

Australia cancels student visas in error

Up to 8,000 students who are studying or have studied in Australia have been affected by “defective” paperwork that led to their student visas being cancelled in error. The government’s Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (Dimia) is trying to contact 7,000 students who have since returned to their home countries to inform them that they can continue their courses. A further 700 students in Australia were also affected.

The problem came to light during a federal court case brought by a Bangladeshi student against the government for cancelling his student visa. He had failed to attend more than half his classes during one term of his cookery course. The court case brought to light the fact that students in breach of their visa conditions – they must attend 80 per cent of their classes and maintain good academic performance – had been sent a letter which told them to contact a particular Dimia office and officer, rather than any Dimia office and officer.

Any student who failed to contact Dimia within 28 days of receipt of this letter had their visa cancelled. Dimia’s website stated, “Any cancella-

tion of student visas where this notice was used may be ineffective. The department is working to notify all potentially affected people through a range of methods, including an advertising campaign, letters to clients and website information.” The defective letters had been used between May 2001 and 16 August this year.

In a more embarrassing turn of events, it emerged that up to 300 students may also have been wrongly detained in prison prior to being deported, as this is a policy used in some cases of visa overstay. A Dimia spokesperson told *The Daily Telegraph* newspaper that it may face claims for compensation. “Our records indicate that over the five years, some 300 people may have been impacted in this way,” he said.

At the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (Acpet), Tim Smith, National Executive Officer, said that only a few Acpet members had been affected, and that providers were assisting Dimia to locate students by contacting them at their last known addresses. “A substantial number of those affected have obtained another visa and have returned to their studies,” he said.



The immigration department is trying to reach up to 8,000 students affected

Thailand to encourage Chinese language study

THAILAND’S EDUCATION Minister, Chaturon Chaisang, announced earlier this year that he wanted to encourage more schools in the country to offer tuition in Mandarin, given China’s rising economic power and the close trade relations between the two countries.

Usanee Watanapan at the education ministry was quoted in *The Nation* newspaper explaining that the new strategy – which is still in draft form – included a goal of standardisation of tuition nationally, teacher development and academic exchange and cooperation with Chinese schools. “We have received support from China,” said Watanapan. “Chinese experts are going to work with our experts to de-

velop textbooks based on our curriculum.”

She said that currently Mandarin tuition, which is offered in at least 300 schools in the country, was taught with varying levels and benchmarks. A central curriculum would “allow a continuity” for Mandarin learners. Schools not currently offering Mandarin will be encouraged to do so and a plan to match up institutions with “sister schools” in China is also on the cards.

“China is an economic power and Mandarin is becoming increasingly important,” said Watanapan. “If we try to avoid it, we will lose.” The move may well have a knock-on effect for the significant English language teaching market in Thailand.

36,000 possible visa violations in USA

THROUGH THE SEVIS PROGRAMME in the USA – which was set up to detect visa defrauders and those not complying with the terms of their student visa – 36,000 possible visa violations were detected in the first year alone, according to the US Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). However, of these, only 1,600 were investigated and 155 arrests made.

The problem, according to Tom Tancredo, a member of the House subcommittee on international terrorism, is that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) only has 2,000 special agents to enforce immigration laws within the USA. “We’re partway there, we won’t be done until we not only have the system operating fully, but we respond effectively to what it tells us,” he told *The Detroit News*. The other problem is that many students fall foul of their visa regulations without realising, by dropping a class or changing immigration status without notifying authorities.



The Icef Americas Workshop

Date: December 11-13
Venue: Miami, USA
Email: info@icef.com
Web: www.icef.com

Expolangues

Date: January 18-21
Venue: Paris, France
Email: camille.rabehanta@letudiant.fr
Web: www.expolangues.fr/

Fitur 2006

Date: January 25-29
Venue: Madrid, Spain
Email: fitur@ifema.es
Web: www.fitur.ifema.es

The Pacific-Rim Workshop

Date: February 28 - March 2
Venue: Tokyo, Japan
Contact: Icef, as before

Aula - Educ. Opportunities Exhibition

Date: March 8-12

Venue: Madrid, Spain
Email: aula@ifema.es
Web: www.aula.ifema.es

Salao do Estudante

Date: March 11-12
Venue: São Paulo, Brazil
Date: March 14-15
Venue: Curitiba, Brazil
Date: March 17
Venue: Porto Alegre, Brazil
Date: March 19
Venue: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Date: March 21

Venue: Florianopolis, Brazil
Email: rupert@csglobal.net
Web: www.csglobal.net

The Alphe Korea Workshop

Date: March 11-13
Venue: Seoul, Korea

The Alphe Japan Workshop

Date: March 15-17
Venue: Tokyo, Japan
Email: jane@hothousemedia.com
Web: www.hothousemedia.com

New record for world's longest lesson

TO TOAST ITS new school in the heart of Shanghai, China, EF decided to aim high and break the Guinness World Record for the world's longest language lesson. Beginning at 10am on September 9, the lengthy lesson eventually ended 72 hours later, earning a new accolade for the school and a free English language course in London for the surviving students!

Teacher, David Specchio, and his willing students were given a 15-minute break from their lesson every eight hours and carbohydrate-rich foods as well as drinks supplied by sponsor, Coca-Cola. The 25 students that made the distance also received a year's supply of Coca-Cola.

"It was one of the most exhausting but rewarding experiences of my life," commented student Mary Bai, 32. "The class really bonded to break this record." Specchio added, "I am very proud to have been part of this event, the students were fantastic and, although it was a real challenge, it's been great fun too."

