

Immigration act review in Australia

Currency

		1xUS\$ =currency*
Argentinean	Pesos	3.230
Australian	Dollar	1.823
Brazilian	Real	2.501
British	Pound	0.687
Bulgarian	Leva	2.158
Canadian	Dollar	1.556
Chilean	Pesos	652.32
Chinese (PR)	Yuan	8.276
Czech	Koruny	33.45
Danish	Kroner	8.200
Egyptian	Pound	4.600
EU	Euro	1.103
Hong Kong	Dollar	7.799
Hungarian	Forint	269.18
Icelandic	Kronur	91.836
Indonesian	Rupiah	9244.3
Israeli	New Shekels	4.877
Japanese	Yen	127.93
Maltese	Lira	0.456
Mexican	Peso	9.464
New Zealand	Dollar	2.183
Norwegian	Kroner	8.326
Polish	Zloty	4.083
Russian	Rubles	31.260
Singaporean	Dollar	1.805
Slovakian	Koruny	46.997
South African	Rand	10.219
South Korean	Won	1273.6
Swedish	Krona	10.172
Swiss	Franc	1.607
Taiwanese	NT Dollar	34.513
Thai	Baht	42.875
Turkish	Lira	1,365,500.0
Venezuelan	Bolivar	1004.0

*Rates are subject to change and should be used as indications only. 15/05/02

French – Chinese education links promoted

THE French and Chinese governments signed an agreement in March to promote education in their respective countries, focusing on the exchange of students, teaching of French in China and Chinese in France and professional training. The agreement seeks to maintain growth in university exchange students, to establish common references and ensure partnerships between training institutions.

According to China's Xinhua news agency, a total of 3,450 Chinese university students are currently studying in France, up from 1,127 in 1997/98, while the number of French students studying Chinese in France has doubled in five years. □

Close cooperation in Australia between the Department for Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (Dimia) and education industry bodies could iron out problems that schools are experiencing with the immigration legislation that was introduced last year.

As a result of industry efforts to make the legislation more workable, a review of the current framework is being carried out by Dimia that may bring about a change in legislation by November. Particular problems have been cited in Korea and there are fears that developing markets are being stifled because of the current regulations.

Concerns were voiced last year when the new "transparent" system was introduced, which gives each country and education sector an Assessment Level (AL) grade of between 1 and 5, according to the perceived risk of visa overstay. Prospective students who are assessed at AL 3, 4 or 5 have to provide extensive proof of finances and English language

ability (see *Language Travel Magazine*, September and October 2001, page 6).

One key concern among English language providers is the requirement of students with higher AL gradings to have a relatively high IELTS score to gain a student visa. As Alyson Moore, Chairperson of English Australia, pointed out, "It's a classic catch 22 [situation] in which the students are required to already know the very thing they want to study." Industry bodies – encompassing English Australia (EA), the Affiliation of International Education Peak Bodies (AIEPB) and the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (Acpet) – have recommended to Dimia that alternatives to IELTS should be explored, as IELTS testing is limited in some countries, or that the IELTS requirement be dropped and the responsibility of screening English levels be placed with schools themselves.

Another key concern is the "no further stay" rule that now exempts AL 3, 4 or 5 students studying English language from

prolonging their studies once in Australia. Acpet member, Penny Kozlowski, from the English College of Adelaide, has reported severe delays in processing visa applications in Korea, which is related in part to the fact that students are now returning to Seoul to apply for a further student visa. Acpet has recommended that the no further stay rule be revoked and replaced with a new bona fide financial test.

Other suggestions include the proposal that regular reviews of assessment levels are carried out so that levels of compliance may lead to a change in a country's AL grading. Industry players are also lobbying for the abolition of the default AL 3 rule, which sees countries that are not specifically graded, with small numbers of visa applicants, given AL 3 status automatically. A spokesperson for EA pointed out, "New markets cannot be grown whilst [they] are automatically placed in AL 3 category [including no further stay], regardless of any evidence of risk." Results of the review are expected in August. □

More changes for US visa system

ALL prospective students going to the USA are now required to obtain a student visa prior to entering the country and are no longer able to switch from tourist status to student status, unless intention of study is declared at the port of entry. Continued pressure on the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) has led to these reforms, as the USA looks to safeguard itself against visa violations and risk.

