

OVERSEAS STUDENTS AND TERTIARY EDUCATION: NOTES ON THE AUSTRALIAN-MALAYSIAN LINK

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Background

On 8 September 1983, the Australian Government announced the establishment of a Committee to review private overseas student policy to be chaired by Professor John Golding (Law, Macquarie University) and assisted by Mr Frank Hambly, (Secretary, Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee) as Vice-Chairman. It was expected to report on its findings before March 1984 so that any recommended changes could be implemented well before the school year commencing in February/March 1985.¹

The main lines of enquiry involved the place and role that private overseas students, coming to Australia, played in (a) international understanding and cultural exchange, (b) development assistance, (c) immigration, (d) education and (e) trade-interests of the government.²

Because of the growing numbers of private overseas students especially from Southeast Asia, and predominantly Chinese from Malaysia, there are a variety of sensitive socio-cultural, racial-ethnic, as well as developmental factors involved, apart from those of a more directly educational and training nature. The increasing financial stringency experienced in recent years by the tertiary education sector, the growing competition for places and the imposition of foreign student quotas in certain selected faculties (such as medicine, dentistry, architecture, engineering and science) have all contributed to the government's dilemma in determining suitable admission policies relevant for the 1980s.

Tertiary education has been virtually tuition free since 1973, and it is not until recently that overseas students have been asked to pay a partial contribution to their education in Australia. Since 1980, private overseas students have had to pay a 'visa' fee which theoretically covers about one-third of the direct educational costs incurred on their behalf by the Australian taxpayer. For many less well-off families in Southeast Asia, the cost of finding each year between \$A2000-3000 for a visa fee (depending on the type of programme involved) on top of annual living expenses, of between \$A4000-5000, involves a considerable financial burden. In 1984 these fees will be \$A2900 for postgraduate degrees, \$A2700 for medicine, dentistry and veterinary science and \$A2150 for all other courses.

Nomenclature: Private Overseas Students

The international educational exchange nomenclature is, for Australia, dominated essentially by two broad and uneven, certainly unbalanced, categories of students. The first, a majority grouping, is the private overseas student programme (POSP) and a minority grouping the government (i.e. Australian) sponsored overseas students.

Private students include all those students from overseas who are not in receipt of Australian government awards or training grants, and are so designated for definitional purposes in Australian government or official departmental nomenclature, particularly by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (DIEA), Foreign Affairs, Australian Development Assistance Bureau (ADAB), and the Department of Education and Youth Affairs (DEYA). For example, Malaysian students coming to Australia under Malaysian government sponsorships would generally be *bumiputra* or of Malay race and fewer ethnic Chinese or Indians would normally be involved in such government schemes. Hence the figure for 1982 of 5425 'Malaysian' tertiary students in Australia would involve predominantly private Chinese students, i.e. between 90-95% of the total, and a smaller number of Malay or *bumiputras* who are predominantly Malaysian government sponsored. However, for the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs accounting purposes, both groups are classified as 'private' students when they come to Australia if the Australian government plays no direct part in financing or overseeing their studies.

Statistical and verification problems

It is often difficult to obtain an up-to-date and accurate accounting for all overseas students in Australia because of varying complex, definitional and classification procedures used by different government departments.

Cross national studies and comparisons of international education or training programmes are activities which, while perhaps of general interest to a variety of Australian academics, in practice involve but few researchers. In spite of the fact that currently nearly 7% of all university students come from overseas, there is no unified non-governmental entity or professional academic or research body interested in or proctoring on a continuing basis the activities of this considerable group of students.

On an *ad hoc* and occasional basis a government department, a welfare organisation or an overseas student association will convene a meeting or conference to consider a specific theme or particular problem. For example, Australia does not have an official comprehensive, or professional organisation within the tertiary sector such as the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA) or a co-ordinating entity providing leadership such as the Institute for International Education (IIE) in the United States.

