

Australia's gains

Australia is becoming a serious threat to the UK and USA's positions as top study destinations in the international education travel market, and the launch of a new Australian education brand can only help boost its position.

Australia's international student community is becoming increasingly widespread, as new student markets compete with more traditional ones in the ranking of top student provider countries. "Our most important markets for the past three years have been consistently China, India, Thailand and Canada," says Kathy Attree at the University of Western Sydney International (UWS) in Penrith, New South Wales. "What we have seen is a change in the market ranked five to 15. In this area, we have seen the inclusion of Jordan, Korea, the USA and Germany with a decline in numbers from Pakistan and South America."

At the University of Wollongong in New South Wales, the majority of the top student provider countries are also Asian, although the third largest nationality is more of a surprise. "The most important markets for the University of Wollongong are, in descending order,

China, Thailand, the United States, Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Singapore," says Peter Day at the university.

Australian colleges and universities have seen increasing student enrolments from the USA for a few years (see *Education Travel Magazine*, issue 1, 2002, page 8). According to Marcelo Follari from IDP Education Australia, the USA is now "one of our fastest growing markets". He adds, "We know that there are around 5,200 US students in a wide number of higher education on-campus programmes, ranking as the 14th source country of international students."

Steve Luther from AustralLearn: North American Center for Australian Universities in the USA, confirms that applications from US students for study abroad and longer-term degree programmes in Australia have reached "record levels". He explains, "The interest [in Australia] has absolutely exploded. It's a

New Australian brand

In December 2002, the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training (Dest) launched a new brand label to promote Australian education overseas. The Study in Australia logo was developed by Australian Education International (AEI), with the help of leading education industry representatives, and attempts to emphasise the key attractions of Australia's education system and distinguish it from its US and UK rivals.

Extensive research by AEI, which included interviews with students, parents, agents and academics in more than 20 countries, identified Australia's

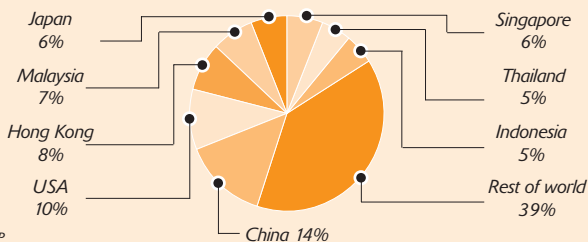


brand position as meeting students' needs for freedom,

challenge and status.

Peter Day from the University of Wollongong in New South Wales, welcomes the initiative. "The branding work conducted by AEI is excellent and absolutely critical in breaking into markets which traditionally do not perceive Australia as a quality provider of higher education – most importantly North Asia (Taiwan, Korea and Japan) as well as the United States, which hitherto has looked to Australia as a destination only for one-session study abroad students," he says.

Total number of student visas issued off-shore for all sectors between July 2001 and July 2002



Source: IDP

Selection of higher and vocational education institutions in Australia

Name of school	Location	Use agents	No. of students	% int. students
Adelaide Hospitality and Tourism School	SA	✓	50	5
Australian College of Travel and Hospitality	VIC	✓	500	60
Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE	QLD	✓	13,000	1
RMIT	VIC	✓	56,000	14
Russo Institute of Technology	QLD	✓	1,100	65
TAFE NSW - Sydney Institute	NSW	✓	53,000	25
Torrens Valley TAFE	SA	✓	3,000	2
University of Tasmania	TAS	✓	13,000	10
University of Western Sydney	NSW	✓	35,000	9
University of Wollongong	NSW	✓	14,209	25

combination of students discovering the value and prestige of the Australian universities and their education system and also the good work by the Australian government and the universities in increasing exposure in North America."

While traditional Asian student markets continue to be key for many institutions, the opening of IDP Education Australia offices in the UK and the USA last year (see *Education Travel Magazine*, issue 3, 2002, page 2), and the launch of a generic brand to promote Australian education (see box above) have helped promote the country's attractions to a wider overseas audience.

Many institutions are also broadening their own marketing strategies overseas. Bronte Neyland from RMIT International in Melbourne, Victoria, comments that the "diversified marketing activities conducted by institutions in an increasing number of regions" have had one of the greatest effects on the number and spread of student nationalities over the past year.

Factors such as the student visa changes brought in by the Australian

government in July 2001 have continued to affect international enrolments, encouraging institutions to explore new marketing opportunities. "All [assessment level] three and four countries, particularly India and Sri Lanka, have experienced a definite decrease," says Margot Hayes from Torrens Valley Institute in Modbury, South Australia, while Neyland adds, "South America, Africa and Europe are the emerging [student] markets for the Australian education system."

Day points to characteristics of the European market that have encouraged promotion in this continent. "In Europe, we have targeted countries where there is a preparedness to pay for higher education abroad or alternatively where home government grants encourage this – notably Sweden and Norway," he says.

However, he adds that, "in the long term we expect to remain focused in the Asian region, which is predicted by IDP Education Australia to be the source of 93 per cent of all Australia's higher education students by the year 2025".