

Acuma Incorporated: International items in the press in May 2009

- Students from affected countries may have to stay home
- Recruiting Agents at Chinese College Fair Pose as Translators
- Studying abroad grows in three trends
- Uproar over face scan for foreign students
- Government promotes the study of Asian languages in schools
- Higher Education on the Move
- Overseas students defy downturn to come to Australia
- Fees boost for Scots studying abroad
- Overseas student group at centre of bullying claims
- Increased visa fees to fund embassy makeovers
- Chinese tycoon Jan Shang worries universities
- Australia sets up helpline for Indian students after assaults
- Aussie welcome
- Fees rise for foreign students
- AEI Study in Australia 2010 Briefings
- Overseas universities woo Chinese students
- Our schools for scandal
- NZ: Chinese numbers on the rise
- Representative Of Australia's Curtin University To Meet Prospective Students
- UOWD's "Study Abroad in Dubai" program spotlights Dubai as 'the most exciting city' for academic study
- International education fair gets underway
- More overseas students coming to Adelaide
- Gillard to scrutinise rogue colleges
- IDP Education Expands Into United States
- International education – its contribution to Australia
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- Indian students to be briefed on Australian violence
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Statement - Attacks against Indian students in Melbourne

Media Release: The Hon Julia Gillard MP
May 28 2009

I am deeply saddened and shocked by the attack on a group of Indian students in Melbourne over the weekend and condemn it unreservedly. I would like to extend my sympathies to the victims of this callous attack.

I want to reiterate my statement before Parliament on Tuesday that the Australian Government will not tolerate victimisation and violence against international students.

Such attacks violate the fundamental Australian values of tolerance and respect for diversity in our society.

The Victorian Police are investigating this serious crime. On the information I have, two people have been interviewed and one has been charged with assault-related offences and is currently in custody on remand.

I note also that two alleged attackers have been arrested in relation to an incident involving an Indian student on a train in Melbourne on 9 May 2009.

I can assure you that the perpetrators of recent attacks in both Sydney and Melbourne will face the full force of the law and I will be working closely with the Victorian and New South Wales State Governments to ensure every effort is made to minimise the possibility of such attacks in the future.

As announced in my statement to Parliament, the Australian Government will be convening a round table to discuss issues affecting international students and student safety will be high on the agenda.

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_090529_100619.aspx

Anger grows over Indian student bashings

ABC News
May 29 2009

A police officer from Victoria leaves for India this weekend on a mission to meet with students planning to visit Australia and to teach them how to stay safe.

The visit follows a recent dramatic upswing in the number of violent attacks against foreign students from the Indian subcontinent in the outer suburbs of Melbourne.

The issue has sparked anger in India and forced the Government to speak out on Australia's status as a multicultural destination for foreign students.

But the initiative by Victoria Police has been criticised by the local Islamic Council, which says the police should spend more time arresting racists and less time trying to teach Indians to look less Indian.

Australia hosts about 400,000 foreign students and a large proportion of them come from the subcontinent. Their numbers have risen by almost 40 per cent in the last year alone.

But for many the stay in Australia has not been entirely pleasant. Melbourne has suffered a big increase this year in violent attacks against visiting foreign students, and those from India appear to have been targeted in particular.

In the latest attack this month, seven men between 15 and 20 years old brutally bashed a 21-year-old Indian man travelling alone on a train.

Now, as part of an initiative sponsored by Victoria University, police community liaison officer Leading Senior Constable Victor Robb will travel to India to brief prospective students about ways to avoid trouble.

"It's mainly on crime prevention and safety strategy tips. Probably much the sort of information I'd give to my daughter if she was going overseas to another country," he said.

But Senior Constable Robb says the visit is not in response to the attacks. It was planned before they took place.

"No this is absolutely in response to the number of attacks that allegedly on the Indian or the international students. This is about an initiative that was projected to other countries," he said.

"There was not one focus on a particular country or a particular issue. It was just trying to look at a strategy in a broader range of strategies on the broader community safety issues."

Victoria University says the attacks are not racially motivated. The vice-president for international students, Andrew Holloway, blames statistics instead.

"It just happens to be coincidental that there's a large number of south Asian students travelling on their own late at night time and if you look at it, the work patterns of Indian students are somewhat different from other students," he said.

"They tend to work at 24/7 conveniences, petrol stations, late-at-night shops, and therefore are more likely to be on the public transport network late at night time."

But according to the Islamic Council of Victoria it's all an ill-conceived idea. The Council's Nazeem Hussein says he is disappointed more is not being done to stop the attacks and protect the foreign visitors.

"I think it's one thing to help the victims look less like victims, sorry to look less Indian, but I think it's another thing to really attack the core issue here which is racism," he said.

"And we're seeing not as much from the police that we would have probably expected.

"It's only a particular type of crime that is on the rise and that's crimes against people that look Indian. So really that statistic means not very much given that this particular crime is on the increase."

View from outside

The apparent spate in attacks has attracted considerable media attention in India, where a view prevails that violence against Indian students in Australia goes largely unreported.

On Wednesday, India's External Affairs Minister SM Krishna said he had been appalled by the attacks on Indian students in Melbourne.

"We will also impress upon the Australian authorities that such attacks should not be permitted and that it is their responsibility to ensure the well-being and security of our students studying in Australia," Krishna told the Hindustan Times.

Another newspaper, the Times of India, has almost an entire section of its website dedicated to the escalating violence in Melbourne.

A potential exodus of lucrative Indian students has the Federal Government concerned, and both deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Foreign Minister Stephen Smith have moved to allay fears.

"Australia takes very seriously its reputation as a safe destination for Indian students," Mr Smith said yesterday, adding that Indian students had faced "problems in one particular location in Melbourne".

Australian High Commissioner John McCarthy was reported by the Hindustan Times as saying Australia remained a safe destination for Indian students.

"The record shows that Australia is a safe destination. My hope is that this is an aberration," he said.

"We're appalled by what has happened. We are trying to do our best. The police have taken action and some people have been arrested."

Ms Gillard told the House of Representatives: "I want to send a message loud and clear that international students are very welcome in this nation and Australia will not tolerate discrimination against or victimisation of any of our international students."

One of the latest attacks was on 25 year old Bal-jinder Singh, who was stabbed in the stomach in an attempted robbery at Carnegie, in Melbourne's south-east.

The President of the National Union of Students, David Barrow, says Federal and State Governments need to make Indian students feel more comfortable about approaching Australian authorities.

"You need to feel welcomed by this country and right now we are treating international students like cash cows as opposed to human beings," he said.

"We've got to change the philosophy that we have towards international students when we change that philosophy a lot of our processes will change accordingly."

There is a danger that the talk and action is too little too late however. The consensus in the Indian press seems to be that the Government has left it too late to respond.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/05/29/2583942.htm?section=australia>

Houses of assaulted Indians burgled in Australia

Deccan Herald
May 28 2009

The houses of four Indian students, who were brutally assaulted by a group of teenagers in Australia have been burgled, even as one of them battles for life at a hospital, an organisation of Indian students here has alleged.

The students, who were bashed up in an apparent racial attack, were away to the hospital when unknown intruders broke into their houses and stole everything available.

"They have no clothes or anything left in the house and the students are really feeling insecure and unsafe," said Gautam Gupta, President of the Federation of Indian student Association (FISA).

"They believe it was done by members of the same group who had assaulted them during the weekend," he said. There was, however, no official confirmation of the burglary so far.

The fresh attack comes despite the Indian government pressing Australia to tackle security issues of its students in the wake of growing assaults on them.

Meanwhile, the condition of the 25-year old Shравan Kumar, who is fighting for life in a hospital, remains critical and doctors are "not very optimistic" about chances of his recovery.

Representatives of FISA, along with those of Australia's apex student body National Union of Students (NUS) will meet Indian High Commission Sujatha Singh on the issue today and present a list of their demands.

NUS General Secretary David Wilkins expressed his organisation's concern at the spate of attacks on Indians.

"NUS will be supporting FISA's ongoing campaign to protect the safety of all international students at a time when racist attacks have been increasing in Melbourne," NUS General Secretary David Wilkins said.

"At a time when there is a vacuum of representation for international students, NUS will be working along with FISA to integrate, empower and represent Indian and all international students," he said.

Gupta said the meeting will focus on presenting a list of recommendations to High Commissioner that will include the demand that Indian government summon Australian High Commissioner in New Delhi for an explanation on the issue.

It will also press the Indian authorities to issue a travel warning declaring Australia unsafe for students if the matter persists, apart from raising issues of racist attacks on Indians across the world with special mention to Australia and a compensation package for them.

"Indian consulates must support an independent body like FISA for representation of issues facing Indian citizens," he said in the statement.

FISA also asked Australia to ensure that anybody who is physically assaulted be given complete medical cover at par with Australian citizens and institutes be forced to return full tuition fee if the student becomes unable to complete the degree due to an assault.

"Government must also refund complete living costs and cost of airfares to the victims and at least two per cent of Indians should be employed as uniformed police force in Victoria to ensure equality and reduction in racist overtones in Police response," FISA said.

It said Australia must also run a media campaign detailing contributions of overseas students to Australian economy and emphasise on how their presence has benefitted Australia and created jobs here.

It further suggested offenders to be tried under Hate Crimes Act and the a dedicated India desk be established with the Premier's Office to oversee implementation of these recommendations

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/4919/houses-assaulted-indians-burgled-australia.html>

Australian Foreign Minister condemns attacks on Indian students

AFP

May 28 2009

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith condemned a wave of attacks on Indian students in Melbourne after the latest assault left a 25-year-old fighting for his life.

Indian student Sravan Kumar Theerthala was stabbed with a screwdriver early Sunday morning when a group of teenagers gatecrashed a party he was attending in the suburbs of Australia's second largest city.

He remains in intensive care at the Royal Melbourne Hospital following the attack, in which police said other men were also assaulted.

It was the latest in a series of attacks on students from the sub-continent which has prompted authorities here to set up a help line where victims can report incidents to Hindi and English-speaking operators.

"I'm appalled by these attacks and I condemn them absolutely," Smith said in a statement to AFP.

"Australia takes very seriously its reputation as a safe destination for Indian students."

Smith said the problem was centred around one location in Melbourne, which he did not identify.

