
4. EDUCATION MARKETING ACTIVITIES OF KEY COMPETITOR COUNTRIES

4.1 Australia

Australia has a population of 16 million people and has fewer than 30 universities. Prior to 1986, the number of overseas students in Australia was controlled by an annual quota system, and these students were either partly or fully subsidized by the government through aid programs.

Since 1986, Australian universities and other educational institutions have offered places to overseas students at full cost. In 1989, the Australian government identified education marketing as a priority commodity and Asia as a priority market, and established the Australian Education Centre (AEC) system. There are currently nine AECs in Asia Pacific, located in Fiji, Hong Kong, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.

Since 1986, the number of international students in Australia has increased from 22 000 (2 000 fee-paying) to approximately 54 000 (48 000 fee-paying) in 1991. The Australian government has estimated that over A\$1 billion (approximately C\$892 million) is generated annually as a result of the fees and other payments made by the increased numbers of international students. It reports that the \$300–\$400 million in fees collected by the educational institutions enables the provision of buildings, teachers and resources that benefit international and Australian students.

The Australian Education Centres are funded in part by subscription fees paid to educational institutions, by application processing fees and by other means.

Australia has benefited from its proximity to the South and Southeast Asian Pacific markets and from the establishment of a co-ordinated approach to marketing, including the presence of AECs in the region.

Canada can learn much from the Australian approach, both from the challenges encountered and the successes experienced.