Nearly 4% of all students currently enrolled in various forms of tertiary institutions are specifically and directly from 'overseas' in the sense that they have purposefully and officially come to Australia for training or education. If one includes the number of students who have been born abroad and/or those whose parents have immigrated to Australia in the past two decades, however, more than a third of all tertiary students would have to be designated as having a significant 'overseas, if not multicultural connection'. Perhaps indeed this situation is the basis at times for some of the confusion, vagueness, indifference and even difficulties which often attend Australian academic attitudes towards 'foreign', 'international', 'overseas', or even 'ethnic originated' students with whom they are involved as teachers and/or researchers.³

Australia has nearly 12000 overseas students in 1983 studying at tertiary institutions and over 4000 studying at secondary schools, mostly completing higher school certificate studies in order to enter colleges or universities primarily in Australia. Malaysian students enrolled in Australian high schools increased nearly 100% between 1980 and 1982, increasing from approximately 800 to 1600 students in the three-year period. In 1980, of all private overseas students, both secondary and tertiary, Malaysia with nearly 4000 made up 50% of the total — while in 1982 there were 7000 students constituting 55%.⁴

In regard to the academic performance of overseas students in Australia much more information is necessary before accurate or useful comparisons can be made either within Australia between the various educational sectors, between institutions or between disciplines or fields of studies.

A pioneering and carefully structured study by G. Lakshmana Rao, undertaken between 1973-75 entitled *Brain Drain and Foreign Students*, published in 1979, still remains ten years later as the major 'current' study in the field. In view of the present unease and criticisms of the various private student programmes it is of interest to see what his now decade-old, findings revealed. He noted, that in respect of Malaysian students, some 71% of his study sample had some of their secondary education in Australia prior to entering a university or college of advanced education, and

about four-fifths of all those who had some secondary education in Australia were of Chinese racial origin.

TABLE 1

AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES: FACULTY QUOTAS OTHER THAN HIGHER DEGREES (OTHD) 1983

Discipline	Adelaide	Australian National U	Deakin*	Flinders	Griffith*	James Cook*	La Trobe	Macquarie	Melbourne	Monash	Murdoch	Newcastle	New England	New South Wales	Queensland	Sydney	Tasmania	Western Australia	Wollongong
Agricultural Science	5														1	4			
Architecture		No quotas	No quotas						4						10	5			
Arts									17						64	20			
Arts/Law															1				
Commerce															36			30	No quotas
Dental Science	3								2						22	4			
Design Studies															7				
Economics									46						4	10			
Education															21	1			
Engineering	9								44	80					33	10		40	
Human Movement Studies															1				
Laws									5						11	5			
Medicine/Surgery	5			4					12	8				20	58	6	4		
Music															1	1			
Occupational Therapy															4				
Pharmacy															12	4			
Physiotherapy															2				
Regional and Town Planning															3				
Science									29						27	12			
Social Work	30														2	4			
Surveying															16				
Veterinary Science									2		4				11	4			

*Deakin — A maximum of 30 percent of new student places in the Bachelor of Architecture program and a maximum of 10 percent for the Bachelor of Commerce, to be taken up by overseas applicants.

*James Cook — The number of first year overseas students must not exceed 25 percent of the total intake in a particular faculty.

*Griffith — The number of undergraduate places to be filled each year by students with overseas qualifications should not exceed 8 percent of the full-time places available throughout the university.

*Western Australia — An overall quota of 125 was imposed in 1981, 1982 and 1983 on new overseas students entering the first year of bachelor degree courses.

Source: Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee

He also noted that

among students from Malaysia, as many as two-thirds (68%) of the Malays are sponsored (home government) compared with less than a twentieth (4%) of the Chinese... This suggests a very high level of government support for the Malays and a high level of individual initiative and educational achievement on the part of the Chinese.

And moreover he has noted, apropos the 1973 data, that

Among private students from Malaysia 90% are Chinese while only 5% are Malay. Among those sponsored (home government) slightly more than a quarter (26%) are Chinese while two-thirds (68%) are Malays. This distribution suggests that while the Chinese have the initiative, drive, basic educational qualifications and financial support from within the family to go abroad for study, the Malays do not have the opportunity to go to Australia without governmental (home) support.⁵

A decade later in 1983, the situation would remain substantially the same.