However, Victoria state police estimate Indians make up 30 percent of robbery victims in Melbourne's western suburbs, where many of the students live.

The foreign minister was responding to a strongly-worded statement from Indian External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna saying he was "appalled" at the attack on Theerthala and his fellow students.

Krishna said India's High Commissioner (ambassador) to Australia Sujatha Singh had rushed to Melbourne to ensure the student received the best possible medical care and ensure authorities did their utmost to bring the attackers to justice.

"We will also impress upon the Australian authorities that such attacks should not be permitted and that it is their responsibility to ensure the well-being and security of our students studying in Australia," he said in a statement.

Police set up a community liaison group in January to examine the issue after an armed robbery in a convenience store left an Indian man in a coma.

They have also boosted numbers on a robbery taskforce in Melbourne's western suburbs and are considering sending officers to Indian cities to educate Australia-bound students about how to minimise the risk of being attacked.

But police have played down any racial motive for the attacks, saying the Indian students, who often work late shifts to support their studies, were often in the wrong place at the wrong time.

A police media statement issued on the day of the Theerthala attack made no mention of the victim's Indian background and portrayed the incident as a simple clash between partygoers.

Federation of Indian Students in Australia (FISA) president Amit Menghani said earlier this month that he had no doubt there was a racial element to recent attacks.

"Discrimination is always there," Menghani said.

"Indian students are being targeted and attacked. The level of crime is increasing and it's a concern for the student community."

He said Indian students were seen as easy targets because "we're humble people and we don't carry any weapons".

Indians form the second largest group of overseas students in Australia, a sector that is the country's third largest export earner, reaping 15.5 billion dollars (12.1 billion US) in 2008.

But Menghani said Indians would examine studying elsewhere if they did not feel safe in Australia. The violence has already prompted headlines such as "Australia land of racism" in Indian online media.

Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard this week said she would meet with students to discuss the issue.

"Reports of any violence or discrimination directed at international students can do much damage to our international reputation as a welcoming country," she told parliament.

"I want to send a message loud and clear that international students are very welcome in this nation and Australia will not tolerate discrimination against or victimisation of any of our international students."

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gyaONARR3ryzHgGON1oikMWDx-NA>

Another Company Will Jump Into International-Student Recruiting

Chronicle of Higher Education
May 27 2009

Los Angeles — The foreign-student-recruitment market just got a little more crowded as Hobsons, a major education-services company, announced today that it would begin to offer independent recruiting services to American colleges seeking to attract additional overseas students.

Notably, Hobsons' international-counselor network got the seal of approval from Nafsa: Association of International Educators, which has previously remained on the sidelines of the debate over the use of paid international-recruiting agencies. In an interview during the international-education group's annual conference here, Marlene Johnson, Nafsa's president, said that she had "confidence in the quality of Hobsons' work."

Hobsons' announcement followed news that IDP International, Australia's largest and most successful international-student-recruitment company, would branch out into the American market. Unlike IDP, however, Hobsons is a newcomer to in-country recruiting and lacks a network of overseas recruiting agents.

Jeremy Cooper, managing director of integrated-marketing solutions for Hobsons, said the company would subcontract with "best of breed" agencies in countries that were key markets for American colleges and provide them with extensive training about higher education in the United States.

The use of paid recruiting agents has been controversial in the United States, but Mr. Cooper said Hobsons was responding to demands from the 2,000 American colleges with which it already works, in areas such as enrollment management. "We're not pushing them," he said. "They're pulling us."

Mr. Cooper said Hobsons' existing relationships and reputation for quality would help the firm attract clients. The company expects to sign up 200 American colleges over the next five years.

<http://chronicle.com/news/article/6539/another-company-will-jump-into-international-student-recruiting>

Indian students to be briefed on Australian violence

Radio Australia News
May 28 2009

An Australian police officer is to travel to India to brief prospective foreign students about how to avoid street violence if they come to study in Australia.

Police community liaison officer Senior Constable Victor Robb says his advice will mainly cover "crime prevention, safety strategy tips".

"Probably much the same sort of information I would give my own daughter if she was going overseas," he adds.

The initiative, sponsored by Victoria University in Melbourne, comes after a wave of attacks on international students, largely those from India.

Increase in violence

Australia has about 400,000 foreign students, with a large proportion from the subcontinent.

The numbers saw a 40 per cent rise last year.

Melbourne has seen a big increase in violent attacks on Indian students - the most recent only this month, when seven men set upon a 21-year-old male student on a suburban train.

Victoria University's vice-president for international students, Andrew Holloway, says the attacks are not racist, but reflect the fact that Indian students often have part-time jobs that entail them using public transport late at night.

But Nazeem Hussain, director of the Islamic Council of Victoria, says he is disappointed more is not being done to help the visitors and stop the attacks.

"The core issue is racism . . . we are seeing not as much from the police as we would probably have expected," Mr Hussain says.

<http://www.radioaustralianews.net.au/stories/200905/2583333.htm?desktop>

Economic crisis not dissuading students from studying abroad

VietNamNet.vn
May 27 2009

VietNamNet Bridge – Some academic counselling centres have reported two-fold increases in the numbers of students registering to study abroad, with English-speaking countries still at the top of lists of destinations.

Students are asking for information about training courses

Nguyen Thu Trang in Dinh Cong new urban area in Hanoi related that her parents had reserved a sum of \$200,000 to fund her overseas studies. Trang will leave Hanoi this autumn and start university in the US.

Trang said that her parents have stable incomes and a reasonable plan for her overseas studies; therefore, Trang does not need financial aid from schools.

Nguyen Thi Lich, who lives on Nguyen Chi Thanh street in Hanoi, related that she has been saving money so her daughter can study abroad for seven years.

Lich said that she leases a house, and she has been depositing all the money from the house at banks to fund her daughter's studies.

Ha Viet Hang, Head of the Overseas Study Consultancy Division under ISC, an academic counselling centre, said that the crisis seems not to be affecting wealthy people's plans to send children abroad for studying, except for the children of securities or real estate investors. In general, every family has savings they do not touch because they are reserved for funding children's educations.

Tran Thi Dan, Director of Sunrise Overseas Consultancy Centre, also said that Vietnamese families can send their children abroad even in the crisis because they have been saving money for many years.

"Sometimes we get parents who bring 6-year-old children. This means that parents prepare for their children's studies very early," Dan said.

Overseas study consultancy centres still doing well

According to ISC, the number of students who have completed formalities to study in the UK and New Zealand through ISC has increased by two fold since the beginning of 2009.

Meanwhile, Duc Anh Overseas Study Consultancy Centre Lu Thi Hong Nham said that the number of students coming to the centre in the first months of the year increased by 30 percent in comparison with 2008.

Nham said that English-speaking countries like the US, UK and Australia remain the top choices of Vietnamese students. Other markets, though having lower fees, are not as attractive.

Dan said that previously Vietnamese students liked studying in France because of tuition preferences. However, France has become unattractive as universities there are now collecting fees. Students do not have to pay tuition fees to study in Germany, but they have to pass the university entrance exams in Vietnam and meet the requirements in Germany to be eligible to study in that country.

Director of the Institute for International Education (IIE) in Vietnam, Dr Mark Ashwill, said that Vietnamese students are especially interested in studying in the US. The number of Vietnamese students going to IIE's consultancy centres between January and March was 24 percent higher than last year.

Currently, the US proves to be the second most-attractive market to Vietnamese students, just after Australia.

Mr Ashwill said that community colleges are a popular destination for Vietnamese students, because after finishing two years of studying at colleges with relatively low costs, students can transfer credits to many universities.

Seventy percent of the visas for students were granted by the US General Consulate in Vietnam to students studying at community colleges. Vietnam now ranks third among countries with the largest number of students studying at community colleges in the US.

<http://english.vietnamnet.vn/education/2009/05/849980/>

International education – its contribution to Australia

Speech: The Hon Julia Gillard MP
May 26 2009

International education has made a significant contribution to Australia. It has grown to now be our third largest source of overseas earnings, generating \$15.5 billion in 2008 and supporting more than 125,000 jobs. In 2008, nearly half a million students came to Australia. It is the lead sector in terms of export earnings in Victoria and the second largest in New South Wales.

But international students do much more than contribute to our economy and create jobs. They build on Australia's long multicultural history that has created a friendly, tolerant and secular country.

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International students enrich our society. They help to provide a diverse and rich education experience for Australians. This diversity enables our education institutions to offer a much wider range of courses and campus facilities.

People coming to Australia to study and Australians studying abroad promote cross cultural experiences that benefit us both now and in the future, building understanding that underpins tolerance and stability here and abroad.

The relationships formed by students support long-lasting diplomatic, research and business links.

From the early days of the Colombo Plan through to the current day Endeavour Scholarships, we have provided scholarship opportunities to students from across the Asia Pacific. Many have gone on to be leaders in their own countries and the contacts and relationships they forged as young students have proved of invaluable benefit to us.

Australian Government support for international education

The Australian Government has provided significant support to facilitate the development and growth of the highly regarded international education sector we now have. We have done this through an integrated approach to policy, regulation, international engagement and promotion, both here in Australia and overseas, using our international network of counsellors.

In March 2009, I announced the Study in Australia 2010 strategy, a \$3.5 million drive to support Australia's international education and training sector in during the global recession. It is underpinned by four key themes: showcasing Australian education and training excellence; positioning Australia in the global market; enhancing the student experience; and supporting the Australian international education sector.

The Australian Government's 2009-10 Budget continues our drive for a world-class education system, planting the seeds for Australia's future growth and positioning Australia as an education leader, with modern facilities and high-quality teaching.

Australia has a long record of providing scholarships. Our Endeavour Scholarships are internationally competitive, merit-based scholarships providing opportunities for citizens of the Asia-Pacific, Middle East, Europe and the Americas to undertake study, research and professional development in Australia. Importantly, awards are also available for Australians to do the same abroad.

The Endeavour Scholarships have recently been enhanced by the Prime Minister's Australia Asia Endeavour Awards, a \$14.9 million initiative over four years that will further enhance the internationalisation of Australian education. These new Awards will develop internationally-aware, skilled future leaders in Australia, build human capital within Australian businesses and contribute to productivity gains and innovations, establish enduring educational and professional linkages and develop a network of people across Asia which have a strong affinity to Australia.

