

4. Oceania

Status of Japanese-language education in Oceania

Institutions in Oceania totaled 1,833 (down 5.7% from the previous survey in 2021), teachers totaled 3,685 (up 2.4%), and learners totaled 454,700 (up 1.3%). Compared to the previous survey, institutions decreased, while teachers and learners showed a slight increase. This survey also confirmed the resumption of Japanese-language education in Marshall, where it could not be confirmed in the previous survey. On the other hand, Japanese-language education could not be confirmed in Kiribati.

In the region of Oceania, Australia continues to have the largest number of institutions, teachers, and learners, as in the previous survey, followed by New Zealand and New Caledonia. The distribution of learners is 93.3% for Australia and 5.6% for New Zealand, with these two countries combined accounting for 98.9%.

Looking at changes by country and region, institutions increased in 3 countries/regions, remained unchanged in 4 countries/regions, and decreased in 6 countries/regions. Teachers increased in 6 countries/regions, remained unchanged in 2 countries/regions,

and decreased in 5 countries/regions. Learners increased in 4 countries/regions, remained unchanged in 1 country, and decreased in 8 countries/regions.

Looking at the proportion of learners in Oceania by educational level, primary education accounted for 54.4%, secondary education for 41.9%, higher education for 2.6%, and non-school education for 1.0%. Together, primary and secondary education comprised 96.3% of the total.

The overall online class implementation rate for the region is 10.9%, the lowest among all 12 regions for the second consecutive survey.

The primary purposes for learning Japanese, in descending order, are interest in anime, manga, J-POP, fashion, etc. (52.9%) and interest in the Japanese language (45.4%), maintaining the same ranking as the previous survey. While non-responses were 36.1%, higher than in other regions, this survey showed that sightseeing in Japan (34.8%) increased by 18.6 percentage points from the previous survey.

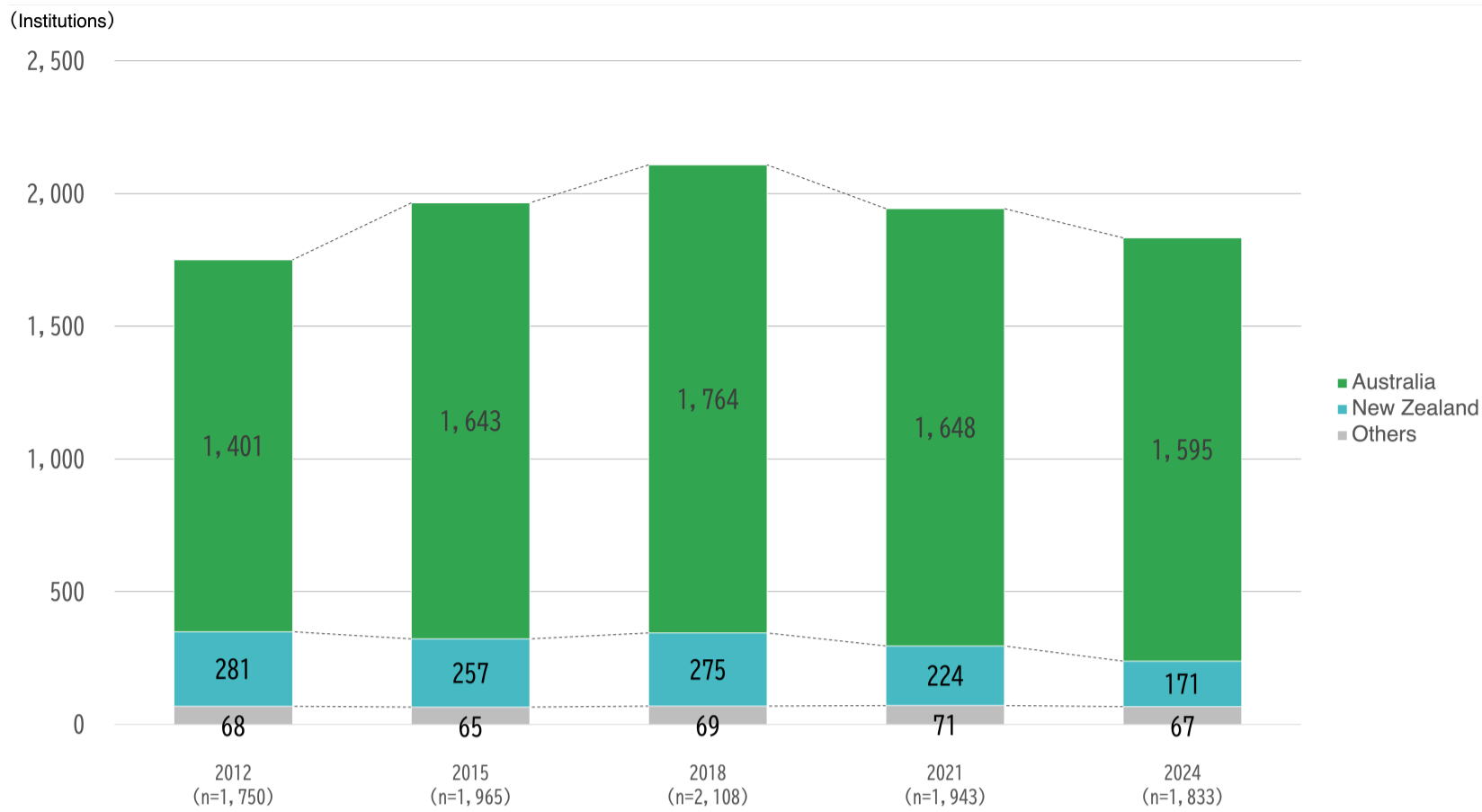
Table 2-4-1 Number of Institutions, number of Teachers, and number of Learners in Oceania

