiences across the Indo-Pacific — including in Indonesia, where branch campuses navigate multi-layered approval processes and differing public expectations — highlight the challenge of transforming education exports into genuine instruments of partnership. Moving forward, ensuring that such campuses operate as collaborative nodes rather than competitive outposts will be essential for advancing Australia's knowledge diplomacy across the region.

While Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040 recognises education and skills as priority sectors, its operational focus remains narrow.[16] The case studies it highlights—such as partnerships in Vietnam's vocational training or Malaysia's education pathways—illustrate engagement at the programmatic level but fall short of systemic capacity-building.

> The strategy's recommendations reveal this imbalance. Most proposals emphasise increasing student mobility, promoting Australian qualifications, or expanding offshore delivery—measures that primarily benefit Australian institutions rather than strengthen Southeast Asia's own educational infrastructure.

For instance, calls for "raising awareness of Australia's offerings," "ensuring visa competitiveness," and "encouraging work-integrated learning internships" reinforce a transactional model of engagement. Even initiatives framed as capability-building—such as co-financed scholarships, outbound mobility, or joint research grants—still revolve around the logic of bringing Southeast Asian students to Australian campuses, rather than empowering regional universities to become equal co-creators of knowledge. This approach contrasts with Japan's JICA-funded higher education reforms or the EU's Erasmus+ capacity-building projects, which invest directly in institutional governance, curriculum development, and research ecosystems within partner countries.[17]

Australia's model has often been defined less by strategy than by circumstance. It benefits from structural advantages—English as the medium of instruction, geographic proximity to Asia, and a large regional diaspora—but these strengths function as passive assets rather than deliberate instruments of diplomacy. While genuine partnerships exist, such as joint research under the

Partnership for Australia-Indonesia Research (PAIR) or the establishment of Australian campuses in Indonesia through IA-CEPA, these initiatives remain geographically and institutionally limited. They often engage elite public universities or specific regions, leaving broader systems of higher education untouched.[18]

> Without a coherent regional strategy, Australia's influence risks remaining fragmented—visible through presence and numbers yet lacking the rooted reciprocity that sustains legitimacy.

This dynamic is reflected in the government's flagship Australian Strategy for International Education 2021–2030, which emphasises export growth and diversification but stops short of proposing mechanisms for sustained institutional co-development with Indo-Pacific counterparts.

To maintain its place in the Indo-Pacific knowledge ecosystem, Australia must move beyond promotional strategies and offshore delivery. Higher education's legitimacy and long-term influence depend on its character as a global public good: one built on collaboration, reciprocity, and shared value rather than competitive export logic.[19] What is needed is a structural shift—from exporting education to co-developing it, from recruitment to reciprocity, and from transactional exchange to institutional trust.

3 PERCEPTIONS FROM ASIA

Numbers alone cannot secure legitimacy. Across the Indo-Pacific, students and partner governments consistently underline the gap between Australia's scale of engagement and the quality of that engagement. For students, Australia offers valuable access to global networks, professional opportunities and English-language education. Yet they frequently cite concerns about rising costs of living, limited scholarships and uncertainty created by shifting visa rules. For many, the experience of studying in Australia is marked as much by financial anxiety as by academic achievement.

Regional policymakers echo these concerns. Officials and scholars from Southeast Asia often note that Australia's international education policies appear driven more by domestic economics than by a shared commitment to knowledge as a public good. Announcements of student visa caps or sudden policy changes on post-study work rights are interpreted not only as administrative adjustments but as signals of instability and short-term thinking. These perceptions risk undermining trust precisely at the moment when Australia needs to consolidate its position in the region.

Scholars have long cautioned against the commodification of higher education. Simon Marginson argues that universities lose legitimacy when framed primarily as providers of private returns rather than contributors to the global public good.[20] In this view, treating international students as "cash cows" erodes the very trust that underpins soft power. While Australia has benefitted financially from its export model, the long-term costs are becoming clear: suspicion of motives, frustration with policy inconsistency, and growing competition from regional alternatives.

For Southeast Asia in particular, trust is a decisive currency. Students and governments alike evaluate Australia not only on educational quality but also on whether its policies reflect reciprocity, inclusiveness, and respect. The importance of trust is embedded in ASEAN's normative architecture: the ASEAN Way emphasizes consensus, mutual respect, and informal norms of cooperation, and ASEAN's strategic plans underscore tolerance, mutual respect, and collective identity as foundational values.[21] These norms have underpinned the region's resilience through decades of change, binding member states through shared expectations of behaviour.