Moving forward – focusing on two key areas

Today I want to focus on two aspects of international education which I believe will be fundamentally important to the future of Australian international education: quality and the student experience.

To remain competitive we need to:

continue to enhance our quality education and training system and ensure that Australia's reputation for world-class education is maintained and strengthened; and
further improve student experiences, particularly students' living experiences and safety.
Quality – a cornerstone

Australia needs a highly regarded, high quality and internationally relevant education and training system, one which provides students, both Australian and international, with the skills and knowledge they need to participate fully in our globally engaged economy and society.

The Bradley Review found that the future of Australia's higher education system rests on continuing to ensure its quality and reputation. In responding to the Bradley Review the Australian Government has committed to the creation of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), which will oversee the new framework for quality assurance and regulation. It will accredit providers, carry out audits of standards and performance and streamline current regulatory arrangements and provide for national consistency. A national approach to regulation and quality assurance will mean Australia's knowledge and skills needs can be met in a more efficient and transparent way, enabling higher education providers to focus on what they do best – providing quality higher education.

Australia offers students a high quality education and a choice of education providers. Australia cannot afford poor quality provision of services damaging the international reputation of our education and training. The Government has developed a close working relationship with the State and Territories on these issues. This strong relationship has resulted in initiatives like the recent program of targeted swift audits by the Victorian Government. We will work with other States to implement similar initiatives.

As part of a strengthened compliance regime, we are increasing our scrutiny of education providers. Our focus is to assist them to better understand their legislative obligations, through workshops and other educative material, at the same time ensuring that providers are fully aware that the Australian Government will not hesitate to use the full extent of its legislative powers to sanction those that breach the law.

To further enhance quality and protect students, the Australian Government will also review the Education Services for Overseas Act 2000 in 2010-11 in consultation with State and Territory governments, the sector and students. The review will make sure that the framework for regulation of overseas education meets world's best standards before it becomes the responsibility of our new TEQSA.

I am also working with my colleague, Senator the Hon Chris Evans, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, on student integrity measures to support genuine students to come to Australia to realise the benefits of an Australian education.

Student experience – a cornerstone

I am aware of and am concerned about the reports in the media of international students' safety being compromised and of their having unsatisfactory experiences while in Australia. I am personally particularly disturbed by a recent violent incident which occurred in my own electorate.

Most international students report that they do feel satisfied with their social experience while in Australia. However reports of any violence or discrimination directed at international students can do much damage to our international reputation as a welcoming country.

The Australian Government is working with State and Territory governments, through its Joint Committee on International Education to enhance the student experience. This group is:

building on the learnings from the Victorian and New South Wales taskforces to improve the experience of international students nationally;
identifying and addressing gaps in support services and information for international students (including addressing the question of the performance of education agents); and
addressing key concerns around social inclusion, safety and accommodation, including by promoting greater diversity and raising Australians' understanding of the benefits of international education. Today I am announcing that the Government will invite international student representatives to participate in a round table to discuss issues affecting their study experience such as accommodation, welfare and safety. I will also be asking the round table to consider how the Government can best hear and respond to their views on these and other issues of vital concern to international students, on a continuing basis.

I will shortly call for expressions of interest from those wanting to participate in the round table. Participants will be selected on the basis of their ability to represent the views of international students. The roundtable will include participants from across all international education and training sectors, and all states and territories. With over 430 000 international students visiting Australia annually, it is important to me that their views and concerns are heard and addressed by government.

The outcome of this round table, along with other international education issues, will inform discussions with State and Territory education ministers at the inaugural meeting of the Ministerial Council on Tertiary Education later this year and we will agree on what more needs to be done to promote and protect Australia's reputation as a safe destination for top quality study and research.

Conclusion

I am committed to working towards a sustainable international education sector that delivers high quality, internationally recognised courses which maximise international students' experiences and outcome. I want international education to continue to positively contribute to Australia's productivity, participation and society.

In this Parliament today, I also want to send a message loud and clear that international students are very welcome in this nation and Australia will not tolerate discrimination against or victimisation of any of our international students.

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Speeches/Pages/Article_090527_093411.aspx

IDP Education Expands Into United States

EMediaWire.com
May 26 2009

IDP Education today announced that the firm is entering the American higher education market, looking to place international students into American universities in Fall of 2010. Now in its 40th year, IDP has placed over a quarter of a million students into education institutions in Australia and is expanding its international student recruiting operation to the United States at a time that American universities need students.

Los Angeles, CA (PRWEB) May 26, 2009 -- IDP Education today announced that the firm is entering the American higher education market, looking to place international students into American universities in the Fall of 2010. Now in its 40th year, IDP has placed over a quarter of a million students into education institutions in Australia and is expanding its international student recruiting operation to the United States at a time that American universities need students.

Showcasing its plans for placing students into American universities at the NAFSA - Association of International Educators conference in Los Angeles this week, IDP presented college administrators with a solution to the growing problem of not enough money to recruit an increasing number of international students. According to IDP's North American director Mark Shay, "American universities, especially private ones, are seeing a real need for foreign students to account for softer demand in their traditional markets. As schools look to cut their overhead, they are looking to vendors like IDP to help deliver students in a cost-effective manner."

In the student placement model, IDP acts on the school's behalf, working with families in IDP offices overseas to help them through the complicated maze of information and processes needed to enroll in an American university.

IDP Chief Executive Anthony Pollock said he was pleased at the response shown by American schools to IDP's offering. "There is a huge international demand for an American university degree, but lack of US investment in overseas recruiting has kept this market from reaching its true potential. With a more proactive approach we think there can be a million foreign students in the US within the next decade," Pollock says. There were 624,000 international students in US universities and colleges in 2008.

IDP has been a pioneer in the placement of international students, fundamentally inventing the business in its recruiting for Australian universities over several decades. With a focus on finding the best fit for students, IDP has built a trusted reputation with families in nations such as India, China, Indonesia, South Korea and Taiwan. IDP's well-trained and professional counselors, working from 70 offices in 25 countries, help students and their families navigate the entire process of enrollment. In exchange, universities pay IDP a placement fee.



International items in the press • May 2009

"IDP's integrity and professionalism is unparalleled. At a time when university advertising budgets are being cut, IDP's model of paying only for successful enrollments should resonate with the business needs of the universities," Shay says.

"Further value comes from the in-depth counseling process, where we not only bring students into a university, we bring ones who are more likely to stay through and graduate."

About IDP Education:

IDP Education, the world's largest international student placement service, is jointly-owned by 38 Australian universities and SEEK Limited, Australia's leading online employment and training company. In addition to the student placement division, IDP is a major sponsor of research into international education and pioneered forecasting of international student trends and growth.

Established by Australian universities in 1969 to channel aid to universities in Asian countries, IDP continues its founding vision by managing scholarship programs on behalf of various governments for developing countries.

IDP also is part-owner of IELTS - the world's leading English language proficiency test - with the British Council and Cambridge University. More than 1.2 million people take the IELTS test each year. The IELTS test is recognized by more than 2,000 US academic faculties, colleges and universities. IDP conducts IELTS tests around the world in 247 locations and 44 countries.

<http://www.emediawire.com/releases/2009/5/prweb2460584.htm>

Gillard to scrutinise rogue colleges

WA Today
May 26 2009

THE Federal Government has promised to crack down on rogue colleges that teach foreign students, warning that Australia cannot afford to let them damage the reputation of its \$15 billion international education industry.

In a strongly worded ministerial statement in Parliament, Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard said yesterday the Government would scrutinise education providers and review the legislation that covers their responsibilities towards foreign students.

A round table of international students from throughout the country would also be established to discuss issues such as accommodation, welfare and safety, she said.

The announcement follows a series of recent reports in The Age about alleged rotting at private training colleges in Melbourne and violent attacks, sometimes involving racial abuse, on foreign students in Victoria, Queensland and NSW.

The move is the strongest indication yet that the Government holds fears that the reputation-sensitive international education industry could be seriously damaged if foreign students abandon Australia as a study destination because of concern about personal safety and the quality of education and training.

Ms Gillard said a more rigorous method of auditing being applied to 16 colleges that pose a "high risk" to students in Victoria could form the basis for auditing of all education providers in Australia.

"As part of a strengthened compliance regime, we are increasing our scrutiny of education providers. Our focus is to assist them to better understand their legislative obligations, through workshops and other educative material," she said.

"The Australian Government will not hesitate to use the full extent of its legislative powers to sanction those that breach the law. Australia cannot afford poor-quality provision of services damaging the international reputation of our education and training."

Ms Gillard said she and Minister for Immigration and Citizenship Chris Evans were working on "student integrity measures" to make sure only genuine overseas students came here to study.

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Although most students reported satisfaction with their social experience in Australia, reports of violence and discrimination had the potential to damage our international reputation, Ms Gillard said.

A recent violent attack on an Indian student occurred in Ms Gillard's electorate of Lalor.

International education is Australia's third-largest source of overseas earnings after coal and iron. It is Victoria's biggest export earner, contributing nearly \$4.5 billion to the state's economy last year.

Last week, the Brumby Government bowed to pressure to crack down on rogue training colleges, announcing a rapid audit of colleges suspected of breaching regulations. The crackdowns announced by the Victorian and Federal governments come after repeated official statements playing down the extent of the problem.

Moves by both tiers of government follow claims in The Age last week that a Melbourne college had allegedly been taking cash payments to upgrade marks and employing unqualified teachers.

It is believed some colleges are exploiting foreign students' eagerness to secure permanent residency by selling certificates and bogus work experience references, both of which are required before an application can be lodged.

<http://www.watoday.com.au/national/gillard-to-scrutinise-rogue-colleges-20090526-bm3s.html?page=-1>

More overseas students coming to Adelaide

Independent Weekly
May 27 2009

South Australia's education sector has defied the economic downturn with international student enrolments up 24 per cent in the first quarter this year.

Further Education Minister Michael O'Brien said the Government was now on target to have 32,000 international students in Adelaide by the end of the year.

He said a lower dollar had contributed to the increase in 2009, with the fall over recent months making it 30 per cent cheaper to study in Australia.

But the minister said the increase in the number of students coming to Adelaide was no accident.

"South Australia's university and training providers must be commended for their highly professional marketing and recruitment programs," he said.

"Our education providers are helping to teach the next generation of Asian leaders, which in turn enhances their understanding of our language and culture and fosters closer ties with South Australia."