(Listed in order of the number of Learners in 2024)

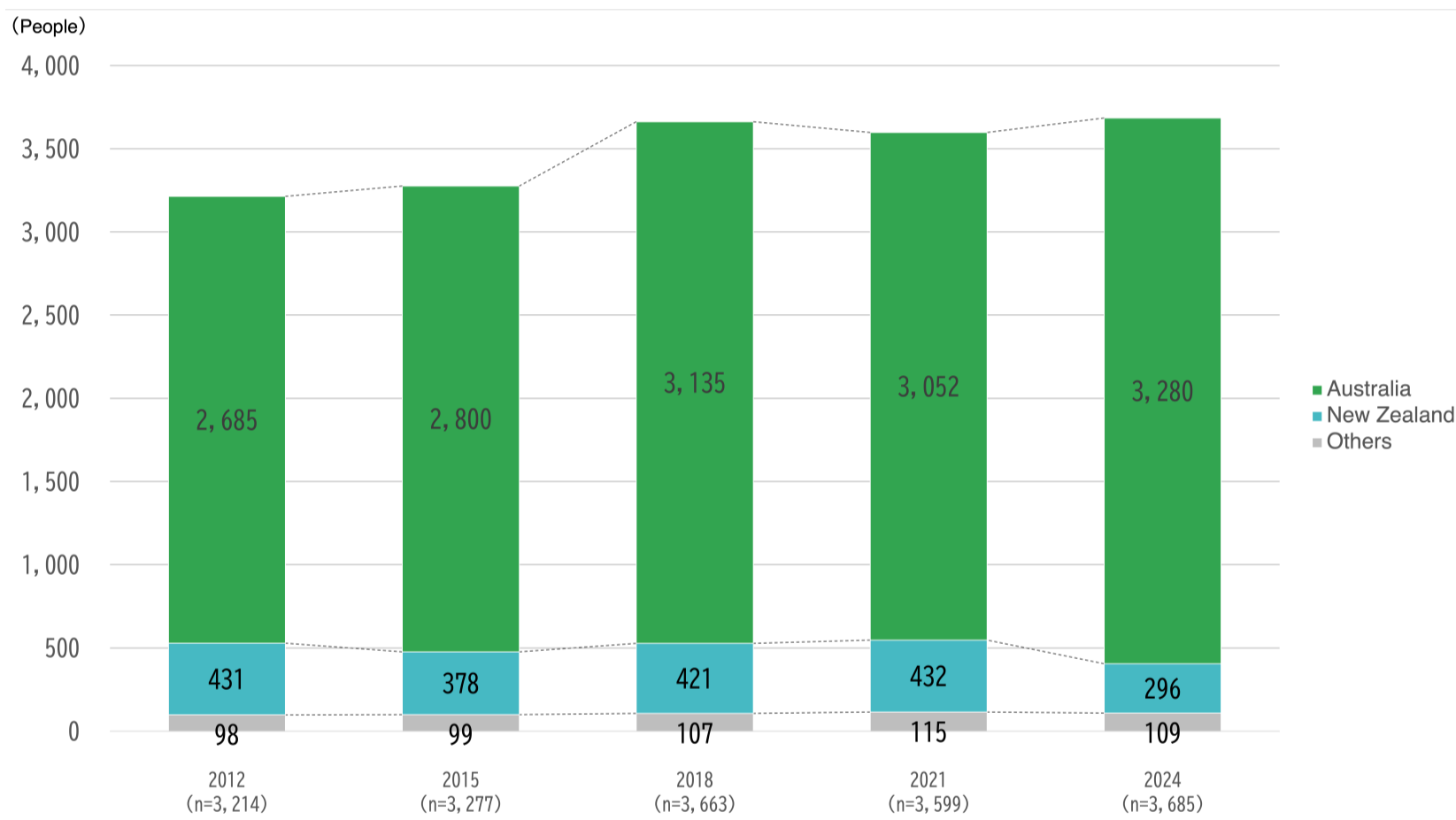
Country and Region	Number of Institutions in 2024 (institutions)	Number of Teachers in 2024 (people)	Number of Learners in 2024 (people)	Learners per 100,000 population (people)	Number of Learners in Primary education 2024 (people)	Number of Learners in Secondary education 2024 (people)	Number of Learners in Higher education 2024 (people)	Number of Learners in Non-school education 2024 (people)	Population* (people)	Number of Institutions in 2021 (institutions)	Number of Teachers in 2021 (people)	Number of Learners in 2021 (people)
Australia	1,595	3,280	424,316	1665.0	240,650	168,856	10,423	4,387	25,484,656	1,648	3,052	415,348
New Zealand	171	296	25,456	531.1	6,774	17,096	1,270	316	4,793,358	224	432	28,072
New Caledonia	31	53	3,053	1124.9	0	2,974	49	30	271,407	36	56	3,426
Guam	12	17	893	580.5	60	743	90	0	153,836	9	16	1,076
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	3	3	240	445.4	30	210	0	0	53,883	3	3	270
French Polynesia	4	7	197	70.7	0	110	0	87	278,786	6	14	113
Palau	3	4	180	1021.9	0	160	20	0	17,614	3	3	155
Tonga	9	17	155	154.7	0	149	6	0	100,179	7	13	162
Micronesia	2	3	125	121.5	0	15	0	110	102,843	4	5	229
Papua New Guinea	1	3	50	0.7	0	50	0	0	7,275,324	1	2	50
Marshall	1	1	20	47.1	0	0	20	0	42,418	0	0	0
Samoa	1	1	15	7.3	0	0	15	0	205,557	1	1	56
Kiribati	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	119,940	1	2	20
Oceania overall	1,833	3,685	454,700	—	247,514	190,363	11,893	4,930	—	1,943	3,599	448,977

*Source: *Population and Vital Statistics Report (as of 3 January 2025)*, by United Nations

