

## **Australia-Japan Relations and the Future of Japanese Studies at Monash**

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While Japanology was first formally taught in Australia in 1918, it was the experience of war with Japan that spurred the development of systematic training in Japanese language for military personnel. Postwar Japanese studies built on this investment, as many university teachers had been trained in the military or in the Allied Occupation of Japan. The later tsunami of Japanese language education was experienced most intensely in 1989. The establishment of the Japanese Department at Monash occurred in between these two stages. These days, the motivation for studying Japanese has shifted from economic / instrumental reasons to the infatuation with Japanese popular culture, at the same time as Japanese has become the most widely studied foreign language in Australian schools and universities. Meanwhile, national educational priorities have de-emphasized Japan in particular and Asia in general, with the withdrawal of much funding support. Thus, before the study of Japan and Asia became truly mainstream, it has been taken off the national radar. In this sense, it could be said that the Japanese studies profession has failed in its mission. It is now vital for Japanese studies professionals to highlight the importance of a deeper engagement with and familiarity with Japan (and Asia) for Australia's credibility in the region. In this paper I will explore some of the challenges facing Japanese Studies in response to changes in the Australia-Japan relationship, its relation with the broader field of Asian studies, and the fate of area studies generally in the globalizing world.