Mr O'Brien said next week's state budget would also waive all primary and high school fees for the dependents of any students at local universities to bring South Australia into line with other states.

<http://www.independentweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/more-overseas-students-coming-to-adelaide/1524674.aspx>

International education fair gets underway

Times Of India
May 26 2009

CHENNAI: US acting consul general Frederick Kaplan inaugurated a two-day international education fair in the city on Monday. Universities from UK,

Ireland, Singapore, Australia and the US have set up stalls at the event being held at Hotel Park Sheraton. The universities provided students a host of options to choose from in different academic streams including engineering, science, management, arts and media programmes.

In his inaugural address, Fredrick Kaplan stressed on the need for study abroad and said: "For Indians and for many people around the world, it is essential to read, write and speak English with ease. But what is most important is to develop creative thinking and analytical skills. The American system of education encourages students to ask questions and challenge the conventional wisdom. It will not do to simply memorise information because the data you put in your brain today will be obsolete tomorrow. What is important is the ability to think, analyse and create those are skills that can last forever."

Pointing out that it made sense to think of one's education in global terms in times when borders were being dissolved, Kaplan said, "As of 2005 (the last year for which numbers are available) there were about 138 million students worldwide seeking university degrees. More and more of these students will study abroad. Today the United States is the premier destination for international students; we have over 600,000 and the number is growing."

According to him, since economies and peoples of the world are intertwined like never before in human history, "to be educated today you must have an understanding of the wider world, speak more than one language, and be comfortable with people from other countries and other cultures."

The fair is organised by the Education Times (Times of India) and the Association of Accredited Advisors on Overseas Education.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Chennai/International-education-fair-gets-underway/articleshow/4577255.cms>

UOWD's "Study Abroad in Dubai" program spotlights Dubai as 'the most exciting city' for academic study

PressReleaseNetwork.com

May 25 2009

The University of Wollongong in Dubai (UOWD) launched a unique 'Study Abroad in Dubai' program that allows undergraduate students from all over the world to study in Dubai for a full semester, combining study with adventure and cultural understanding.

The program was introduced at a press conference attended by Professor Rob Whelan, President of UOWD and Mr. Stephen Garrett, Counsellor (Education & Training), Australian Educational International. Representatives from Dubai International Academic City (DIAC), AUSTRADE, the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) and Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) were present at the launch.

UOWD's 'Study Abroad in Dubai' program is being launched simultaneously in Los Angeles, USA, at the National Association of Foreign Students Advisors (NAFSA) Conference, one of the three biggest conferences on international education in the world, with the assistance of the University of Wollongong in Australia.

The program, one of the first of its kind in the region to be offered by a UAE-based university, is designed to actively encourage international students to study subjects such as Arab history and culture, which they could not study at home, to maximise the international nature of their study experience.

"Several stereotypes and myths are associated with the Middle East. As this region gains growing importance, it is essential that students form abroad understand and experience the local language, culture and business practices. Being enrolled at a local university is the best way to do this," said Professor Rob Whelan, President, UOWD. "This program will enable western students to broaden their horizons and eliminate misconceptions about the Arab world."

Speaking on behalf of Australian Education International, Mr. Stephen Garrett, Counsellor (Education & Training) said, "My office is tasked with the responsibility of promoting two-way student mobility between Australia and the Gulf/Middle-East regions. Interest in studying in this region, particularly from

Australian students has grown exponentially over the past few years and I commend UOWD in introducing this program to meet this demand.”

Mr. Ibrahim Yaqoot, Executive Director Corporate Support, DTCM, who was scheduled to speak at the launch, conveyed the following message: “Dubai offers the best in lifestyle and cultural richness for any visitor. We compliment UOWD on introducing a study program that will enable international students gain first-hand experience of Arabian living and heritage, and enjoy Dubai’s unique cosmopolitan ambience.”

Students from countries such as the United States, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Australia and New Zealand, often spend a semester abroad at an international university and have the studies undertaken credited back to the degree at their home institution. UOWD believes its Study Abroad program will be especially attractive to these students, in view of subjects like ‘Doing Business in the Arab and Islamic World’ and ‘Introductory Arabic Language’ which are part of the program.

UOWD Study Abroad program promotes Dubai as ‘the most exciting city in the desert - a lively international business and IT hub, where the sophistication of the 21st century walks hand in hand with the rich history of the region, where the dust of the desert is clearing to reveal one of the most vibrant, dynamic and international cities of the 21st century.’

The program offers students clean and safe accommodation in Dubai, allowing them to live in a multi-cultural environment conducive to cross-cultural understanding, personal growth and social development. Accommodation facilities are provided on a shared basis in the UOWD residences. UOWD Study Abroad students may enrol in 3-4 subjects for one full academic semester and select from the entire range of undergraduate subjects on offer.

Study Abroad students are assessed the same way as UOWD students enrolled in full degree programs. Applicants need to have completed one year of study at a recognised tertiary institution and be currently enrolled at an overseas university. The minimum required Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) is 2.5 on a scale of 4.0; or equivalent. All students are required to demonstrate their proficiency in English language.

UOWD offers a multicultural learning atmosphere with a current enrolment of over 3,500 students representing 108 nationalities. For further details on the Study Abroad program, please contact: Admissions, University of Wollongong in Dubai, Phone: +971 4 367 2400. Email: info@uowdubai.ac.ae. Web: <http://www.uowdubai.ac.ae>.

About the University of Wollongong in Dubai

Established in 1993, UOWD was the first Australian university in Dubai to be licensed by the UAE Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research. Located at Dubai Knowledge Village, it boasts 3,500 students from 108 different nationalities. It is part of one of Australia’s best performing research institutions, the University of Wollongong, Australia.

http://www.pressreleasetwork.com/newsroom/news_view.phtml?news_id=2857

Representative Of Australia's Curtin University To Meet Prospective Students

BruDirect.com, Brunei
May 23 2009

Bandar Seri Begawan - A Representative from Australia's Curtin University will be in the Sultanate next week to meet prospective students keen on furthering their studies in the land "Down Under".

Internationally connected Bruneian Education Consultancy James Hon, Marketing and Management (JHMM), has been welcoming Australian and British institutions to the country in the past weeks. On Monday May 25 and Tuesday May 26, JHMM will host a visit for the Curtin University's Faculty of Humanities.

Named after Australia's wartime Prime Minister John Curtin, the Curtin University of Technology's award-winning School of Humanities will be at hand to provide students with information on their courses.

These include Architecture, Interior Architecture, Construction Management, Urban Planning, Library Studies, Languages, Social Science, Social-Work, Fine Art, Design, Fashion, Education, Journalism, Mass Communication, and Film and Television, among many others.
In the recent 2008 QS THES World University ranking, Curtin University was once again ranked top 230, well ahead of more established institutions in Europe and North America.

Based in Perth, the university is surrounded by a cosmopolitan city with a wonderful climate as well as modern facilities. Located 15 minutes Southeast of CBD, Curtin University is nestled in the student-friendly suburb of Bentley.

Today, Curtin University is Australia's largest university on the West Coast, with a student population of 45,000. There are over 9,000 international students coming from 120 countries. Currently, there are approximately 180 Bruneians studying at Curtin University's Bentley campus. Anita Jolly of Curtin University will be available to meet students this Monday and the day after. She will also be holding two seminars, specifically on Humanities subjects like Art and Design, Architecture, Communications, Education, Social Sciences, and so on.

For more information, contact Mr Delon Hon at No 10, 1st Floor, Hj Abd Rahman Building, Kiulap, BSB, or by calling 2230198, or faxing to 2230199. -- Courtesy of Borneo Bulletin

<http://www.brudirect.com/DailyInfo/News/Archive/May09/23/nite19.htm>

NZ: Chinese numbers on the rise

University World News
May 24 2009

The ongoing impact of past declines in the number of Chinese students has masked a rebound in enrolments by new international students in New Zealand's universities this year while increasing numbers of Chinese continue to flood into Australian universities.

For several years, New Zealand's eight universities have suffered the 'pipeline' effect of a dramatic downturn in Chinese enrolments that began about 2003-4. This year was no exception for many institutions, with five of the eight universities reporting that their start-of-year international student numbers had dropped 1-4% compared with the same time last year.

But two universities - Waikato and Canterbury - bucked the trend with increases of 7% and nearly 4% respectively. In addition, enrolments by new international students are understood to have increased at most universities.

Victoria University of Wellington, for example, reported an overall decline in international student numbers so far this year, but a 9% increase in new enrolments. Victoria's pro vice-chancellor (international) Professor Roberto Rabel said the university was also experiencing a 20% increase in applications for the second trimester, indicating the university's final figure could be close to that of 2008.

Within that growth, Rabel said there were positive trends. "For example, the number of international PhD students has risen by over 40% compared with the same time last year to reach almost 280."

The increase in new enrolments has been attributed in part to the low value of the New Zealand dollar, which is now worth US\$0.55, down from about US\$0.79 at this time last year. But universities have also worked hard to diversify their international student base in order to reduce their reliance on China as a source country.

Australia, however, has long been an attractive destination to students from China and last year they again comprised the largest group of international students, with nearly 52,000 of the 183,000 foreigners enrolled in higher education. The number of Chinese students increased by 5% in 2007 over the previous year and by a further 8% last year.

Overall international student enrolments grew by 5% because of a strong growth in commencements. Two source countries - China and India - made up more than 43% of all higher education enrolments, with the Chinese the most numerous and almost doubling those from India.

The international education export market was estimated to be worth more than A\$15 billion (US\$11.8 billion) to Australia last year - up nearly 24% on 2007. Some universities now generate a quarter to almost a half of their income from foreign student fees - a reliance considered highly dangerous should the market experience a decline.

That is possible should the global economic crisis continue to worsen but also because as Australia's competitors in the overseas student arena increase in number and in attractiveness to the Australia's major source countries.

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20090521175856790>

Our schools for scandal

WA Today
May 22 2009

Spring Street this week bowed to pressure to crack down on rogue training colleges, but how did Australia arrive at a situation where countless overseas students are being fleeced by offshore agents and unscrupulous local private college operators?

THE biggest shock for Ajay when he arrived in Melbourne from India was the discovery that Flinders Street Station was not the college where he would be studying his cookery course. A wily education agent in India had shown him a photo of the grand train station and spun a story about how it was one of Melbourne's finest colleges. The likelihood is the agent was contracted by an Australian college to recruit students on its behalf.

