

## Prime Minister's Education Assistance Program for Japan: Exchange profiles

The *Prime Minister's Program of Education Assistance for Japan* strengthened ties and established new relationships between Australian and Japanese institutions, through the two-way exchange of over 100 academics, researchers and students in 2011 and 2012.

Academics and researchers accounted for over one third of participants, with most involved in joint-research in biological, chemical, engineering and medical fields. Expertise sharing between universities was the third largest area of collaboration, with about one fifth of participants involved in education development, including teacher training and internationalisation at Japanese universities.

Australian and Japanese students were particularly interested in language exchange. About half of all participants in the program were undergraduates from hard-hit Japanese universities engaged in English language study tours customised to their area of study.

### Joint-research on Eye Disease in the Asia-Pacific

In the field of medical research, the Centre for Eye Research Australia at Melbourne University and Tokyo Dental and Medical University are working to improve the diagnosis of eye disease in the Asia-Pacific. The reported strength of the collaboration comes from the combination of the Japanese researchers' clinical experience and the epidemiological capacity at Centre for Eye Research Australia. The research will establish new guidelines for assessing eye disease, with findings to be published in 2013-2014.

### Joint-research on thermogenic plants

In November 2011, Adelaide University hosted the Cryobiofrontier Research Center of Iwate University to continue research interrupted by earthquake damage to laboratories and the loss of refrigerated samples.

Researchers experimented on mitochondria prepared from thermogenic or heat-generating plants. The researchers are writing a joint-paper on the mechanism of heat-generation in *D. vulgaris* and have presented joint experimental data to the *Meeting of the Molecular Biology Society of Japan*.



Professor Seymour and Ms Umekawa conducting research at the University of Adelaide.

### Strengthening the Australia/Japan Colloid Materials Research Network

In the field of chemical engineering, Melbourne University will host workshops with emerging researchers from Tohoku University in November 2012. The institutions seek to renew long-term collaboration between Australia and Japan in chemical engineering through developing a strategy for the *Australia/Japan Colloid Materials Research Network*. The strategy will be presented to the Royal Australian Chemical Institute and the Japan Chemical Society and will underpin future joint-research such as in developing new nanomaterials for renewable energy uses, and self-assembling membranes for effective water reuse.

### **Joint-research on the bioremediation of radioactive waste**

In January 2012, RMIT and Miyagi University researchers undertook the first stages of a collaborative project investigating the use of a bacterial strain in removing radioactive pollution from contaminated areas in Fukushima.

Miyagi University and RMIT researchers are working towards co-publishing a review on microbial and fungal approaches to the removal of radioactivity and are continuing their research in this critical area.

### **English language study tour customised to the needs of student teachers**

In March 2012, eight student teachers from Miyagi University of Education undertook a program of English language study at Central Queensland University in Rockhampton to improve their ability to teach English at elementary schools in Japan.

The study tour involved home stays, cultural activities and visits to three local schools to observe teaching practices (Crescent Lagoon Public School, Glenmore State High School, and Cathedral College).



Miyagi University of Education students studying at Central Queensland University

### **Rebuilding Australia-Japan student exchange**

In June 2012, Monash University worked with Tokyo's Hitotsubashi University in developing protocols to assist Japanese universities to support international students when crisis situations occur. The findings will be published in English and Japanese and will be presented at seminars at both universities in order to contribute to greater understanding and collaboration in student exchange between Australia and Japan.

### **Australian and Japanese psychologists share expertise**

In May 2012, psychologists from the Sydney Institute, NSW TAFE ran workshops with staff and post-graduate students at Senshu University in Tokyo to train them in psychological post-disaster recovery practices.

The exchange enabled the Sydney Institute to establish a new relationship with Senshu University and share their practices in the provision of psychology services.



Mr Magiros delivering a presentation at Senshu University.