The Australian-Malaysian Educational Link⁶

In 1982, 57% of all private overseas students in tertiary training came from Malaysia and nearly all were of Chinese ethnic origin. Malaysian tertiary students in Australia increased 35% in number from 3965 in 1980 to 5439 in 1982. (In addition 48% of all private overseas secondary students are also from Malaysia and predominantly of Chinese origin). This fact may to some extent influence the Australian government's attitude towards these overseas students especially if it believes that many of their families are sufficiently well off financially to send their children to Australia. It is considerably less expensive for them to come to Australia than enrol for tertiary studies in the USA, or in the UK, where charges have been imposed since 1980 ranging from approximately \$A5000 for an arts-humanities based course to \$A7500 for a science based course and \$A10000 for a medical course. By coming to countries such as Australia they avoid the severe educational quotas imposed by the Malaysian government on many Chinese students who have been unable to enter tertiary institutions in their own country. The *bumiputra* policy, or positive discrimination in favour of Malays seeking higher education, acts as a strong incentive to encourage Chinese (and to some degree Indians) to go abroad. Obviously Australia, and to a lesser extent Britain, America and Canada, all play an important role as a political and pedagogical safety valve for the Malaysian government, which in 1982 refused to allow the establishment of a private university predominantly for Chinese which would have catered to the needs of those students who are being forced to go abroad for their post-secondary training.

Hence the current Australian government enquiry into the role that private overseas students play in Australian tertiary institutions embraces a variety of long standing ethnic or racial problems and poses questions of sensitive political importance regarding many countries in the Asian-Pacific region with which Australia has long standing commercial, economic, political and defence involvements.

Malaysian Higher Education Policy

There are five universities in Malaysia, of which four were established after 1967. They cater to a population which today numbers nearly 15 million with an ethnic-racial composition of approximately 55% Malay, 35% Chinese and 10% Indian. A population survey conducted in 1980 indicated that, in socio-economic terms, about 30% of all Malaysia's people lived 'in poverty' of whom nearly three-quarters were Malays, about 17% Chinese and 8% Indian.

As Sharom Ahmat, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Universiti Sains, Malaysia has noted:

Occupations have also tended to be highly stratified according to race. While the Chinese are dominant in private industrial and commercial employment, and Indians in the professions, the Malays are largely in the civil service, police and armed forces, small holding agriculture and fishing.⁷

The New Economic Policy initiated in the Second Malaysia Plan 1971-75, gave first priority to the eradication of poverty as well as to the structural reorganisation of society to overcome the dysfunctional interaction of 'racial origins and economic inequalities'. Education has had a decisive role to play in restructuring Malaysian society particularly in regard to university entrance and training for the professions. The exclusive use of the Malay language, targeted for all first year university courses by 1983, a reversal in the current ratio of 60:40 arts-humanities bias in favour of science-technology, and the deliberate policy of Malay recruitment into the universities, are goals established over a decade ago. In 1969 when there was only one university in Malaysia, only 25% of enrolments consisted of Malays, however by 1975, with five universities established, Malays, accounted for over 57%; Chinese 36% and Indians 6%. In 1980 the proportion had changed respectively to approximately Malay 66%; Chinese 28% and Indian 6%. In order to partially 'redress' the clearly designed but obviously over successful imbalance which had been achieved within a decade, however, the Malaysian government decided in 1981 that a more 'ideal' ethnic mix should ultimately result in a ratio of 55% Malay and 45% non Malay, and set in motion a recruitment drive amongst non-Malays to achieve this more 'politically accepted' mix.⁸

Not unexpectedly the result of the government's carefully designed and rigorously implemented *bumiputra* policy has been to encourage non Malay students in increasing numbers to enrol overseas for their tertiary education. In turn, this has also increased the number of Chinese Malaysians who have been sent by their families to complete their last years of secondary education in countries such as Australia, New Zealand and Britain. The pressures from within Malaysia, which have forced the departure abroad of young people, are partially reflected in recent statistics showing the comparative enrolment of various ethnic groups in local and overseas institutions.

As has been noted earlier in this paper, Malaysia, although a priority country, is inordinately or grossly over-represented when compared to all the other priority countries. In fact for private overseas tertiary students amongst the various priority countries, Malaysia in 1982 took up 75% of the available places (i.e. all priority countries amounted to 7007, students and Malaysia accounted for 5426 places).