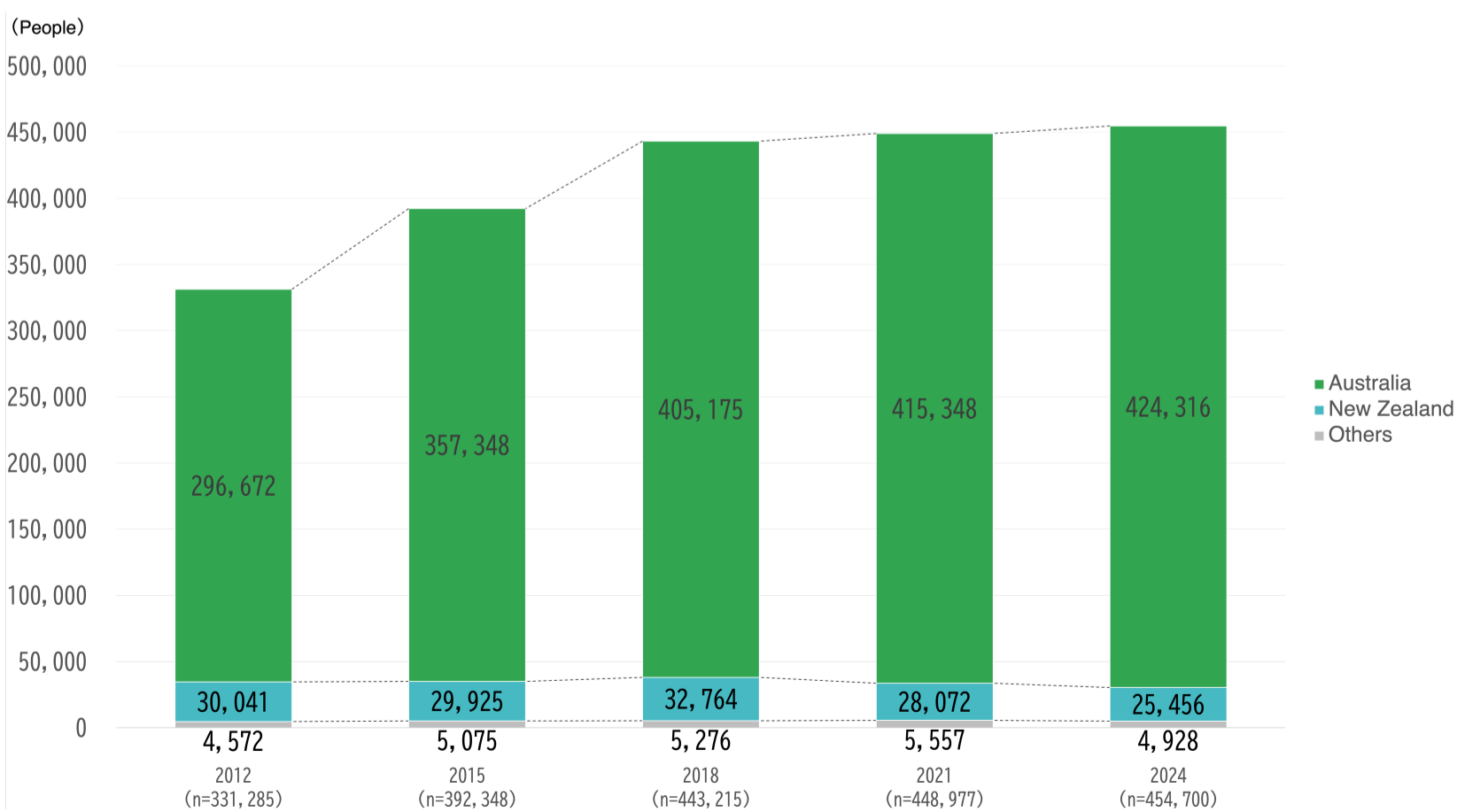
Graph 2-4-1 Number of Institutions in Oceania