When Ajay protested back in his home town of Amritsar that he wanted to study graphic arts, the agent told him cookery was a better option and that once he was in Australia he could easily switch courses or colleges. After all, there's nothing you can't do in a wonderful city like Melbourne where jobs abound.

Swept up in the excitement of an overseas adventure and bursting with ambition, the trusting 19-year-old signed on the dotted line, dreaming of making his parents proud. Now, the Melbourne college where he is enrolled will not let him leave to study elsewhere. He is stuck, living in Springvale, dreaming of being a graphic artist but training to work as a cook.

Ajay is one of countless foreign students duped, fleeced or blatantly misled by offshore education agents who, in many ways, are the linchpin of Australia's \$15 billion international education industry, the nation's third-largest export after coal and iron. But it's not just foreign charlatans who are bringing this bonanza industry into disrepute. There are a worrying number of unscrupulous private college operators in Australia, or "crooks" as Immigration Minister Chris Evans described them this week, ready to swindle students the moment they land in the country.

It is widely believed some vocational education and training colleges are hotbeds for scams, with operators allegedly taking under-the-counter payments for certificates, for bogus work experience references and to upgrade marks. These things may be illegal, but some foreign students see it as the fastest and easiest way to secure that most coveted of prizes: permanent residency.

This week, after repeatedly playing down the extent of the rogue-college problem, the State Government buckled, announcing it would audit 16 colleges that posed a "high risk" to foreign students. The move follows allegations reported in The Age that South Pacific Institute, a private training college in Melbourne, was taking cash from students to upgrade marks and also employing unqualified teachers, claims it denies.

But how did it come to this? Has there been a reluctance to clean up a lucrative industry that forms the backbone of the Australian economy? Are some students complicit in scams aimed at securing permanent residency in a country that firmly ties the booming education market to migration in an attempt to plug the skills gap and bring in billions of export dollars?

Not all foreign students are ripped off. But those that are often find their journey of exploitation starts in their home country, with education agents telling them lies about their college, their course, living expenses or Australia's education system generally. Most universities, TAFE colleges and private colleges engage agents in countries around the world to help recruit foreign students. The going market rate for each student signed up for training colleges is a payment to the agent of about 25 per cent of the course fee. Big money.

Some agents are very good. Others are not. The Federal Government has no direct mechanism in place for monitoring or regulating them. A national code of practice puts the onus on universities and colleges to police the system. They are required by law to ensure they don't use agents who are dishonest. They must also monitor agents' activities, provide them with accurate information and dump them if they get even a sniff they might be conned.

According to a source in India, one scam works by agents "lending" cash to students. Bank statements showing a healthy balance are designed to mislead the Australian Government when it assesses whether students have the finances to support themselves here.

Canberra also stipulates the level of English a student must have. But prospective students can buy fake English proficiency certificates from agents in their home nations. Fraudsters have been caught by police in India and China.

Some agents double dip, charging students for their services and taking a cut from Australian colleges too. Praveen paid her Indian agent 10,000 rupees (\$A270) to enrol her in a medical-related course. She arrived in Australia only to find she had been enrolled in a hairdressing course. Her college won't let her change courses or switch colleges. She has agreed to do the hairdressing course because she sees no way out of the bind. Her college has provided no support at all, she says.

Flinders University academic Virginia Pattingale, among others, says the Federal Government should set up a formal register of education agents, similar to that of migration agents. As global education grows, so does the sophistication of electronic fraud. False documents, identity theft, manipulated CVs and theft of logos and vice-chancellors' signatures all have the potential to punch a hole in the integrity of a nation's education system, she says.

The Federal Government says overseas education agents are outside its jurisdiction, so a register is pointless.

The unabashedly mercantilist approach to the internationalisation of education has been a phenomenal success. Australia has the highest proportion (19 per cent) of international students of any OECD country. Surveys show it is considered a safer and cheaper study destination than its main rivals, the US and Britain. But the real draw card is that the Government provides foreign students with a legitimate pathway to permanent residency.

Broadly speaking, in the vocational education and training sector, students must attain their qualification and provide a reference showing they have 900 hours of work experience before they can lodge an application. The trade-off is that the skills they gain in their courses will help Australia tackle its shortage of skilled labour. But once in Australia, students can face fresh challenges, particularly if they find themselves at colleges that act more as visa factories than education facilities.

Students disillusioned by the system are turning to a new organisation recently set up to provide support services to them. Education expert Robert Palmer was so disgusted at the way some students were treated he established the Overseas Students' Support Network Australia. He has filing cabinets full of case studies.

Here's a sample: Sandeep said that after paying his fees, he discovered his college did not have the facilities to teach cookery and was not even authorised to deliver courses to foreign students. Meenu said her college had taken payment of \$4000 from her but had then cancelled her enrolment without any explanation other than "these things happen in the system". Raj said he was struggling to understand his graphic arts pre-press classes because they were almost exclusively delivered in Chinese.

There are also reports of colleges not keeping proper attendance records, curriculums being taught back to front and frequent timetable changes that make part-time employment impossible.

The Age interviewed dozens of students from a range of Melbourne's private training colleges over the past three months. All spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of jeopardising their student visas. Some said they were bullied into paying advance fees or threatened with deportation. Others had results withheld until they coughed up cash. Others still said they had been forced to pay fines of up to \$250 for turning up even a few minutes late to class. Two cookery students said they were forced to clean the toilets by their teacher and another said his 15-week English course had come to an abrupt end after 10 weeks, but his college was refusing to refund him for the weeks of no tuition.

Students of South Pacific Institute, which is now under investigation, said they were told they could upgrade marks by paying \$200. The college denies the allegations.

Foreign students are often reluctant to report colleges that ask for unofficial payments, either because they have made the payments, or they fear exposure of reports could result in their deportation. Colleges that teach foreign students must report poor attendance and unsatisfactory results to the Federal Government — a move that can lead to deportation. It is not surprising, then, that many believe they are at the mercy of private colleges.

The final leg of a student's bid for permanent residency involves securing a reference from an employer showing they have 900 hours of work experience. Some colleges own the businesses where students get work experience. Cambridge International College, in Melbourne, for example, owns Scissors in the City, a hairdressing salon, and Cutting Edge Design, a graphic arts business. For a payment of \$4500 students, can do their work experience there. All perfectly legitimate.

But some college operators are known to sell bogus work experience references. The Age understands the going market rate is about \$2500 per reference.

The Federal Government is facing mounting internal pressure to launch a co-ordinated nationwide crackdown on corrupt training colleges. Senior officials from government departments told The Age last month that widespread rackets among private training colleges were "out of control" and undermining Australia's education, immigration and employment systems. Complex networks linking unscrupulous private colleges, migration agents, education agents and businesses offering work experience indicated the involvement of organised crime, one official said.

The officials said a unified response from the Commonwealth was being hampered by a lack of co-ordination, confusion over jurisdictions and a reluctance to upset a lucrative industry.

The monitoring process is fractured. The Immigration Department oversees student visas and attendance. The federal Education Department looks after consumer protection. It is up to state regulator the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority to check complaints about education standards. In the year to last June, the Education Department closed one college. The Registration and Qualifications Authority, which sources say is under-resourced, closed at least four colleges last year. Director Lynn Glover has denied the authority's "light touch" approach of allowing colleges a chance to put things right instead of taking a heavy hand is fuelling the problem.

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training, an industry body, denies the problem is widespread. Nonetheless, the Immigration Department is investigating 20 Melbourne colleges for possible breaches of immigration law.

For Ajay, there will be hard times as he studies a subject he doesn't much care for. But he has his youthful optimism. After his first six months of study, he will not need formal permission from his college to leave. He knows what he will be doing: enrolling in a new college, to study a new course, to pave the way for a new life.

<http://www.watoday.com.au/national/our-schools-for-scandal-20090522-bic6.html?page=-1>

Overseas universities woo Chinese students

China Daily
May 21 2009

The University of Melbourne is hoping to foster more exchanges and closer cooperation with Chinese students and academics, said Professor Glyn Davis, vice-chancellor of the institution, during a visit to China.

"China is the central part of our international engagement as we have over 3,000 Chinese students now on campus and tens of thousands of graduates in China," Davis said.

With one in seven overseas students throughout the world now coming from China and Chinese students making up the largest single national group of overseas students worldwide, Davis said there is plenty of interest in attracting Chinese students.

Australians, too, are looking to learn. The University of Melbourne has been providing Chinese language lessons for "more than half a century". He said Australians are becoming more interested because of the closer economic ties, cultural attractiveness and because there are an increasing number of young Australian expats in China.

In addition to student exchange programs with top Chinese universities, the University of Melbourne is exploring the possibility of joint research projects in water management, environment protection, medicine and bioscience, added Professor John Dewar, who is in charge of global relations at the university.

Both countries face similar challenges in water management. The university and Chinese Academy of Sciences set up a China-Australia Water Resources Center in Melbourne in 2006.

Nearly 80 percent of Chinese university students have considered studying abroad, according to the latest survey by China Youth Daily. Most going overseas opt to study in the US, the UK, Australia and Canada.

During the global financial crisis, more Chinese students are expected to head overseas because of the pressure to find work and the appreciation of the Chinese currency.

Overseas universities are seizing the opportunity and looking to attract more Chinese students through greater cooperation with Chinese counterparts and organizations.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-05/21/content_7913542.htm

AEI Study in Australia 2010 Briefings

Australian Education International
May 21 2009

AEI Study in Australia 2010 National Briefings is a sector support initiative under the Australian Government's Study in Australia 2010 drive.

The one-day sessions provide briefings on policy issues, consultations on key areas of work including the Study in Australia 2010 initiatives, and information sharing on market access, current data and trends, research, the regulatory environment, qualification recognition, scholarships, the international student experience and more.

Half-day workshops on ESOS National Code Best Practice will take place on the day before or after the main briefings.

<http://www.aei.gov.au/AEI/Events/SIA2010nationalbriefings.htm>

Fees rise for foreign students

Otago Daily Times, New Zealand
May 18 2009

Sarah Todd Fees for international students at the University of Otago will increase by as much as 21.7% next year, after staff said its existing prices did not match its reputation for quality tuition and degrees.