If the Department of Foreign Affairs sees the growing importance of fostering and increasing private students from PNG and the South Pacific it would as a corollary restrict progressively the entry, (or discourage the demand) from countries such as Malaysia or Hong Kong.

However, patent discrimination and gross anomalies in the operation of the POSP would result, believes the DIEA, if stricter selection criteria were to be imposed on a country such as Malaysia. It is obvious that there has been, in the last three years, an increasing demand for entry by private students from Malaysia (and also Hong Kong), and as DIEA has noted

arrivals from these countries have been increasing partly in response to demand, and the difficulties experienced in imposing the selection criteria; and partly because of political expediency, especially in the case of Malaysia.¹¹

A DIEA submission of May 1983 to the Jackson Committee (to review the Australian Overseas Aid Program) contains the critical quotations noted above (emphasis added by author) and in the case of 'political expediency' and 'Malaysia' no further comment perhaps is necessary. Such a cryptic note however without further explanation can only lead to the conclusion that there is a considerable difference of opinion between the government departments involved in the operation of the POSP and barely hinted at in a public submission to such a review as the Jackson Committee. This is perhaps more clearly borne out in a concluding summary when the DIEA paper bluntly notes:

... we consider that the mixture of aid, foreign policy, and general response-to-demand motives operating within POSP have produced a confused and ineffective policy. In our view, each of these could be catered for more effectively by separating out target groups within POSP and applying appropriate policy and resources to each.¹²

It is accordingly hard to escape the conclusion that, if the DIEA submission to the Jackson Review Committee on Development Assistance is in any way echoed or replicated in a similar submission to the newly established Golding Review Committee on POSP, then the position of Malaysia as a priority

TABLE 3
MALAYSIA
Enrolment in Degree-Level Courses in Local and Overseas Institutions
1978 and 1980

	MALAYS		CHINESE		INDIANS		OTHERS		TOTAL									
	1978	%	1980	%	1978	%	1980	%	1978	%	1980	%	1978	1980				
Local Institutions	11540	63.9	13138	65.5	5292	29.3	5450	27.1	1053	5.8	1248	6.2	179	1.0	209	1.2	18064	20045
Overseas Institutions	3937	22.5	5194	26.6	11293	64.5	11538	59.1	2086	11.9	2676	13.7	197	1.1	107	0.5	17513	19515
TOTAL	15477	43.5	18332	46.3	16585	46.6	16988	42.9	3139	8.8	3924	9.9	376	1.1	316	0.9	35577	39560

Table based on statistics provided by Sharom Ahmat in "Critical Issues that Face Tertiary Institutions and Administration in the 1980s: The Case of Malaysia", *Journal of Tertiary Educational Administration*, 5, 1, May 1983, p. 87.

Thus the Malaysian government's internal educational policies during the 1970s have had external ramifications indirectly transmitted to overseas institutions. During the 1980s countries such as Australia have contributed unwittingly to 'the solution' of a local problem now made regional which contains within it both racial and international connotations. The imposition of quotas, increasingly since 1978 in some Australian universities, and in certain key faculties perhaps also reflects an indirect response to Malaysian government policy. The deliberate maintenance in Malaysia of discriminatory quotas favouring Malays in universities and especially in particular faculties such as those involving science and technology has led to a recruitment drive amongst Malays to the detriment of non-Malays. Thus the two-fold pressure to keep recruitment overall of Malays high, and to continue remedial measures countering the arts-humanities bias in favour of science and technology, has forced non Malays to study abroad not only in highly preferred fields such as medicine, dentistry, architecture and engineering, but also now to seek places in arts-humanities, commerce, economics and business studies.

To cater to the needs of non-Malay students locally the establishment of a private university was proposed in 1980. Such an institution had been discussed as early as 1968 but the project was abandoned until more recently.