Graph 2-4-2 Number of Teachers in Oceania



Graph 2-4-3 Number of Learners in Oceania



Graph 2-4-4 Percentages of Learners by educational stage in Oceania

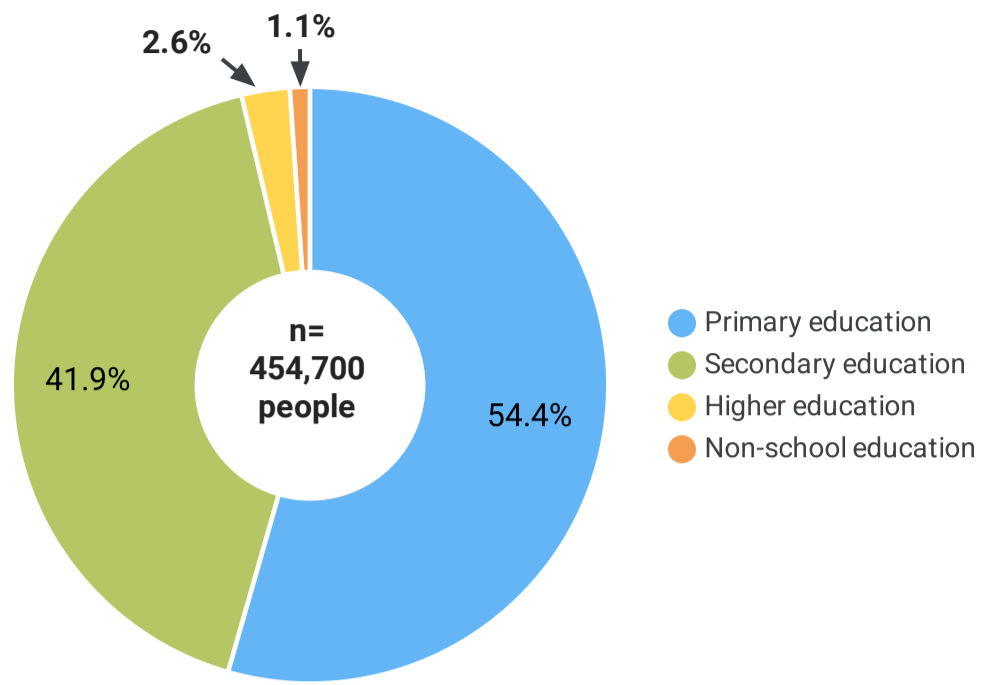
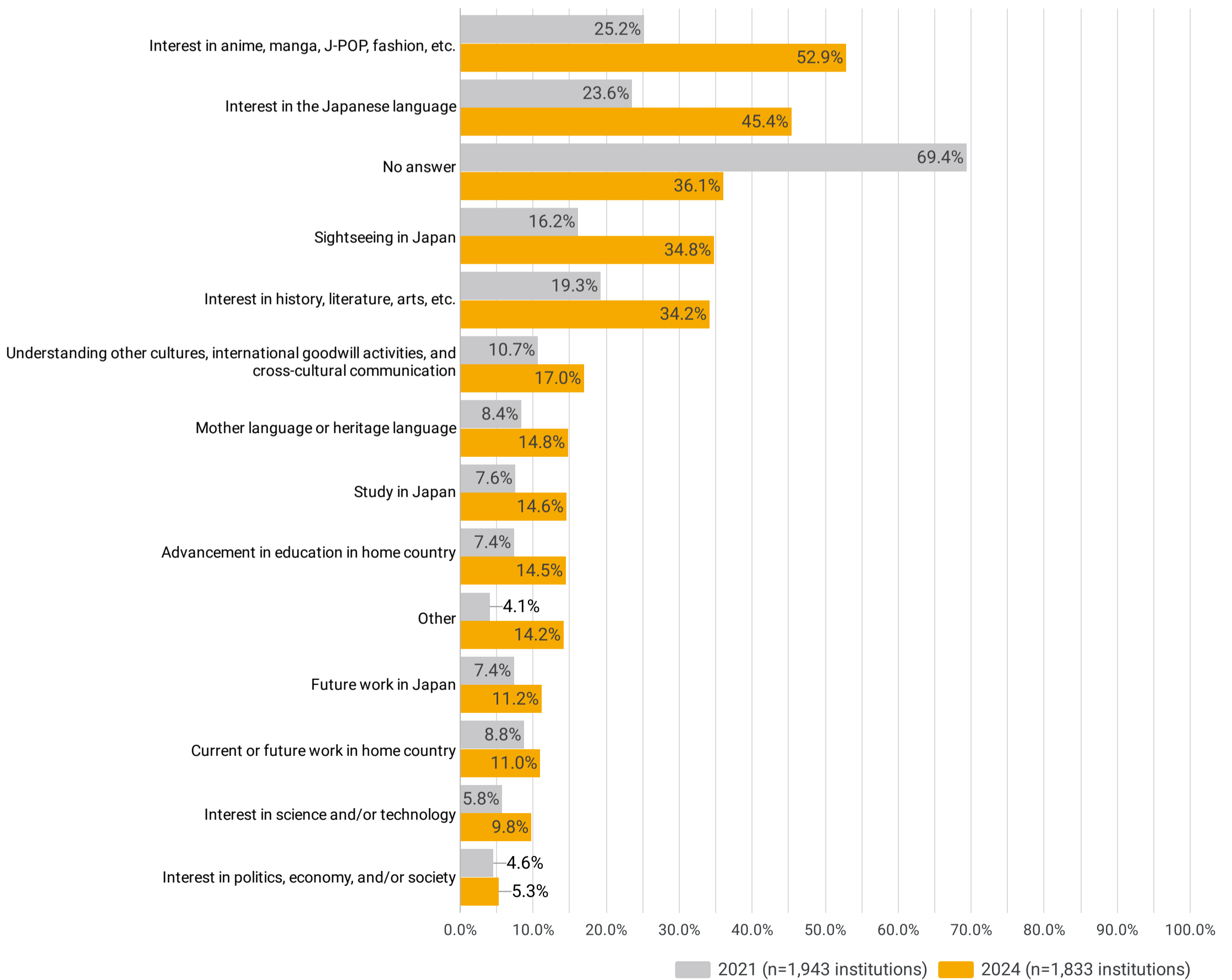


