

# Tokyo City University Australia Program (TAP) at ECU

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Simon Davies Burrows  
Manager, Internationalisation

## Australia – Japan mobility focus

Australian and Japanese governments supports closer cooperation between Australian and Japanese Universities

- Australian government selected Japan as a key country in the Government's flag-ship New Colombo Plan Pilot round
- Japanese government are strongly committed to student mobility with a target to double the number of Japanese students studying overseas, and international students studying in Japan, by 2020.

## Australia – Japan mobility focus

A 2014 Japan - Australia symposium focused on strategies to increase student mobility and strengthen university partnerships.

Issues identified included:

- Traditional, 1:1 student exchanges no longer an adequate mechanism.
- New, innovative and flexible responses are required to enable significant levels of student mobility.
- Opportunities exist for a step-change in cooperation models.

## Why TCU for ECU?

ECU and TCU are 'like-minded' institutions sharing similar discipline areas and strong existing connections

- ECU has offered Japanese language as a major since 1991 and over the years developed strong relationships with a number of Japanese universities for student exchange
  - but ....we were looking for a new partner to grow our inbound study abroad and support internationalisation
- Working together the development of an innovative study abroad model addressed some of the challenges identified in the 2014 symposium
- Partnership opens opportunities for deeper connections

## TAP @ ECU

The Australian component of TAP comprises:

- English language and academic program;
- Integrated living accommodation – no more than 2 Japanese per flat;
- Integration of ECU and TCU students wherever possible, with innovative strategies to achieve this goal

## Maximising benefits for students ?

The TCU/ECU partnership provides an opportunity to **Internationalise** ECU students – *Nationally, 85-90% of university students will never ‘study overseas’*

- Partnership connections are built into the ECU curriculum with Japanese language students being required to ‘interview’ TCU students (captive audience)

# Connecting students

TCU students have:

- varying English language abilities
- aged between 18 – 20 and for most, it is their first time away from home
- Academic classes that do not include other ECU students leading to reduced opportunity for integration and an
- We know that isolation and loneliness directly impacts on a students success and same-culture networks are not necessarily a ‘panacea’ and
- We wanted to come up with a comprehensive program to provide student-to-student connections

# Buddy & 'Experiencing Australia' program

## Developed:

- A comprehensive 'Experiencing Australia' program: including both on and off campus activities (13) throughout the 20 weeks
- The TAP Volunteer Buddy Program
- Recruited a specialist Project Officer to oversee development and manage the both aspects of the Program
- Sought input and advice from key stakeholders across the University including our ECU Careers and Leadership team and reviewed 'best practice' from other institutions and organisations



# Buddy Program Design

- Buddies are recruited from all ECU Schools using a variety of mediums e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Email, Student Portal
- All volunteers attend a 3 hour compulsory training session that covers:
  - The Buddy Role,
  - Boundaries and Confidentiality,
  - Safety during on and off campus activities and
  - Culturally appropriate practices including a basic Japanese lesson
- Buddies are NOT expected to take on a counselling or teaching role and refer problems onto the Project Officer for triage to the appropriate ECU student support area

# Matching Buddies and TCU students

Matching is complex and a time consuming task

- Students and Buddies are then matched as follows:
  - Those students with lowest levels of English are matched with a Buddy that speaks Japanese
  - Those with higher levels of English proficiency are matched with non-speaking Japanese students
- Each group is assigned:
  - 2 buddies – one ‘leader’/experienced Buddy
  - Mixed groups are assigned one Buddy of each gender/same gender student groups have Buddies of the same
  - a TCU student with a higher level of English

## Buddy Program – Experiencing Australia

- Buddies and students attend up to 13 ECU planned on and off campus social inclusion activities
- Many Buddies undertake additional independent activities with their students [guidelines are provided for these during training]
- Opportunity for Japanese students to visit Australian homes