The government's public relations English language news sheet *Malaysia* of February 1983 noted the legal attempts in 1980 to establish a private Chinese university which was to be called Merdeka University Berhad and the High Court rejection of its application in 1982. With a peculiar sense of time it also noted the subsequent establishment of a new university (the sixth) in June 1983 to be called International Islamic University and located on Fraser's Hill, Kuala Lumpur, to be fully operational by 1995:

As the nation emerged from its quarter century of experience in the field of education, there were two further major developments.

A group of educators formed a company called the Merdeka University Berhad and had wanted to set up a private university to be known as the Merdeka University. It was an idea mooted 14 years ago by a group of Chinese educationists.

When Britain dealt a stinging blow to Commonwealth students two years ago by raising university fees, the proponents of the private university reactivated their plan and pressed for approval from the Government.

But, the Government found some of the main features of the university contrary to the National Education Policy, among them the fact that its medium of instruction was to be Chinese. It rejected the application.

Subsequently, it became a court case between the Government and the Merdeka University Berhad. The company lost its case, first in the High Court, then in the Federal Court.

The latest development in Malaysian education is the announcement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir of the setting up of the International Islamic University in Fraser's Hill. It will begin taking its first batch of students at a temporary campus in June 1983. The 180 students will pursue law and economics.

The university, to be run by a board of representatives of the international Islamic community as well as leading educationists, is expected to be fully operational in 1995.

The journey has been hard.

Let us maintain it, for us our motto says: Unity is Strength.⁹

Private Overseas Student Program (POSP): Australia

The Private Overseas Student Program (POSP) is under the general policy and administrative responsibility of the DIEA, but it shares (consults) on an inter-departmental committee with the Department of Foreign Affairs and the DEYA on general policy issues. The DIEA in effectively managing the POSP, aims at what it describes as:

establishing and putting into effect a system of Guaranteed Student Allocations (GSAs) which is aimed at ensuring access / of overseas students / to places within the formal education system for students from specified countries without significant displacement of Australian students.¹⁰

Because there is disproportionate or grossly uneven 'demand for entry', from some countries such as Malaysia, the application of a fair and equitable GSA system by DIEA is jeopardised due to the division of power (authority) and responsibility for policy making and final programme implementation between the various government departments concerned with foreign affairs, education and immigration. The Department of Foreign Affairs lists on a priority basis which countries are first chosen, and then favoured to send foreign students; its criteria are two-fold, foreign policy interests and economic development considerations with a primary focus on regional countries in the South Pacific area. The DIEA is expected to manage the GSA system in terms of both regional country priorities and the educational capacity of Australian institutions, particularly those at the tertiary level. The priority countries, as determined by Foreign Affairs, are in order (1) Malaysia, (2) Other ASEAN Countries, (3) Middle East countries, (4) PNG and South Pacific countries.

TABLE 2:1

AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES: OVERSEAS UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS 1982
(Expressed as numbers and as percent of total undergraduate enrolments)