Over the past decades, the Australia Awards have produced thousands of long-term and short-term alumni who embody enduring connections between Australia and the Indo-Pacific. These networks remain one of Australia's most tangible reservoirs of trust. Yet relying solely on alumni as the frontline of soft power is becoming increasingly challenging. Regional competitors are deploying more deliberate and state-backed education diplomacy, embedding scholarships within strategic partnerships, co-branded institutions, and development frameworks that extend beyond individual relationships. Without comparable institutional anchoring, Australia risks having its alumni goodwill overshadowed by competitors' more assertive and coordinated approaches.

4 COMPETITION AND CHOICES

Australia's regional competitors approach education with deliberate diplomatic intent. Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) offers thousands of scholarships annually, often embedded within institution-to-institution partnerships that cultivate long-term affinity. South Korea's Global Korea Scholarship (GKS) combines financial support with cultural immersion and language training, ensuring that graduates carry a sustained emotional connection alongside academic credentials. China, through its dense network of government scholarships and Confucius Institutes, has woven higher education directly into the fabric of its foreign policy and development cooperation.

BOX 2: **Examples of Indo-Pacific Knowledge diplomacy**

Finally, Australia must change its narrative. International education should no longer be framed as a $40 billion export, but as a cornerstone

JAPAN

STI for SDGs (JICA Program)

Links university partnerships with Japan's broader development agenda. Multi-year collaborations focus on curriculum reform, research management, and governance capacity in partner universities.

KOREA

Global Korea Scholarship (GKS)

Combines full financial support with language and cultural immersion. Graduates develop long-term professional and emotional ties that strengthen Korea's regional visibility.

CHINA

Chinese Government Scholarships and Education under the Belt and Road Initiative

Combines long-standing government scholarships with newer BRI-linked programs that integrate Confucius Institutes and joint-campus ventures. Together, these initiatives form a single framework of cultural and development diplomacy, projecting China's soft power alongside its economic influence.

Takeaway: Each program treats education as statecraft, a long-term investment in trust and institutional partnership, rather than a transactional exchange of degrees.

Unlike Japan, Korea, or China, whose educational initiatives are tightly woven into foreign policy, Australia's engagement has evolved more reactively than strategically. This absence of a unified strategy leaves Australia vulnerable to perceptions of inconsistency and short-termism. While Japan, Korea, and China have positioned their universities as extensions of statecraft—agents of trust and technology transfer—Australia's institutions often appear commercially driven and domestically constrained.[22] Its presence in the region is visible, but its legitimacy is shallow.[23]

If left unaddressed, Australia risks maintaining the illusion of leadership while gradually ceding substantive influence. This trajectory, however, is not irreversible. Australia still possesses the credibility, infrastructure, and intellectual networks to redefine its educational engagement. What is needed is not more visibility, but more vision — a deliberate recalibration that treats education as diplomacy rather than export.

5 PATHWAYS FORWARD

Australia's international education system stands at a crossroads. To sustain influence in the Indo-Pacific, it must evolve from an export industry into an instrument of knowledge diplomacy — one that fosters shared capacity and long-term institutional trust. This transformation requires policies that align domestic priorities with regional aspirations.[24]

The first step is to move beyond transactional reforms such as visa recalibration or promotional campaigns. These measures, while necessary, are insufficient to bridge the structural gap between scale and legitimacy. Instead, Australia and its universities must pursue a whole-of-system approach that embeds collaboration at every level — from policy dialogue to institutional design — and treats Southeast Asian partners as co-architects of regional knowledge ecosystems.

Australia already possesses a foundation to build on. Existing initiatives such as the Australia Awards Scholarships and the Partnership for Australia–Indonesia Research (PAIR) embody elements of mutuality and institutional trust. Co-financed programs like the LPDP–AAS joint scholarship scheme also point to emerging models of shared ownership. Yet these efforts remain fragmented and largely concentrated in a few bilateral partnerships.