The falling New Zealand dollar and fee increases at other institutions meant Otago needed to restore relativity with its competitors, pro-vice-chancellor (international) Prof Sarah Todd told a university council meeting last week.

The main competitors were institutions in other parts of New Zealand and in Australia.

Students searching for an overseas university at which to study had "price-quality perceptions" based on factors such as a university's age, history, reputation, ranking, location, fees and the quality of its marketing.

If fees at Otago - ranked as New Zealand's top research university - were too low, a "dislocation" could occur in students' minds, she said.

She likened it to a person looking at a pair of jeans in an upmarket menswear store which were the same price as jeans from a chain store.

"If the price looks unusually cheap, they will wonder why. It is the same with a university. We are a provider of goods and services just like anyone else."

New Zealand universities were also more attractive to international students because of this country's falling dollar, Prof Todd said.

"While it is unclear how much longer we will enjoy the currently favourable conditions, the low value of the dollar means we are tracking as much as 60% cheaper on affordability matrices in some key markets compared to the same period last year."

Otago's key markets are the United States, China and Malaysia.

About 2270 international students are enrolled this year from more than 90 countries.

About three-quarters of them pay international fees, while the remainder - PhD students and students from universities with reciprocal fee agreements with Otago - pay the same fees as New Zealand-born students.

New Zealand universities must ensure international fees cover tuition costs so international students are not being subsidised by domestic students.

In the past, fee increases have been about 5% a year, but the council agreed with Prof Todd's recommendation to increase most fees by much more than that next year.

The two student representatives, Edwin Darlow and Simon Wilson, voted against.

Nil fee increases were adopted for two courses, with fee rises for the majority of the rest ranging from 6.4% to 21.7%.

Of the 306 courses listed, fees for 201 will rise by 10% or more.

The large fee increases only apply to international students enrolling for the first time next year.

The university guarantees their fees will only rise by 5% per annum for the rest of the time they are at Otago.

<http://www.odt.co.nz/on-campus/university-otago/56568/fees-rise-foreign-students>

Aussie welcome

The Star Online, Malaysia
May 17 2009

IT WAS a rather unusual sight as 55 students from Australia and a few from South Africa, Tanzania, Botswana and Kenya, milled around chattering excitedly at the Australian High Commissioner's residence recently.

They were students participating in Monash University's Study Abroad programme, who are spending six months to a year at Monash University Sunway.

"I came here because I wanted to experience another culture," said Australian business and commerce student James Fischer during the welcome tea at the residence.

"It's my first time living outside the 'bubble' and my comfort zone, where my bedsheets are neatly folded and food is on the table."

The exchange programme students chatting with Williams (right) and Australian High Commission staff.

Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia Penny Williams said that one of her personal goals was to enable Australian students to have an "experience" of Malaysia.

"Over the years, there has been around 300,000 Malaysians who study in Australia and five chief ministers in Malaysia were educated in Australia," said Williams.

"Many Malaysians understand Australia quite well, having studied there. But the Australian government also wants its citizens to understand Malaysia," she added.

Monash University pro vice-chancellor and president (Malaysia) Prof Robin Pollard anticipates another 83 Australian students will come next semester. He expressed hope that the exchange students would make the most of their stay in Malaysia and impact their communities when they return to their home countries.

"This is a developing country and it will change your DNA as you go along," he said.

"You will return as changed people, having had fantastic experiences and share them with others back home."

Although many of them have only been in Malaysia for a few months, the students are already on their way to accumulating valuable cultural lessons and experiences.

Australian student Jason Sing said he has matured through his stint in Malaysia, particularly while dealing with Malaysian cab drivers, and commented that this country had "the nicest sunsets I've ever seen".

"I like it here a lot," he said. "I am supposed to be here for only six months but I have decided to finish off my degree here and perhaps even do an internship programme."

Williams pointed out other programmes at the government level aimed at enhancing the educational relationship between the two countries, such as the Endeavour Awards and International Student Exchange Programme that started in 2007.

The former is a scholarship programme for those in Asia Pacific, Middle East, Europe and the Americas to undertake study, research or professional development in Australia and vice versa for Australians, while the latter allows Australian undergraduates to undertake student exchanges with a fee waiver.

This year, the Australian government is also offering various scholarships to encourage Australians to pursue vocational education and training, as well as internships in Malaysia.

<http://thestar.com.my/education/story.asp?file=/2009/5/17/education/3832908&sec=education>

Australia sets up helpline for Indian students after assaults

AFP

May 15 2009

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Authorities in Australia will launch a telephone helpline Friday for Indian students who have been the target of a wave of violent attacks in the southern city of Melbourne.

Victoria state police said the helpline, which will have operators who speak both Hindi and English, had been established after consultation with the local Indian community.

It follows a series of assaults on students from the sub-continent in Australia's second largest city, which the Federation of Indian Students in Australia (FISA) says were at least partially racially motivated.

"Discrimination is always there," FISA president Amit Menghani told AFP.

"Indian students are being targeted and attacked. The level of crime is increasing and it's a concern for the student community."

Police estimate Indians make up 30 percent of robbery victims in Melbourne's western suburbs and set up a community liaison group in January to examine the issue after an armed robbery in a convenience store left an Indian man in a coma.

They have also boosted numbers on a robbery taskforce in Melbourne's western suburbs and are considering sending officers to Indian cities to educate Australia-bound students about how to minimise the risk being attacked.

But police have played down any racial motive for the attacks, saying the Indian students, who often work late shifts to support their studies, were often in the wrong place at the wrong time.

"While Victoria Police acknowledges the Indian community are over-represented as victims, there is no evidence to support Indians are targeted or vilified because of their ethnicity," Inspector Scott Mahony said at the launch of the community liaison group in January.

"Sometimes, it is just a combination of timing and chance.

"A number of offenders are opportunists who take advantage of time, circumstances and opportunity. An example of this is targeting people when they are alone, particularly late at night."

Mahony angered Indian students in February, when he suggested they should not talk loudly in their native language in public or travel around with expensive items such as mp3 players on display.

Menghani said the comments implied Indian students brought the attacks upon themselves and accused police of failing to do enough to curb the assaults.

He was doubtful the helpline would improve the situation.

"It's too little too late," he said. "If someone calls the helpline it means that they've already been attacked.

"If they were really serious they would do something about it when it occurred. The attacks are not just happening in one suburb now, it's all around Melbourne and they're not doing anything about it."

He said Indian students were seen as easy targets for thieves because "we're humble people and we don't carry any weapons".

Menghani predicted Indians would look at studying elsewhere if the attacks continued.

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jfaD3h0vzL93mX_2Grz6LqI9Kk_Q

Chinese tycoon Jan Shang worries universities

The Australian
May 14 2009

A CHINESE tycoon who refuses to condemn the Tiananmen Square massacre has taken over the peak body of Australia's overseas students, the National Liaison Committee.

Jan Shang, a 43-year-old Sydney Chinatown venture capitalist, admits he helped recruit Chinese defenders of the Olympic torch against pro-Tibet protesters last year in what was described as the biggest pro-Beijing rally of the relay.

Another new member of the NLC is Jim Wang, recent past president of the Australian Chinese Students Club, who has confirmed he arranged transportation of Chinese students to the rally.

The Group of Eight research-intensive universities are shunning Mr Shang, voicing concerns about the NLC's legal status and election processes yesterday, while the National Union of Students has cut ties with the group, saying it is undemocratic.

A spokeswoman for Education Minister Julia Gillard said yesterday Ms Gillard had not met with Mr Shang, and clarification about NLC Ltd was being sought.

In an interview with The Australian yesterday, Mr Shang denied the NLC had received any funding from the Chinese Government, or that he had ever been a member of the Communist Party. But he refused to condemn the 1989 massacre in Tiananmen Square in which several hundred civilians were shot dead by the Chinese army.

"You put me in an awkward position. We are non-political, non-religious, and non-profit. I am not in a position to play the political game," he said.

Fellow NLC member Mr Wang, who said he had worked for the Reserve Bank of Australia, conceded he was ACSC president when it issued a statement before the rally that said no sovereign nation should tolerate separatist activities. "It is within China's international right to extend its sovereignty over its own territories, including XiZang (Tibet)," the ACSC said.

The NLC's spokesman, Mr Mark Choo, told a Senate education committee inquiry in March that the NLC was being bankrolled by the Chinese Students Association and its public officer, Mr Shang.

Asked if the CSA had helped organise the Chinese torch defence, Mr Shang told The Australian: "I am not denying that. We are the peak body who have affiliated clubs at the universities who went to Canberra to defend the torch.

"We wish to contribute to a harmonious society. We didn't endorse anyone to do anything violent; we are for the peace rally, nothing of a political nature," he said.

Mr Shang has been campaigning on the issue of the safety of international students in Australia, citing official figures that 51 overseas students died in Australia in the year to November 2008.

But the Department of Immigration has said the figures are lower than the mortality rate for Australians in the 15 to 29-year age group.

However, the universities are concerned the NLC safety campaign is an attempt to undermine the success of Australia's \$15.5 billion overseas student industry.

Mr Shang, who claims he was a student leader at the esteemed Fundan University in the late 80s before becoming a millionaire at age 25, said the Chinese community had "come to the rescue" of the old NLC after its funding was reduced to \$60,000 a year under voluntary student unionism.

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25476949-2702,00.html>

Increased visa fees to fund embassy makeovers

The Australian
May 13 2009

FOREIGN students wanting to study in Australia will be forced to pay an extra 20 per cent for their entry permits after another hike in visa fees.

Humanitarian arrivals, tourists and temporary residents who were hit with visa fee increases last year have been spared further pain.

But students, business people, skilled migrants and certain family categories are going to be hit hard, with the new measures expected to raise \$402.3 million over the next four years.

For foreign students, the changes mean a hike from \$450 to about \$540 for each application.

It will also cost more to become an Australian citizen, with the application fee up 10 per cent to \$260 for people born overseas.

The additional revenue will help offset the cost of building several new embassies.

The Bangkok embassy, one of the most important in Asia, is to be relocated to a more secure area, as will the Jakarta mission, which was severely damaged in a terrorist attack in 2005.

It will also help pay the \$1 million it cost the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to evacuate Australians stranded in Bangkok last year when anti-government protesters occupied the country's main airport.