The changes follow the embarrassing situation brought to light after the September 11 events, in which the flight school attended by Mohammed Atta, presumed ringleader of the hijackers, received notification of his student visa approval from the INS six months after the attacks. Previously, students were able to begin a course of study in the



Students in the USA can no longer study while awaiting student status

USA while waiting for clarification of student visa issuance, although the majority of international students gain student visas prior to their arrival in the USA.

The INS said the amendment, which came into immediate effect in May, "ensures that those aliens seeking to remain in the USA in student status will have received

the appropriate security checks before a course of study". Students will still be able to enter as a tourist in some circumstances, such as for interviews on campus, but they will not be able to begin their study programme until INS approval is received. The INS has said processing times of 30 days would be achieved in such cases.

The Alphe UK Workshop

Date: 23-25 August
 Venue: London, UK
 Contact: Hothouse Media
 Matthew Northover
 or Jane Gilham
 11-15 Emerald Street
 London, WC1N 3QL, UK
 Tel: +44 20 7440 4027
 Fax: +44 20 7440 4033
 Email: matthew@hothousemedia.com
 jane@hothousemedia.com

Arels International Language Fair

Date: 27-29 August
 Venue: Brighton, UK
 Contact: Annie Wright, Arels
 56 Buckingham Gate
 London, SW1E 6AG, UK
 Tel: +44 20 780 29200
 Fax: +44 20 780 29201
 Email: info@arels.org.uk

International Educational Fair

Date: 27 August
 Venue: Pusan, Korea
 Contact: Mansuk Bae, KAMC
 422-30 Jangjeon 3 - Dong
 Keumjeong-Ku
 Pusan, 609-840, Korea
 Tel: +82 51517 7340
 Fax: +82 51517 7341
 Email: kamc@thrunet.com

MEI-Relsa Agent Workshop

Date: 2 September
 Venue: Co. Clare, Ireland
 Contact: MEI-Relsa,
 17 Lower Camden St,
 Dublin 2, Ireland
 Tel: +353 147 53122
 Fax: +353 147 53088
 Email: info@mei.ie

Language Parade

Date: 6-8 September
 Venue: Budapest, Hungary
 Contact: LingVisit Educational &
 Language Travel Ltd.
 PO Box 435, Budapest 62,
 H-1395, Hungary
 Tel: +36 12695489
 Fax: +36 13022863
 Email: lingvisit@lingvisit.hu

14th Annual Conference of the EAIE

Date: 11-14 September
 Venue: Porto, Portugal
 Contact: EAIE Secretariat
 PO Box 11189
 Amsterdam, 1001
 The Netherlands
 Tel: +31 205 254 999
 Fax: +31 205 254 998
 Email: eaie@eaie.nl

Expo-Estudenoxterior.com Brazil Roadshow

Date: 12 September
 Venue: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
 Date: 14 September
 Venue: Londrina, Brazil
 Date: 16 September
 Venue: Curitiba, Brazil
 Date: 18 September
 Venue: Riberao Preto, Brazil
 Contact: Daniel Ripple
 Front Page Promotions Media
 7421 Frankford Road #1236
 Dallas, TX, 75252, USA
 Tel: +1 972 612 9659
 Fax: +1 972 612 9659
 Email: daniel@fppmedia.com

Foreign Languages Plus

Date: 19-22 September
 Venue: Moscow, Russia
 Date: 28-29 September
 Venue: St Petersburg, Russia
 Contact: Stas Gaponov, BKC
 International House
 Starovagankovskiy pr 15 off 5,
 Moscow, 121019, Russia

Tel: +7 095 737 5225
 Fax: +7 095 737 6579
 Email: plus@study.ru

The California Workshop

Date: 13-14 September
 Venue: Los Angeles, USA
 Contact: Icef, Am Hofgarten 9
 Bonn, 53113, Germany
 Tel: +49 228 201 190
 Fax: +49 228 201 1944
 Email: icefbonn@icef.com

WYSTC 2002

Date: 29 September - 5 October
 Venue: Rhodes, Greece
 Contact: WYSTC Secretariat
 Bredgade 25H
 Copenhagen, DK-1260,
 Denmark
 Tel: +45 339 39620
 Fax: +45 339 35646
 Email: mailbox@wystc.org

Salon "Education"

Date: 16-20 October
 Venue: Namur, Belgium
 Contact: Frank Leglise,
 People & Places,
 Blvd Emile Bockstael 191
 Brussels, 1020, Belgium
 Tel: +32 242 32880
 Fax: +32 242 32889
 Email: info@saloneducation.be