Table 2-4-2 Online class implementation ratio in Oceania

Country and Region	Number of Institutions in each Country and Region	Online class implementation (institutions)	Online class implementation (%)
Australia	1,595	144	9.0
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	3	2	66.7
Guam	12	5	41.7
Samoa	1	1	100.0
Tonga	9	3	33.3
New Caledonia	31	5	16.1
New Zealand	171	35	20.5
Papua New Guinea	1	0	0.0
Palau	3	1	33.3
French Polynesia	4	3	75.0
Marshall	1	0	0.0
Micronesia	2	0	0.0
Oceania overall	1,833	199	10.9

Graph 2-4-5 Objectives of Japanese-language learning in Oceania



Trends in each country and region

[Australia]

Australia, the largest country for Japanese-language education in Oceania, has over 90% of Japanese-language learners in school education. Although teachers and learners increased from the previous survey (2021), institutions decreased. Therefore, it cannot be said that Japanese-language education activities are expanding.

Securing teachers is a critical challenge for Japanese-language education in Australia. The shortage of school teachers is not limited to Japanese-language teachers, and has become a social issue in Australia due to an increase in retirements caused by aging and excessive workloads. Some institutions have discontinued Japanese-language classes due to teacher shortages. Furthermore, interviews with language education professionals, including those involved in Japanese, revealed that many stakeholders in Australia currently perceive a decline in the presence of language education. This decline is attributed to various factors, including curriculum, educational policies, and school management.

Numbers of institutions, teachers, and learners in primary education all decreased. States with particularly significant declines in learners are New South Wales, the Northern Territory, and Victoria. One reason is that an increasing number of schools have removed Japanese from their list of elective subjects due to various factors, including teacher shortages. Furthermore, particularly in Victoria, an increasing number of schools are adopting Australian Sign Language (Auslan) as a language education subject.

In secondary education, teachers decreased slightly, but institutions and learners increased. This is likely because more institutions responded compared to the previous survey, as the survey was conducted with the cooperation of a reputable local university. However, according to interviews with Japanese-language education professionals, many expressed the view that institutions providing Japanese-language education are not actually increasing, likely due to factors such as the reduction in Japanese-language courses.