At EF, General Manager, Peter Winn, said he was proud of the students and teacher for

their achievement. "This event proves – in a very extreme way – our commitment to provide 24-hour access to teaching,



EF students and their teacher stayed awake for 72 hours to clinch the record

with the combination of teacher-led classes and studies in our online labs," he said.

Canada push in Middle East

INDUSTRY CANADA, Canada's export promotion arm of government, is organising targeted marketing missions for Canada's language training industry. In September, a trip to Tunisia was organised that involved a student fair and visits to various international schools in the country. In November, a comprehensive marketing trip to the Middle East was undertaken, which gave delegates, who paid Industry Canada to attend each event, the option of visiting Israel, Jordan, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait and Libya.

The programme of events arranged in Israel, Jordan, Kuwait and Libya were all organised by local Canadian embassies. Meanwhile, Industry Canada linked up with Canadian Education Centre Network (CECN) for the student fairs in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

"The Canadian embassies of the Middle East and North Africa region have coordinated their efforts to offer Canadian institutions more opportunities for education recruitment and partnership building at a reduced cost," commented Jean-Philippe Tachdjian of the Education Marketing Group at International Trade Canada, a division of Industry Canada. All the city schedules comprised a welcome reception and networking opportunity, a recruitment fair and local school visits. In Israel, it was the first time Canada had organised an education recruitment event, said Tachdjian.

More immigrants to be welcomed to Canada

REPORTS IN THE CANADIAN press indicate that more immigrants may be encouraged to settle in Canada, as the country tries to shore up deficits in the workforce in parts of the country. Immigration Minister, Joe Volpe, was reported as saying, "We've got to have more immigrants. There isn't a place in the country that hasn't used that four-letter word: more."

Those already in Canada for some time, such as overseas students, would be given preference for permanent settlement rights. Last year, 235,824 people were granted citizenship, while an enhanced annual target of one per cent of Canada's population – 328,000 per year – is being mooted by Volpe, who is unveiling his detailed strategy later this year.

Currency

1xUS\$ =currency*

Argentinean	Pesos	2.914
Australian	Dollar	1.316
Brazilian	Real	2.259
British	Pound	0.566
Bulgarian	Leva	1.635
Canadian	Dollar	1.172
Chilean	Pesos	530.25
Chinese (PR)	Yuan RMB	8.092
Czech	Koruny	24.78
Danish	Kroner	6.244
Egyptian	Pound	5.761
EU	Euro	0.836
Hong Kong	Dollar	7.756
Hungarian	Forint	208.90
Icelandic	Kronur	61.227
Indonesian	Rupiah	10,029.8
Israeli	New Shekels	4.596
Japanese	Yen	113.81
Maltese	Lira	0.359
Mexican	Peso	10.707
New Zealand	Dollar	1.435
Norwegian	Kroner	6.603
Polish	Zloty	3.283
Russian	Rubles	28.600
Singaporean	Dollar	1.691
Slovakian	Koruny	32.47
South African	Rand	6.480
South Korean	Won	1,039.1
Swedish	Kronor	7.780
Swiss	Franc	1.297
Taiwanese	NT Dollar	33.235
Thai	Baht	41.032
Turkish	Lira	1,349,500.0
Venezuelan	Bolivar	2,147.3

*Rates are subject to change and should be used as indications only. 05/10/05.

Europe's language survey

ACCORDING TO a Eurobarometer survey, undertaken in honour of the European Day of Languages in September, half of European citizens can speak a second language, and eight out of 10 students between the ages of 15 and 24 know a second language well enough to have a conversation.

Citizens of Luxembourg had the best second language ability, according to the European Commission's survey of 29,328 people across the European Union and in Turkey, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania.

Ninety-nine per cent of its nationals rated themselves as bilingual, while Hungary had the lowest proportion of citizens with a second language ability – just 29 per cent, one per cent below the UK, at 30 per cent.

English was unsurprisingly the most common second language, spoken by one-third of respondents, followed by German (12 per cent) and French (11 per cent). Somewhat surprisingly, Spanish lingered with Russian as a second language mastered by just five per cent of Europeans.

The Moscow Workshop

Date: March 26-28
Venue: Moscow, Russia
Contact: Icef, as before

Expolingua Madrid

Date: March 31 - April 2
Venue: Madrid, Spain
Email: info@expolingua.es
Web: www.expolingua.es

ExpoBelta

Date: April 1 -2
Venue: Sao Paulo, Brazil

Date: April 4

Venue: Curitiba, Brazil

Date: April 6

Venue: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Date: April 8

Venue: Recife, Brazil

Date: April 11

Venue: Goiânia, Brazil

Email: mgabarra@belta.org.br

Web: www.belta.org.br

Kazakhstan Educational International Fair

Date: April 8-10

Venue: Almaty, Kazakhstan

Email: marina.khan@intellect.kz

Web: www.intellect.kz

Int. Education Fairs of Turkey

Date: April 16-23

Venue: Adana, Ankara, Izmir,

Istanbul - Turkey

Email: info@ieft.net

Web: www.ieft.net

EA Agent Workshop

Date: April 20-22

Venue: Melbourne, Australia

Email:

easec@englishaustralia.com.au

Web: www.englishaustralia.com.au

Ialc Agent Workshop

Date: April 27-30

Venue: Madrid, Spain

Email: info@ialc.org

Web: www.ialc.org

The Icef London Workshop

Date: May 4-6

Venue: London, UK

Contact: Icef, as before

Nafsa Annual Conference

Date: May 21-26

Venue: Montreal, Canada

Email: conference@nafsa.org

Web: www.nafsa.org

The Alphe Canada Workshop

Date: May 27-29

Venue: Vancouver, Canada

The Alphe USA Workshop

Date: May 31- June 2

Venue: Miami, USA

Contact: Hothouse Media, as before