Faculty*	Adelaide	ANU	Deakin	Flinders	Griffith	James Cook	La Trobe	Macquarie	Melbourne	Monash	Murdoch	Newcastle	New England	NSW	Queensland	Sydney*	Tasmania	Western Australia	Wollongong
Humanities	18 0.9	59 2.5	20 1.4	6 0.8	19 2.1	4 1.1	53 1.5	29 1.2	76 1.9		4 1.1	16 1.6	15 0.3	66 3.6	59 1.1	5 0.4	13 1.3		
Fine Arts	4 2.3					2 4.7			3 1.3	120 3.0					1 1.3	0 0.0	5 1.2	47 1.7	21 1.9
Social Sciences	0 0.0		15 2.0	18 1.7		1 0.6	5 1.1	15 1.0	3 1.9		3 0.5		1 0.2	8 1.4	4 0.8	3 3.5			
Law	9 1.2	42 5.8						3 0.3	17 2.3	110 6.7					42 1.8	13 2.7	10 4.2	13 0.2	1 0.2
Education	0 0.0		17 1.2	4 2.1		1 0.1	3 0.3	18 2.3	16 2.9	14 2.0	3 0.6	3 2.0	3 0.5	6 1.7	20 1.3	0 0.0	3 3.3	10 0.3	10 1.6
Economics	44 5.3	53 6.3	25 6.0	7 1.6	4 0.8	15 2.6	217 23.0	173 8.3	111 7.9	603 27.3		46 5.3	80 5.6	320 11.0	25 1.2	32 7.2	34 10.1	123 10.1	14 2.5
Medicine	35 4.1	1 50.0		13 3.7					99 6.9	31 3.2				235 20.8	71 3.6	5 1.3	20 5.9	15 2.2	
Dentistry	9 4.7								7 2.9						20 7.3	1 0.9			3 2.8
Science	73 4.4	42 4.3	76 11.0	24 3.9	8 1.1	12 3.2	131 8.7	28 1.6	81 3.3	324 13.4	9 1.3	18 3.2	18 3.4	294 14.8	41 2.4	30 5.2	37 5.2	100 6.2	8 1.6
Engineering	69 10.7		27 22.1			9 4.7			196 16.9	385 41.0		78 10.2		563 17.2	44 2.1	8 23.0	59 17.1	118 17.1	26 3.6
Architecture	28 11.2		67 38.1						85 15.0			45 36.6	2 0.9	236 18.3	20 1.3	1 3.8		5 4.0	
Agriculture	2 1.0	14 7.1					20 9.0		8 2.3					3 1.8	15 7.9	2 1.6	2 3.8	6 3.2	
Veterinary Science						8 100.0			6 2.4		6 2.4				15 4.1	3 2.9			
Other	1 14.3										0 0.0								
Total	292 3.6	211 4.2	247 4.9	72 2.1	31 1.4	52 1.9	429 5.6	266 2.9	708 5.2	1587 12.6	25 0.9	206 5.5	122 1.6	1770 12.1	368 2.3	80* 1.9	186 4.1	428 5.1	65 2.4

*First year only

TABLE 2:2

AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES: OVERSEAS POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS 1982
(Expressed as numbers and as percent of total postgraduate enrolments)

Faculty*	Adelaide	ANU	Deakin	Flinders	Griffith	James Cook	La Trobe	Macquarie	Melbourne	Monash	Murdoch	Newcastle	New England	NSW	Queensland	Sydney*	Tasmania	Western Australia	Wollongong
Humanities	9 5.9	119 40.1		2 3.6	9 14.3	3 6.4	5 2.4	15 4.0	18 3.5	45 10.6	2 4.2	4 5.1	5 5.4	4 1.3	18 5.1		5 5.4		
Fine Arts	1 2.4								2 8.3							70 5.2		12 5.5	2 1.6
Social Sciences	1 2.6	46 56.1		4 4.3		1 3.8		2 0.8	1 2.5		1 1.5		4 16.7		11 5.0		2 4.7		
Law	0 0.0	5 17.9						1 9.1	1 1.2	21 14.9					12 3.9	2 13.3	2 28.6		
Education	1 0.9	1 33.3	2 2.1	4 3.1		3 4.2	4 1.8	34 10.1	2 0.6	21 2.9	2 2.9	1 0.8	23 4.0	9 4.2	17 5.0		3 1.2	6 3.8	
Economics	14 9.5	4 13.3				1 6.3	7 33.3	10 3.9	9 3.7	26 8.1			8 8.5	63 46.3	12.1 6.8	24 11.1	21 11.1	16 23.2	10 4.5
Medicine	2 3.4	20 43.5		3 6.4				22 9.3	7 7.6			2 8.0		46 21.6	22 25.0	21 7.5	3 14.3		
Dentistry	7 23.4								4 8.9							3 2.6			
Natural Sciences	32 10.2	75 27.5	6 13.3	12 15.6	9 5.6	16 14.4	20 9.5	12 4.6	24 5.5	51 9.8	8 11.8	8 6.6	23 12.9	66 15.4	43 12.2	26 4.9	25 16.7	29 9.0	12 18.2
Engineering	11 12.3		1 10.0					47 24.1	65 26.1			34.6		218 17.7	14.0 9.8	25 16.7	1 4.0	7 12.1	
Architecture	0 0.0							7 5.7						4 2.7	13 17.6	24 13.6		1 20.0	
Agriculture	43 43.5	14 50.0					6 18.6		26 41.3				24 26.7		38 25.3	27 23.5		39 36.1	
Veterinary Sciences						21 53.8			12 38.7		4 11.4				24 30.0	4 5.4			
Other	3 13.1																		
Total	124 10.7	284 36.1	9 2.8	25 6.2	18 7.6	45 12.8	44 5.5	74 4.9	175 7.4	236 9.6	17 5.9	50 9.4	142 12.7	450 12.9	232 10.0	233 6.9	55 8.5	106 8.6	25 8.3