Canberra's container-based diplomats in Kabul will be pleased to learn that \$3 million has been allocated for a study of where to put a new embassy in the Afghan capital. The money will match a dramatic increase in military and civilian aid.

Australia's foreign-based spies get \$43.7 million over four years, money the Australian Secret Intelligence Service will spend on enhancing counter-terrorism capabilities in the immediate region.

Security at diplomatic posts will get a \$54 million budget boost, including \$18.7 million in capital funding. "The measure aims to ensure adequate levels of protection are provided for personnel, visitors, property and information. This includes enhancement to both physical, information and communication technology security," the budget papers say.

Recognising the continuing threat posed by terrorism, the Government has allocated \$28.1 million to DFAT for counter-terror activities focused primarily in Southeast Asia.

Building on Kevin Rudd's First National Security Statement in December, the budget includes \$106.5 million over four years to strengthen diplomacy, advance trade prospects and protect Australians abroad. The Prime Minister's hopes of securing a non-permanent UN Security Council seat will be helped by an extra \$11.2million in lobbying funds. If successful it will have Australia sitting on the council for a two-year term from 2013-14.

"Membership of the Security Council would enhance Australia's ability to shape international responses to security issues," the papers say. "The measure will help support the campaign through funding additional staff at the New York mission, supplementing smaller missions on an as-needs basis, deploying special envoys and supporting ministerial campaigning."

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25470975-5013871,00.html>

Overseas student group at centre of bullying claims

Sydney Morning Herald
May 09 2009

THE body representing international students is no longer welcome in the head offices of major Sydney universities and Australia's most powerful education bureaucrats.

A Chinese businessman with the partially anglicised name Master Shang and a group of other directors took over the old National Liaison Committee of International Students last year.

Under Mr Shang's leadership, the group evolved into a broader group with a much higher profile, campaigning against international students being treated as "mere cash cows".

Now it is at the centre of bullying allegations against university staff and intimidatory and belligerent behaviour on-campus.

The director-general of the NSW Department of Education, Michael Coutts-Trotter, met Mr Shang this year. It is understood the meeting went so badly Mr Coutts-Trotter refuses to have the group in his office again.

Mr Shang said universities and ALP-dominated student unions were unwilling to let international students have a strong voice.

Eight days ago, Mr Shang and other members of the group launched a campaign at NSW Parliament House to highlight the mistreatment of international students in Australia. The launch was attended by consuls-general and deputy consuls-general from 20 countries.

"I am not trying to be difficult," Mr Shang said. "Our on-campus student leaders don't have the capacity to stand up to the universities.

"We make up 25 per cent of the student population. Yet no one is serious about the welfare and wellbeing of international students.

"In the wake of the tragic death of Jiao Dan [a Chinese student murdered two years ago in Sydney], we now know many more are dying or being seriously hurt.

"We have a very good relationship with Victorian universities so I don't understand what the problem is in NSW."

Two months ago the National Union of Students disaffiliated the NLC, raising questions about the Chinese business community bankrolling the organisation. The union's general secretary, David Wilkins, said the new group was self-appointed with no mandate to act on behalf of international students.

He said it was using the old organisation's name to impose itself on international students.

Professor Richard Henry, the academic deputy vice-chancellor at the University of NSW, was dismissive of the new group. He told the publication *Campus Review* that the university had found its interactions with Mr Shang to be "very difficult".

"The University of NSW has elected not to participate in any NLC activities and will not provide any funds to that organisation," Mr Henry said.

"I have been in close consultation with our student body, which is totally supportive of the university's position."

The media manager of the University of Sydney, Andrew Potter, said the university agreed with the National Union of Students, saying: "The university does not recognise the National Liaison Committee as a legitimate voice on behalf of international students."

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/overseas-student-group-at-centre-of-bullying-claims-20090508-axzz.html?page=-1>

Fees boost for Scots studying abroad

The Herald (UK)
May 07 2009

All Scottish university students taking part in overseas exchange programmes will have their fees paid for them from next year under Scottish Government plans.

Currently, some 300 students a year pay up to £1000 to study at international universities outside Europe in contrast to those visiting European universities under the Erasmus initiative, where students don't have to pay fees.

However, Fiona Hyslop, the Education Secretary, has unveiled proposals which will mean that, from the next academic year, all eligible students on recognised exchange programmes will get full fee support from the Student Awards Agency for Scotland.

"These changes will help tackle some of the financial barriers to students' participation in exchange programmes in countries such as Australia, Canada, China, New Zealand and the United States," she said.

Stephen Magee, vice-principal in charge of external relations at St Andrews University welcomed the proposals.

"This commitment comes at a time when Scottish universities are consolidating their already significant presence on the international stage and are looking to exploit a growing number of opportunities for Scottish students to study across the world."

http://www.theherald.co.uk/news/education/display.var.2506492.0.Fees_boost_for_Scots_studying_a_broad.php

Overseas students defy downturn to come to Australia

The Australian
May 07 2009

THE \$15.5 billion export education boom continues to defy the global recession, showing record annual growth of 20.8 per cent in the number of international students in universities and vocational colleges for the key March enrolment period.

In one of the few bright spots for the economy, universities set another record with 21.7 per cent growth in new students in March, driven by a 40 per cent leap in enrolments by Indian students and a 19.6 per cent jump among Chinese students.

University leaders yesterday simultaneously welcomed the surprise figures, saying they were "remarkable", but warned against downgrading formal calls for \$9.7 billion in renewal funding for cash-strapped universities in next Tuesday's budget.

Universities have suffered a calamitous \$800 million loss in investment income since world finance markets collapsed last September, with leading institutions the University of Melbourne and the University of NSW yesterday revealing they had been ravaged by the financial crisis.

Universities Australia chief executive Glenn Withers told The Australian yesterday that vice-chancellors had been "worried" that overseas demand would be down as the recession hit the finances of Asian families.

"(But) there is a flight to security through tertiary training in uncertain times -- both domestically and globally," Dr Withers said.

He attributed the strong result to the quality of Australian education, and an even greater priority that Asian families, traditionally great investors in their children's education, were making in education in uncertain times.

However, Dr Withers said he was worried that the Rudd Government could use the figures to justify putting off the massive investment in university teaching and research recommended by its own recent Bradley and Cutler reviews.

"Domestic and international students are increasingly accepting an education environment where we are stretching resources," he said.

"This is a crucial time for government to not defer the implementation of the Bradley recommendations, which were recommendations for good times and bad.

"If they defer the investment now they run the risk of killing the goose that has laid the golden egg."

The Universities Australia spokesman on international issues, University of Tasmania vice-chancellor Daryl Le Grew, said the figures would give universities "a real charge, because everyone was fearing the meltdown would result in a slackening of commencements".

"There are still risks -- there could be lag time in the downturn of economies overseas -- but the figures give us reason to be cautiously optimistic about enrolments over the next three to five years," Professor Le Grew said.

Commencements in vocational education and English language colleges were up 31 and 9 per cent respectively on last year.

But commencements in secondary schools were down 1 per cent.

A spokeswoman for Education Minister Julia Gillard said yesterday that the figures were "certainly encouraging for the sector in these difficult economic times and show the strength of the sector".

Export education was Australia's third-largest export behind coal and iron ore, the spokeswoman said.

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25440864-5013871,00.html>

Higher Education on the Move

Inside Higher Ed (USA)

May 06 2009

An estimated 2.9 million students worldwide are pursuing their educations outside their home countries, a 57 percent increase since 1999. At a round table discussion at the Institute of International Education's Washington offices Tuesday, coinciding with the release of the institute's new book, *Higher Education on the Move: New Developments in Global Mobility*, participants discussed the implications of that figure and other trends and trajectories not only in student mobility, but in scholar and institutional mobility, as well.

Participants often described the three phenomena as interconnected, with scholar mobility driving institutional mobility and institutional mobility driving student mobility. Sabine O'Hara, executive director of the Council for International Exchange of Scholars and vice president of IIE, described scholar mobility as "maybe a little overlooked" in terms of its impact on students and the overall international character of a college.

Her chapter in the book cites data from a 2007 study at Seton Hall University finding significant correlations between time spent abroad and the international content of a faculty member's teaching and research. "Faculty who spent one to two years abroad are almost twice as likely to incorporate international themes in their courses as those who spent no time abroad; and faculty members who spent more than two years abroad were nearly three times as likely to incorporate international perspectives into their courses. Faculty members who spent time abroad are also three to five times more likely to have a research agenda that is international in scope. In fact, time spent abroad proved more influential than being foreign-born or than experiencing institutional pressures to internationalize."

Yet, problematically for U.S. faculty members, they're among the least mobile worldwide, ranking last among 14 countries on measures like percentage of articles published in a foreign country or co-written with foreign colleagues.

The chapter on scholar mobility also features brief case studies of Fulbright Scholars who leveraged their individual experiences abroad into institution-wide international collaborations. Pascal Delisle, cultural attaché and executive director of the Partner University Fund for the French Embassy, described a need for institutions to increasingly drive student mobility.

While that 57 percent increase since 1999 is important, given worldwide enrollment patterns, "it's nothing explosive like we can expect," Delisle said in an interview. He pointed out that the main engine for student mobility has heretofore been individual in nature, based on student and family decisions, and so international exchange is limited to that pool of people who have the information and financial wherewithal to pursue it on their own, without the support of faculty or administrators. "If we are to see a real internationalization of higher education, the real engine will not be students and their families, the engine will be the institution," Delisle said.

What about that 57 percent increase in border-hopping students over the past decade -- does that number stand to continue growing at such a rate, in light of the global recession (and, of course, so many other factors)?

"I'm sure that there is still considerable potential for growth but I think the rate of growth will slow because the major expansion has already taken place," said Anthony Smallwood, first counselor and spokesperson for the Delegation of the European Commission.

Alan Ruby, senior fellow for international education at the University of Pennsylvania, agreed that the rate of growth will slow but said the raw numbers will keep going up. "The forces that have essentially driven growth have been economic forces that have increased the size of the middle class in the main sending countries," he said -- in the United States' case, China and India.

The size of the middle class will probably continue to grow, as will aspirations -- particularly in China, he said, where the government's one-child policy equates to three sets of very involved adults per child (the parents and the parents' parents), and where personal savings rates dwarf those in the U.S. However, as the sending countries have expanded their own higher education systems, there has already been a discernible shift toward the choice to pursue graduate as opposed to undergraduate education abroad (at least in the case of Chinese students coming to the U.S.), Ruby said.