In higher education, the general trend was toward a decline in teachers and learners in many states. Due to financial difficulties at universities, the reduction in the number of humanities courses is progressing nationwide, leading to the discontinuation of Japanese-language courses and the reduction in the number of Japanese-language teaching positions.

In non-school education, institutions, teachers, and learners all decreased. One contributing factor is the decrease in school education institutions reporting that they teach Japanese to preschoolers or as an extracurricular activity. Although institutions providing heritage language education remain unchanged in number, some have seen a decrease in learners. It has been pointed out that securing teachers is also difficult at private Japanese-language schools.

[New Zealand]

In Oceania, New Zealand, which has the second-largest scale of Japanese-language education after Australia, saw a decrease in institutions, teachers, and learners. A distinctive feature of New Zealand is that primary and secondary education account for over 90% of learners. However, this survey shows significant declines in primary education (down 15.1%), higher education (down 29.4%), and non-school education learners (down 64.5%). Teachers decreased significantly in primary, secondary, and higher education, although an increase was observed in non-school education.

In New Zealand, there are no unified national guidelines for language learning, and foreign language study is not compulsory. Consequently, there are no textbooks or other teaching materials for Japanese-language education. Therefore, Japanese-language teachers must create their own teaching materials, adding the burden of material development to their teaching responsibilities. Additionally, the aging of teachers who had previously been providing instruction, coupled with factors such as rising prices and exchange rates, has led to a situation where younger native Japanese-speaking teachers are not entering the country.

In primary education, the decline in teachers (down 61.2%) has been significantly greater than the decline in learners, resulting in an even heavier burden per teacher. Japanese-language teachers report challenges such as having to teach other languages and subjects simultaneously, and the difficulty of instructing learners of varying ages and proficiency levels at once. Due to this heavy burden, many teachers resign from teaching Japanese. It should be noted that the decline in teachers may be related to the decline in learners.

In secondary education, learning Māori is highly valued, and many schools have adopted curricula that include teaching Māori. Furthermore, languages of Oceania are also widely studied, with learners increasing. On the other hand, learners studying languages other than languages of Oceania have decreased, and Japanese-language learners have also declined in line with this trend. Furthermore, Japanese is included among the elective subjects for the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA), which is required for admission to universities and other higher education institutions. However, NCEA elective subjects include a wide range of options such as music, art, hospitality, and agriculture. Students tend to choose subjects where they can aim for higher scores, and there are indications that Japanese, which is considered difficult, is being avoided.

In non-school education, learners decreased significantly while teachers increased, creating a mismatch between supply and demand. Reports indicate that in school settings, teachers are often required to teach multiple languages besides Japanese. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the establishment of online teaching systems has made it possible for teachers to avoid this demanding work style. Consequently, an increasing number of teachers may be shifting to providing Japanese-language education online at non-school education institutions.

Trends in each country and region

[Other Countries and Regions]

New Caledonia is experiencing a downward trend in the number of institutions, teachers, and learners. Since the inception of Japanese-language education in the country, secondary education has been its primary focus. However, the 2021 baccalauréat reform (*) in mainland France is believed to have affected the number of learners at the secondary level in New Caledonia as well. Additionally, factors such as the difficulty in securing Japanese-language teachers locally, declining birthrates, and challenges in securing funding are also considered to have contributed to the decline.

In French Polynesia, no primary or higher education institutions were identified in this survey. Institutions in secondary education decreased, but learners increased significantly from the previous survey (2021). In non-school education, while numbers of institutions, teachers, and learners are all declining, it is reported that lifelong learning facilities and cultural centers are responsible for Japanese-language education in French Polynesia.

In Marshall, all four institutions confirmed to be providing Japanese-language education in the 2018 survey had temporarily closed in the 2021 survey due to factors such as Japanese-language teachers returning home amid the COVID-19 pandemic. In this survey, the resumption of Japanese-language education was confirmed at one higher education institution. Following the arrival of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) members specializing in Japanese-language education, Japanese-language classes are expected to resume at secondary education institutions.

* See "8. Western Europe [France]" (p. 65) in this report.