*Humanities (including arts and divinity) Social & Behavioural Sciences (including psychology, social work) Education (including arts education) Medicine (including occupational therapy, pharmacy) Agriculture, Forestry (including rural science, forestry) Engineering, Technology (including metallurgy, surveying) Architecture, Building (including urban, regional, town & country planning) Natural Sciences (including biological sciences, mathematics) Economics, Commerce, Government (including accounting, administration) Law (including jurisprudence, arts/law)

Source: Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee: Submission to the Committee of Review of Private Overseas Student Policy, Canberra ACT, October 1983, Appendix 1 (b)

country will come under careful scrutiny in terms of political, economic and even racial grounds. The 'relatively inexpensive' opportunity, which Australia is said to have provided for the higher education of thousands of Malaysian students, 'overwhelmingly of Chinese racial origin and 'evidently' (?) of more than modest financial means, at least comparatively and regionally speaking', will be challenged.

For the extreme Australian critic, the provision of heavily subsidised tertiary, and to some extent secondary education, to an ever-increasing foreign population representing a special racial group from a supposedly well-to-do social and business class within a developing society, still receiving economic aid from a country such as Australia, would be anathema. The educational responsibility is surely one which falls predominantly on the shoulders of the Malaysian government — which recently in its wisdom did not accede to the demands of the Chinese community to set up its own private university — and thus facilitate the operation of a much needed pedagogical safety valve. Perhaps this is what the DIEA paper is referring to as 'Malaysian political expediency'. The ramifications of this policy are now being increasingly felt in Australia and apart from the imposition of university sub-quotas is also manifest unfortunately in a variety of racist anti-Asian propaganda currently being distributed on university and college campuses.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Acknowledgement is made to the generous provision of statistical data and relevant official ministerial policy statements by various colleagues of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Australian Development Assistance Bureau (Development Training Branch), the Department of Education (International Education Branch), the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (Student Section, International Division), the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC), and the Australian Committee of Directors and Principals of Advanced Education (ACDPAE), all located in Canberra ACT. Their generous cooperation and sharing of preliminary results from ongoing research is acknowledged especially the interim results of surveys conducted by AVCC, *Overseas Students Enrolled at Australian Universities*, July 1983, the ACDPAE reported *Overseas Students in Colleges of Advanced Education*, August 1983, and the report *Overseas Students of the University of New South Wales* May 1983 provided by the registrar of the University.
2. See Committee of Review, Private Overseas Student Policy Information Paper, Canberra ACT, 10 October 1983.

3. Among for example 'Asian' students on a major university campus would have to be included the majority, who come with student visas, but there are a growing and significant number who have resident status, including the various refugee groups from Indochina and Timor. In addition there are Asians born in Australia many of whom are second and third generation Australians. Accordingly any classification research into overseas students which merely looks at registration data, place of birth, family names, far less identity photographs, could be fraught with error!
4. Statistics on 1982 data derived from incomplete tabulation sheets provided to author from International Education Branch, Department of Education. These figures are based on the annual student census conducted in June. See also Tertiary Education Commission, *Report for the 1982-84 Triennium. Advice of the Universities Council*, Volume 1, Part 2, October 1980, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra ACT, 1981.
5. G. Lakshmana Rao *Brain Drain and Foreign Students: A Study of the Attitudes and Intentions of Foreign Students in Australia, the USA, Canada and France*. University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1979, p.37 et passim.
6. Nearly 90% of all Malaysian students are located in Sydney and Melbourne. The Malaysian government maintains a liaison office — the 'Malaysian Students Department in Australia' at the Consulate of Malaysia in Melbourne to help in welfare needs of the Malaysian student community in Victoria.
7. Sharom Ahmat, 'Critical Issues that face Tertiary Institutions and Administration in the 1980s: The Case of Malaysia', *Journal of Tertiary Educational Administration*, 5,1, 1983, p.86.
8. *Ibid.*, p.88.
9. John Pillay, 'Sound Education System in Only 25 Years', *Malaysia*, February 1983, p.3.
10. Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, *Submission to the Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program*, (Jackson Committee) May 1983, p.p. 2-3.
11. *Ibid.*, p.5.
12. *Ibid.*, p.9.