To sustain influence across the wider Indo-Pacific, Australia needs not only to consolidate these programs but also to amplify their spirit of reciprocity through region-wide initiatives that engage partners across Southeast Asia and the Pacific. The next challenge is to align and scale these efforts under a coherent framework of knowledge diplomacy, one that treats mutuality not as a by-product, but as the guiding principle of Australia's international education engagement.

Second, Australia should invest in genuine capacity-building frameworks across the Indo-Pacific. This means co-developing curricula, governance models, and research ecosystems with regional universities — not merely recruiting their students. A dedicated regional program for institutional strengthening — akin to the EU's *Erasmus+ Capacity Building for Higher Education* — would demonstrate commitment to mutual growth and long-term reciprocity.

> Such initiatives would also distinguish Australia's engagement from the competitive, market-driven models that currently dominate the region.

Third, funding mechanisms must shift toward co-financed, co-owned partnerships. Joint research centres, cross-accredited postgraduate programs, and regionally based innovation hubs can anchor Australia's presence in ways that survive political or economic fluctuations. Such initiatives would not only reinforce Australia's soft power but also help regional partners build their own academic sovereignty. Unlike its competitors, Australia's proximity, historical linkages, and linguistic accessibility offer it a unique comparative advantage — but only if leveraged for genuine co-creation that builds institutional resilience rather than recruitment-driven dependency.

of its regional diplomacy — a contribution to the Indo-Pacific's collective knowledge infrastructure. As Simon Marginson argues, sustainability arises when knowledge is treated as a *global public good*. By embracing this principle, Australia can convert its educational scale into legitimacy, its visibility into trust, and its partnerships into enduring influence. Reframing education in this way will require courage — to privilege long-term trust over short-term gains, and to view partnerships not as charity, but as co-authored regional futures.

BOX 3: **Recommendations to enhance Australia's education soft power**

1. Pursue a whole-of-system approach that embeds collaboration at every level and treats Southeast Asian partners as co-architects of regional knowledge ecosystems.
2. Invest in genuine capacity-building frameworks across the Indo-Pacific.
3. Shift funding mechanisms toward shift co-financed, co-owned partnerships.
4. Adjust the narrative – from international education's export value to a cornerstone of regional diplomacy.

ENDNOTES

1 Gyngell, A. (2017), *Fear of Abandonment: Australia in the World Since 1942*, Melbourne: La Trobe University Press.

2 Wu, H. (2024), 'The decline of Australia's soft power and its implication for Indo-Pacific security', *PacNet*, No. 60, Pacific Forum, 23 August.

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5 Reilly, B. (2015), 'Australia as a Southern Hemisphere "soft power"', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 69(3): 253–265. doi:10.1080/10357718.2014.989809.

6 This framework was however once analysed on a regional basis. For example, see Abimbola, S., et al. (2016), 'Australian higher education scholarships as tools for international development and diplomacy in Africa', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 70(2): 105–120. doi:10.1080/10357718.2015.1119230.

7 Department of Education (2025), 'International student numbers by country, by state and territory'.

8 Sato, K., Higgins-Devine, K. & Austin, S. (2024), 'How dependent on international students have our universities become?', *ABC News*, 16 May. Available at: https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-05-16/group-of-8-universities-third-of-income-international-students/103846352 [accessed 11 October 2025].

9 Byrne, C. & Hall, R. (2013), 'Realising Australia's international education as public diplomacy', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 67(4): 419–438.

10 Department of Education (2025), 'International student numbers by country, by state and territory'.

11 Department of Education (2025), 'International student numbers by country, by state and territory'.

12 Department of Education (2021), 'Australian Strategy for International Education 2021–2030', *Australian Government – Department of Education*, 26 November. Available at: https://www.education.gov.au/australian-strategy-international-education-2021-2030/resources/australian-strategy-international-education-2021-2030 [accessed 11 October 2025].

13 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (n.d.), 'Soft Power Review', *Australian Government – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*. Available at: https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/public-diplomacy/soft-power-review [accessed 12 October 2025].

ENDNOTES *Continued*

14 This dynamic reflects what Mark Zachary Taylor describes as the loss of *creative insecurity*—a condition where nations innovate most effectively when external challenges outweigh internal complacency. When domestic debates eclipse perceived external threats, policy imagination narrows, and the potential of international education as knowledge diplomacy diminishes. See Taylor, M. Z. (2016), *The Politics of Innovation: Why Some Countries Are Better Than Others at Science and Technology*, New York: Oxford University Press.