## What's in it for the Buddies?

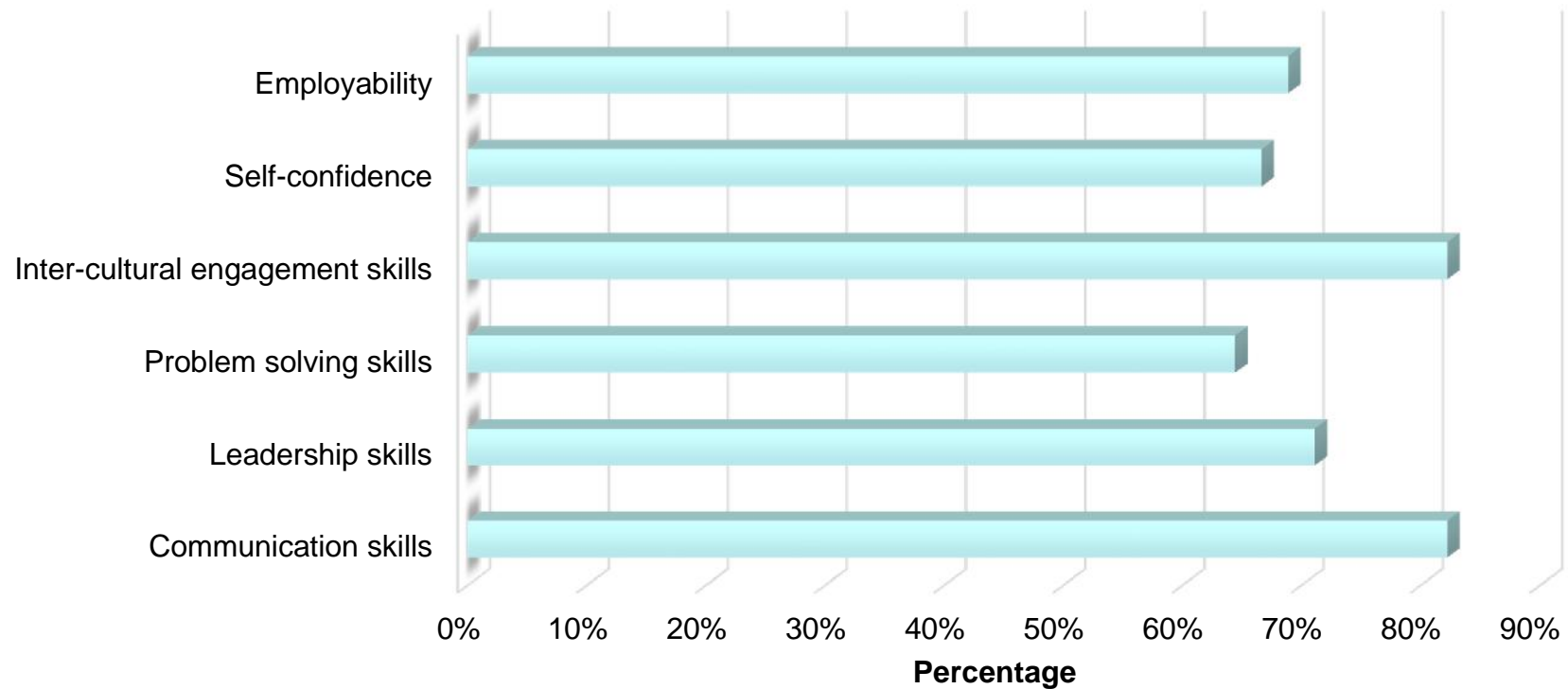
- Develops employability and professional skills
- Develops interpersonal communication skills, cross-cultural competencies
- Team work with other ECU Partner Buddies
- Making new friends
- Leadership opportunities (returning buddies teach new buddies the ropes)
- CV enhancement – further develop existing skills or acquire new skills
- Thank you ceremony, receive a certificate and letter from the Vice Chancellor
- New study learning opportunities – increased interest in Japanese language studies...

## Evaluating the Buddy program – early learnings Buddies and TCU students

- Surveys run at the conclusion of Cycle A, 2016 for both groups with questions on different elements of the program
- Overall results showed both Buddies and TCU students were satisfied with the TAP Buddy Program

