

EUROPEAN UNION CENTRE

Roundtable discussion: Education for the Global Age

THE GLOBALISATION OF AUSTRALIA



Asia is the centre of the world. At least this is the underlying rationale for the recent Australia in the Asian Century White Paper, which outlines strategies for deepening Australia's connections with Asia. The justifications for closer engagement are primarily economic. Opportunities for trade and investment cooperation across the region are growing, as is the economic significance of China and India, and Australia has no alternative but to respond positively to this regional transformation.

Education features prominently as a strategic priority both to prepare Australian minds for professional work in the region but also to connect university, college and school systems across Asia to facilitate learning and knowledge exchange.

The most controversial recommendation stressed the urgent need to equip Australians with Asia-relevant knowledge and skills - "Asia capabilities."

The white paper specified language and knowledge gaps and reminded us that reliance upon English, the global lingua franca, is not a viable long-term option if Australians are to communicate effectively in Asia. Asia-relevant expertise has for a long time resided in Asian studies and language programs catering to students in the humanities and social sciences interested in Asian issues. The challenge is to generalise this general interest in Asian cultures, languages and societies across the university curriculum to ensure that graduates from vocationally specialized areas are equipped with, at the very least, a basic comprehension of Asia. Ideally, an increased proportion of graduates from Engineering, Medical Sciences, Business, and Computing should possess highly specialized Asia capabilities, in particular the ability to communicate professionally in an Asian language.

RMIT University pursues a vigorous program of regional cooperation through RMIT Vietnam and the many academic and research programs that connect with Asian universities and research institutes. This Roundtable will debate how RMIT can build upon these initiatives and reconcile its mission to be a globally connected university with the regional priorities set out in the Asian Century white paper.

To contextualise what will be the start of a continuing discussion throughout the year at RMIT, the Roundtable features presentations from an expert panel comprising:

H.E. Mr. David Daly, Ambassador and Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Australia and New Zealand
Professor On Kit Tam, Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor, College of Business
Associate Professor Christopher Ziguras, Deputy Dean, Learning and Teaching, School of Global, Urban and Social Studies.
Ms. Margot Kilgour, Executive Manager, The Australian APEC Studies Centre

Event details:

Title: Roundtable discussion: Education for the Global Age

Date: 21 May, 2013

Time: 12.30 pm – 2.30 pm

Location: The Chamber, RMIT Building 1 (city campus)

Bookings: By email with the subject heading, "Global Asia Roundtable" to globalstudiesweek@rmit.edu.au by 5pm Monday 20 May