15 Department of Education (2021), Australian Strategy for International Education 2021–2030, *Australian Government – Department of Education*, 26 November. Available at: https://www.education.gov.au/australian-strategy-international-education-2021-2030/resources/australian-strategy-international-education-2021-2030 [accessed 11 October 2025].

16 Moore, N. (2023), *Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040*, Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

17 Japan's *Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development Goals (STI for SDGs)* program, implemented through JICA, supports multi-year collaborations that strengthen university governance and research management across Asia. Meanwhile, the European Union's *Erasmus+ Capacity Building for Higher Education (CBHE)* program provides grants for joint curriculum development, staff mobility, and modernization of higher-education systems in partner countries, including Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines. See European Commission (2025), 'Capacity building for higher education – Erasmus+', *European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)*, 25 September. Available at: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/opportunities/opportunities-for-organisations/cooperation-among-organisations-and-institutions/capacity-building-higher-education [accessed 12 October 2025].

18 In Indonesia alone, there are more than 4,500 higher education institutions, with private universities (Perguruan Tinggi Swasta, PTS) educating the majority of students nationwide. Yet most international partnerships—such as those under the Partnership for Australia-Indonesia Research (PAIR)—are concentrated in elite public universities, including Universitas Hasanuddin, Universitas Indonesia, Institut Teknologi Bandung, and Universitas Gadjah Mada. See The Australia–Indonesia Centre (2025), 'PAIR | The Partnership for Australia–Indonesia Research', *PAIR*, 20 March. Available at: https://pair.australiaindonesiacentre.org/ [accessed 12 October 2025].

19 Marginson, S. (2016), *Higher Education and the Common Good*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing; see also Marginson, S. (2011), 'Higher education and the public good', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 65(4): 411–433. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2273.2011.00496.x.

20 Marginson, S. & Yang, L. (2025), 'Higher education and public good in England', *Higher Education*, 89(1): 183–203. doi:10.1007/s10734-024-01339-2; see also Marginson, S. (2021), 'Higher education and public and common good', *Higher Education*, 82(2): 389–402.

21 Caballero-Anthony, M. (2022), 'The ASEAN Way and the changing security environment: Navigating challenges to informality and centrality', *International Politics*, published online 11 June. doi:10.1057/s41311-022-00400-0.

22 Japan explicitly links research, innovation and international cooperation in its STI for SDGs programs to diplomatic strategy. See Japan Science and Technology Agency (2021), 'Mobilizing science, technology and innovation for SDGs: Japanese actions in STI for SDGs', *Japan Science and Technology Agency*, April. Available at: https://www.jst.go.jp/sdgs/en/pdf/sti_for_sdgs_report_en_apr_2021.pdf. South Korea's scholarship programs like GKS serve cultural diplomacy and exchange, though explicit "university-as-statecraft" framing is less documented. China's Confucius Institutes and global university investments are widely interpreted as instruments of education diplomacy.

23 Regarding Australia, Byrne & Hall argue that although Australia's international education has high commercial value, its soft power potential is underexploited; coordination across agencies and long-term diplomacy integration remain weak. See Byrne, C. & Hall, R. (2013), 'Realising Australia's international education as public diplomacy', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 67(4): 419–438. doi:10.1080/10357718.2013.806019; see also Byrne, C. & Hall, R. (2011), 'Australia's international education as public diplomacy: Soft power potential', *Clingendael Discussion Paper in Diplomacy*, No. 121: 1–27.

24 This ethos of engagement is not foreign to Australia's broader identity. It reflects the same principle that underpins its wider foreign policy — a commitment to partnership grounded in respect and reciprocity rather than imposition. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese underscored this in his 2025 address to the United Nations General Assembly: "It is not the Australian way to try and impose our values on other nations. But when we deal with the world, we bring our values with us". See Albanese, A. (2025), 'Australia's national statement', *Prime Minister of Australia*, 24 September. Available at: https://www.pm.gov.au/media/australias-national-statement [accessed 12 October 2025].

Perth USAsia Centre

ABOUT PERTH USASIA CENTRE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Perth USAsia Centre would like to thank the wide range of individuals who have supported the production of this report. Many other individuals – across business, government and academia – kindly offered insights, information and feedback that have enriched the report. Nonetheless, the author is responsible for all content and arguments contained herein.

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