# Buddy Skill development / enhancement

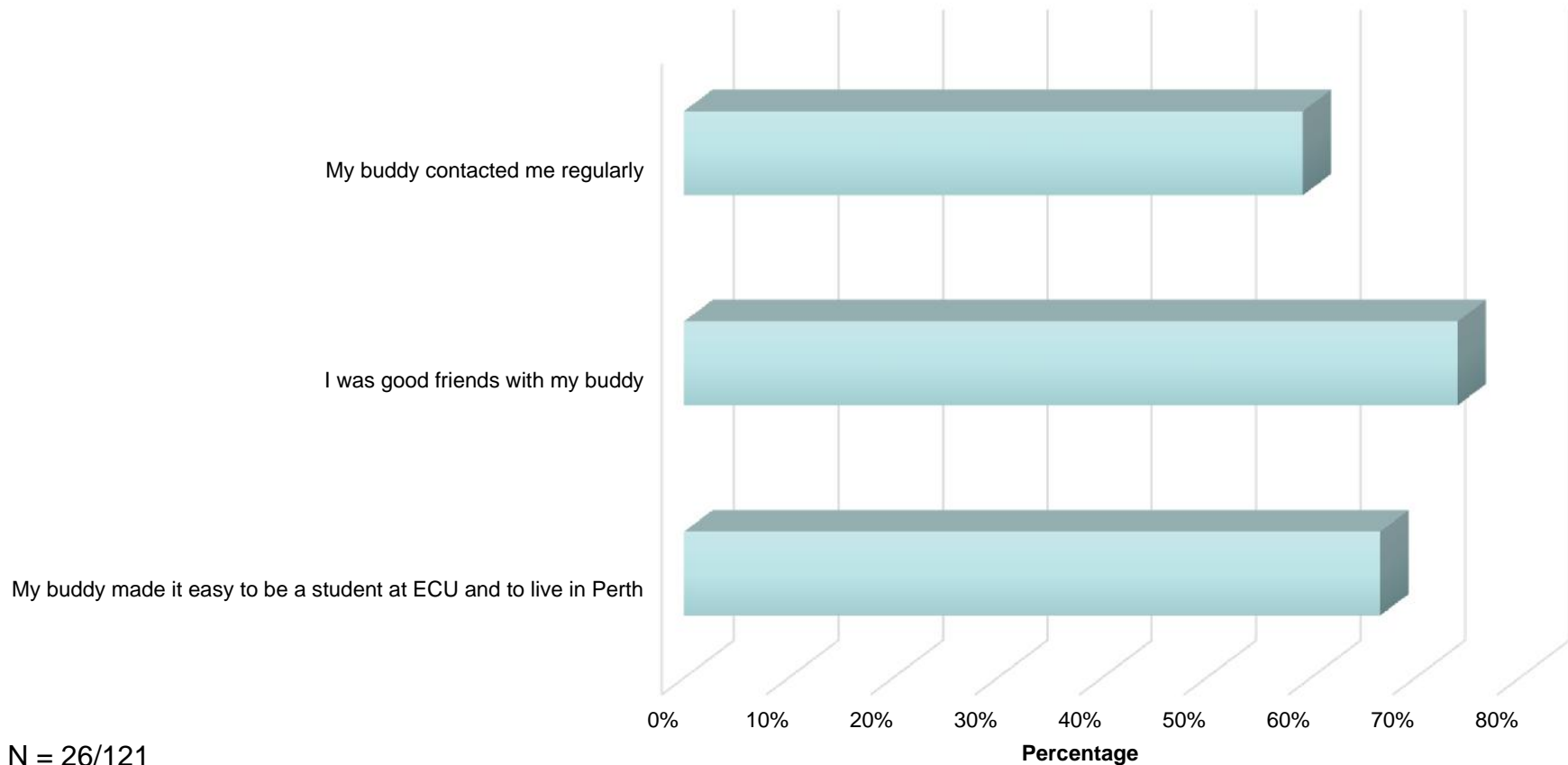
## Program helped develop or further enhance



N = 45

# Buddy Program – TCU student responses

## The Buddy Program



# Where to from here.....internationalisation

- Building a Buddy leadership program – returning buddies to be identified as ‘leaders’
- Surveys have been refined by having both Japanese and English versions for TCU students
- Investigating opportunities for partial credit for Buddies through a Work Integrated Learning Unit and other relevant Academic units



# Where to from here.....internationalisation

- Student exchange agreement
- 3 TCU Students (Cycle A) stayed on are now on exchange for Semester 2 2016
- 10 NCP funded ECU students to visit Tokyo in November 2016 and
- A further 10 NCP funded students will attend a **Developing Future Leaders in a Global Business Context** program in Tokyo in 2017
- Joint PhD program being considered

**Thank You**