REVIEW

Evaluation of the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme: An investigation and review of policy on student financial assistance in Australia

D. Beswick, M. Hayden and H. Schofield
(AGPS, Canberra, 1983. \$15)

This is a review of the fourth volume in the series 'Studies of Tertiary Student Finances'. It is the final report of an evaluative study conducted under contract to the Commonwealth Department of Education for the purpose of assisting the Department in its evaluation of its principal scheme for financial assistance to students in tertiary education. It is one of several studies funded by the Department under its Review and Evaluation Program.

This is a massive (290 pages) examination of the topic. In the course of the study the authors surveyed 2000 students in year 12 — students who were followed up in their first post-school year (i.e. The Transition Survey). It was supplemented by a small study of several hundred students who have left school from years 10 and 11 (The Early School Leavers Survey). There was a third survey of over 1000 students in matched groups of those who have withdrawn and those who had not in 3 tertiary institutions (The Retention Survey). The results of these studies are presented in some 120-odd tables, which it is obviously not possible to discuss fully within the space available here. The first chapter of the Report provides a useful introduction and summary of the Report.

The general results of the surveys are not particularly surprising. For instance, one major conclusion from the Transition Survey was that those who proceed to full-time tertiary education

in comparison to members of other groups, may be characterised by their positive parent encouragement to undertake tertiary education, their higher year 12 examination results, their higher occupational aspirations, their tendency to do a year 12 course consisting mainly of science subjects, their positive teacher encouragement to undertake tertiary education, a high degree of certainty about their occupational choice, and their anticipation of less of a problem in relation to obtaining financial support to undertake full-time education in 1981.

The general conclusion from the Earlier School Leavers Survey was that

the reasons for leaving school after years 10 and 11 tended to include financial considerations only to a very limited extent, insofar as earning money offered independence and

opportunities for personal development which were felt to be denied by continuing at school. In this context the financial considerations are part of a complex set of interacting factors in which family influences, and the character of a student's school experience, are very important.

Finally the comparison between the discontinued and remaining tertiary students showed few differences in personal or family background factors.

Discontinued students appear to have been brighter at the secondary level but, particularly for the younger students, to have suffered a drop in their perceived performance at the tertiary level; they were less likely to have the positive support of their parents and more likely to be influenced by friends in the pursuit of tertiary education; and finally, discontinued students, and especially those from the University, were more intrinsically and less extrinsically motivated in their reasons for gaining a tertiary qualification than were the currently enrolled students.

In addition to the surveys there are a number of case studies

to fill out the statistical picture which emerged from the survey data with some real-life quality.

According to the authors the survey results give rise to five main areas of concern. One, the fuzzy nature of the dependency relationship of students on their families. Two, the uncertain relationship between a family's capacity to assist and its willingness to do so. Three, the differences in the way male and female adolescents were treated by their parents, and the lower level of financial commitment of many families to the tertiary education of their daughters. Four, the importance of alternative financial resources. Five, the decline in total resources available for public assistance to students.

There are no easy solutions for the second area of concern — the gap between a family's ability and its willingness to assist its offspring. If students are given financial assistance when their parents can afford to help, financial assistance will go to the young who not only have good prospects for high incomes in the future, but also, in a disproportionately large number of cases, have financial assistance from affluent parents. If government refuses financial assistance on the grounds of the parents' means, some students whose parents refuse to provide, will be disadvantaged. Some partial solutions suggested by the authors which would assist include: (a) the development of a self-help scheme to facilitate part-time employment of students by universities and colleges and in other situations arranged by them; (b) introduction of a limited and