More immediately, Wang Xiaoyang, the speaker and second secretary for the Embassy of China's education office, described an increasing interest in overseas study even in this economic climate. "They think it's a good time to study and later find a job," he said.

More broadly, the opening chapter of *Higher Education on the Move* depicts a world in which eight countries -- the U.S., United Kingdom, Germany, France, Australia, China, Canada and Japan -- host 72 percent of the world's international students, but in which other, traditionally sending countries are also emerging as destinations.

"Newer host countries such as China are seeing rapid increases in the numbers of international students. Several other countries in the Asia Pacific region -- Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and New Zealand, to name a few -- have stepped up their efforts to internationalize and to attract more international students. Even though this has resulted in a somewhat smaller market share for the U.S., we believe that this is a positive development as it has brought more countries into the field of international education and has changed the dynamic between sending and receiving countries from a unidirectional 'brain drain' type of mobility to one of true mutual exchange," according to a chapter co-written by Rajika Bhandari and Peggy Blumenthal, both of IIE.

The book also includes chapters on the General Agreement on Trade in Services, and the implications for one of the services covered by the agreement, education; joint and dual degree programs; and (everyone's favorite, or least favorite) "higher education rankings and the global 'battle for talent,'" among other topics.

<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/05/06/mobility>

Government promotes the study of Asian languages in schools

Media Release: The Hon Julia Gillard MP
May 04 2009

Government promotes the study of Asian languages in schools

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today invited primary and secondary schools to apply for grants under the \$6.24 million Becoming Asia Literate: Grants to Schools program which opens today.

Becoming Asia Literate: Grants to Schools is part of the Rudd Government's \$62.4 million National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP).

The program will be managed by the Asia Education Foundation and will provide \$6.24 million in direct grants to primary and secondary schools between 2009 and 2011.

The grants will be awarded to schools to promote the teaching and learning of Asian languages and the study of Asia for the four NALSSP target countries—China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea.

Grants will be allocated each year between 2009 and 2011 through competitive funding rounds of up to:

\$20,000 for individual schools

\$25,000 for a cluster of two schools

\$40,000 or more for a cluster of four schools

The Minister also announced the membership of a new reference group to oversee the implementation of the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP).

Announced to coincide with the Asian Education Foundation National Summit, the reference group will provide expert advice and high level strategic oversight across all elements of the NALSSP initiative.

- Chair
Mr Sid Myer
Asialink Chairman
- Professor Kent Anderson
Director, College of Asia and the Pacific at the Australian National University
- Mr Andrew Blair
President of the Australian Secondary Principals' Association
- Ms Kathe Kirby
Executive Director of the Asia Education Foundation
- Professor Tim Lindsey
Director, Asian Law Centre at The University of Melbourne
- Mr Tony Mackay
Executive Director of the Centre for Strategic Education and
Deputy Chair of the Interim National Curriculum Board
- Ms Alice Wong
Head of Asia Markets at Westpac Banking Corporation

In addition to the NALSSP, Education Ministers' recently agreed to include languages in the second phase of the new national curriculum development, together with the arts and geography.

The Rudd Government recently committed \$14.9m to establish a new scholarship scheme: the Prime Minister's Australia Asia Endeavour Awards.

The scholarships will allow the recipients to undertake one year of study in Asia, which can be followed by an internship or work placement also in Asia.

The Rudd Government has also recently committed \$1 billion to build new science and language labs in around 500 secondary schools around the country to promote the study of science and languages.

For more information about the NALSSP, visit www.deewr.gov.au/schooling/NALSSP

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_090504_104437.aspx

Uproar over face scan for foreign students

WA Today
May 02 2009

MELBOURNE colleges will consider the introduction of facial recognition technology at classroom doors in a bid to curb abuse of international student visas.

Many international students are required to attend at least 80 per cent of classes under education visas granted by the Federal Government. But TAFE teacher Gary Alexander said facial recognition technology was the only way to tackle rorting by foreign students seeking permanent residency in Australia.

The proposal has angered civil libertarians and overseas student organisations, which said the new measure discriminated against foreign students and could threaten Victoria's \$3.9 billion international education industry.

Three Melbourne colleges or TAFE schools told The Sunday Age they would consider the software, which requires overseas students to have their faces scanned.

Cameras would then identify students entering or leaving classrooms and automatically record attendance, said Mr Alexander, who plans to market the software in Victoria.

He accused some foreign students of defrauding swipe card technology, which has been introduced by several Melbourne colleges to track attendance.

The department of Immigration and Citizenship revealed last month that it was investigating 20 Melbourne colleges over possible breaches of immigration laws, including falsified attendance records.

Cambridge International College business development manager Phil Honeywood said it required all students to display identity cards at its four Melbourne campuses.

"We're happy to look at any technology on its merit, provided privacy laws are complied with," Mr Honeywood said.

Representatives of Box Hill Institute and Holmes Institute said they would also consider facial recognition software, if it was affordable and cleared privacy hurdles.

But the plan has infuriated the Federation of Indian Students of Australia.

"This is discrimination ... All students should be monitored if there is a genuine concern for the quality of education delivered and received," said spokesman Amit Menghani.

Liberty Victoria president Michael Pearce, SC, also raised concerns that the software could breach racial discrimination and equal opportunity laws if only applied to overseas students.

"This would seem to be an obvious case of discrimination and would need to be applied to every student," Mr Pearce said.

"But you have to ask if such invasive technology is either necessary or desirable."

<http://www.watoday.com.au/national/uproar-over-face-scan-for-foreign-students-20090502-aquu.html>

Studying abroad grows in three trends

People's Daily Online, China
April 30 2009

According to statistics the current market for Chinese studying abroad has shown growing trends in three areas, more self-financed, more classified and more schools and majors available to choose from.

Self-financed students have become the majority

As stated by Zhang Xiuqin, Director-General of the Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges under the Ministry of Education, the number of Chinese students who went to study abroad in 2008 reached 179,800. Of these students, 161,600 were self-financed, accounting for 90 percent of the total. Self-financed students have become the majority of Chinese students studying abroad.

In 2007, Zhu Jiani, a 2008 master's degree graduate of the Graduate School of Education at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, made a survey via the Internet of Chinese students studying abroad. According to 454 questionnaires received, 62 percent of the students declared their family as the main source of funding for their tuition for studying abroad, ranking it still the top financial source. Zhang, mother of a self-financed student studying abroad, said in an interview that nowadays people can more easily afford to study abroad as their income has increased while expenses for studying abroad have not changed much.

Experts believe that the recent market for studying abroad has benefited from two policies. The first one was the four trillion yuan stimulus package adopted by the Chinese government to boost domestic demand. This has benefited many industries, and therefore directly or indirectly impacted the common family. The second policy related to the fact that in recent years, popular studying abroad destinations such as the UK, the US, Australia and Canada all adjusted their policies one after another, relaxing visa restrictions, adjusting the percentage of new students admitted and cutting down the threshold for enrollment, therefore increasing the number of foreign students from China and other countries.

Students studying abroad become more diversified

A consultant who works at an intermediary agency for studying abroad called Chivast Education International said that "the number of candidates applying as graduate students increased by 30 to 40 percent and as undergraduates increased by 50 percent in 2008."

Recently, Chinese students studying abroad have become increasingly diversified. Aside from undergraduates, other students such as graduate students, doctorate students, and advanced research scholars have gradually increased. Apart from students, young white-collar workers are also looking for the opportunity to study abroad.

According to overseas study experts, children are primarily sent to study abroad due to the high pressure and great competition of university entrance examinations in China and the fact that it would be relatively easier to study in a foreign university. Second, it could help the children adapt earlier to the international environment and lay the foundations for them to enter relatively good universities for postgraduate education. Third, the parents of many high school students were previously overseas students and advise their children to study abroad.

Experts believe that studying abroad is no longer an exclusive right for certain classes as the market for overseas studies at present has become a "supermarket for everyday people," resulting from the increasingly lower costs and higher value of studying abroad.

A larger selection of schools and majors to choose from

During the China International Education Exhibition Tour held recently, of the over 400 colleges and institutions that participated in the exhibition, 149 were new participants, including first time exhibitors from Australia, France, the Netherlands, Ireland, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and the UK. They offered Chinese students a series of education programs covering high school education, vocational education, continuing education, undergraduate education and postgraduate courses.

Colleges from countries and regions visiting China to recruit new students are also providing more choices in terms of what they can major in. After analysis, experts believe that in past years, most students going abroad to study chose business administration, finance, accounting or IT, which has almost saturated the market for these majors. In recent years, the majors which were relatively less popular in the past, such as engineering, logistics, environment, education, nursing, cosmetology and hairdressing and vehicle maintenance and repair, have become the choices of many students that study abroad.

Experts suggest that when choosing what to major in, one should first establish a goal, ascertaining what one wants to learn about and should not blindly follow the trend. The appropriately chosen major should be selected in accordance with the basis of learning, background, mode of thinking and individual character. One should anticipate the job prospects of the chosen major in order to avoid "learning something useless."

<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6648966.html>

Recruiting Agents at Chinese College Fair Pose as Translators

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

April 30 2009

A number of American universities have issued complaints against a college fair co-sponsored by the Institute of International Education (IIE) in Hangzhou, China. According to fair attendees, the translators hired to work with Americans participants were actually student recruiting agents for Edushanghai International Company Ltd., which bills itself as a provider of "counseling services" to Chinese students who want to study overseas.

IIE, which holds higher education fairs in countries around the world to bring together colleges and students, forbids third parties to seek to represent colleges or potential students at the events. The organization has offered the aggrieved colleges a credit for the fees they paid to participate in the recent college fair.

"As far as we are aware, this situation has never occurred before, and we are taking steps to make sure that it does not happen again," IIE spokesman Sharon Witherell said in a written statement.

The use of paid recruiting agents is one of the most controversial issues in international education today. Universities in Australia, Britain, and elsewhere commonly use overseas recruiters to attract foreign students, but the practice is not widespread among American institutions. Critics worry that agents may take advantage of students, but proponents argue that the only way in which American colleges can compete globally for students is to use agents.

http://www.aacrao.org/transcript/index.cfm?fuseaction=show_view&doc_id=4282