The Tokyo Workshop

Date: 21-22 October
 Venue: Tokyo, Japan
 Contact: Icef (as above)

Expolingua Portugal

Date: 24-26 October
 Venue: Lisbon, Portugal
 Contact: Goncalo Borges de Sousa
 Expolingua Portugal
 Rua da Esperanca,
 4 - 2 Lisbon, 1200-657
 Portugal
 Tel: +351 139 66089
 Fax: +351 139 66223
 Email: info@expolingua.pt

International Education Fair

Date: 26-27 October
 Venue: Taipei, Taiwan
 Contact: Vivien Liu, Tosa
 Room 1122,
 No.15 Fuhsing Rd, Taipei
 ROC 105, Taiwan
 Tel: +886 27739330
 Fax: +886 27739481
 Email: tosa@tosa.org.tw

The Alphe Asia Workshop

Date: 29-31 October
 Venue: Phuket, Thailand
 Contact: Hothouse Media (as above)

International Education Fair

Date: 2-3 November
 Venue: Bangkok, Thailand
 Contact: Saijai Sriyayanta, Tieca
 503/30 K.S.L. Tower
 18th Floor
 Sri-Ayudhaya Road
 Phayathai, Rajthavee
 Bangkok, 10400, Thailand
 Tel: +662 642 6114
 Fax: +662 642 6115
 Email: admin@tieca.com

Vieta International Education Fair

Date: 8-9 November
 Venue: Hanoi
 Date: 10-11 November
 Venue: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
 Contact: Vieta c/o Vietnam Education
 Promotion Association
 30 Ta Quang Buu, Hanoi
 Vietnam
 Tel: +84 48223675
 Fax: +84 48223699
 Email: vieta@fpt.vn

A win for Alphe USA in Las Vegas

THE second Alphe Workshop to be held in the USA was highly commended by participants for maintaining the same high quality of attendees and easy networking environment that have become the hallmarks of all the Alphe events. The workshop, which took place in April in Las Vegas, attracted 30 agents from 14 different countries who met with 16 schools and education institutions from around the world.

Jaul Loram, of the French Culinary Institute in the USA, commented, "It was a very productive [workshop]. What was good was that all the attendees were networking constantly." John Temple, of Temple & Temple Tours in Canada, said he found the casual, low-key atmosphere "refreshing".

Matthew Northover, Alphe Organiser, said that he hoped the workshop would grow at a comfortable pace, maintaining relaxed business opportunities and a good ratio of agents to educators. □

US hopes for languages funding boost

ACADEMICS and lobbyists in the USA are hoping that the aftermath of September 11 will encourage increased funding for language study and exchange.

President Bush has proposed a US\$4 million increase in relevant Education Department funding in his 2003 budget, while legislation is currently pending in the Senate that, if accepted, would forego interest on college loans for students who study for undergraduate degrees in certain foreign languages, such as Arabic, Pashto and Russian.

Senator Richard J Durbin, who introduced the bill, said, "It does our nation no good to have expanded intelligence gathering capabilities if what we retrieve sits untranslated. The USA must have the brainpower to match its firepower." His comments came as it was revealed that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had publicly pleaded for people to help translate documents written in Arabic and Farsi. □

In a further change, business visitors or tourists entering the country are now granted a 30-day visa rather than a standard six-month visa, unless they can explain to an INS immigration inspector why they need more time in the country. The maximum initial admission period for these visa categories will also drop from one year to six months.

"These new rules strike the appropriate balance between the INS' mission to ensure that our nation's immigration laws are followed and our desire to welcome legitimate visitors to the USA," said INS Commissioner, James Ziglar. Terry Hartle at the American Council on Education welcomed the changes, saying, "As of [now], the government's rules are simple: if you are here as a tourist, have a good time, but if

you want to go to school, you need INS approval [first]."

The Bush administration has also announced plans to review applications from foreign students for study in "sensitive areas" on a case-by-case basis. An Interagency Panel on Advanced Science and Security (Ipass) will be established that will provide an advisory opinion on cases referred to it by the Department of State, which retains its decision-making authority.

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy stressed that Ipass would screen candidates looking to study in areas that are "uniquely available in the United States", and that there would not be blanket screening of particular courses. Graduate and postgraduate students are expected to be most affected. □