

# Sars impacts on industry

## Currency

		1xUS\$ =currency*
Argentinean	Pesos	2.703
Australian	Dollar	1.554
Brazilian	Real	2.916
British	Pound	0.623
Bulgarian	Leva	1.693
Canadian	Dollar	1.392
Chilean	Pesos	694.98
Chinese (PR)	Yuan	8.276
Czech	Koruny	27.45
Danish	Kroner	6.475
Egyptian	Pound	5.905
EU	Euro	0.872
Hong Kong	Dollar	7.798
Hungarian	Forint	213.41
Icelandic	Kronur	73.530
Indonesian	Rupiah	8,535.0
Israeli	New Shekels	4.460
Japanese	Yen	117.10
Maltese	Lira	0.408
Mexican	Peso	10.106
New Zealand	Dollar	1.735
Norwegian	Kroner	6.859
Polish	Zloty	3.765
Russian	Rubles	31.100
Singaporean	Dollar	1.738
Slovakian	Koruny	35.776
South African	Rand	7.239
South Korean	Won	1,196.9
Swedish	Krona	7.957
Swiss	Franc	1.321
Taiwanese	NT Dollar	34.775
Thai	Baht	42.290
Turkish	Lira	1,503,000.0
Venezuelan	Bolivar	1,592.8

\*Rates are subject to change and should be used as indications only. 11/05/03

## Work rights in South Africa

PROVISIONAL changes in the immigration system for South Africa have been announced, with the likely outcome being that students will be allowed to work part-time during their studies, providing that they are enrolled on a course that is longer than three months in duration.

Students will also be required to enter the country on a study permit, not on a holiday permit as has been the case in the past, if they are studying for more than three months. According to Jens von Wichingen at South African language school, Cape Studies, the changes may possibly attract more students and should not negatively affect the ease of entry to the country. □

The outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (Sars) in certain parts of the world has impacted on language travel bookings although, according to agencies and schools, the effect on many has been minimal so far. However, agencies in the Asian region have felt the squeeze the most, with a number of agents reporting a downturn in business, and some schools were bracing themselves for a further drop in numbers as the summer season approached.

'Business has slackened off considerably with Sars,' reported Elizabeth Walmsey, Managing Director at AECC International in Taiwan. 'We just don't know when it will pick up. It looks like the summer vacation, short-term student will be hard to find this year.' At Alliance Academic in China, Cindy Li also predicted that business would be affected until at least August.

Brian Hockertz of Taiwanese agency, Oh Canada, said, 'Initially, the Sars panic had some direct impact on bookings and [there were] some cancellations.'

## New Zealand hits rocky times

OPERATING conditions for language schools in New Zealand have taken a turn for the worse, with factors such as increased price competition from Australia and the impact of Sars on Chinese enrolments slowing bookings.

One language school has already declared bankruptcy this year and there are fears that more schools will fold. Barbara Takase, Chairperson of the Association of Private Providers of English Language (Appel), said many schools were noticing a decline in bookings and have had to lay off staff. Susan McAllister, Director of Aspect ILA in Christchurch, said forward bookings were down by 30 per cent at her school in May.

Planet English in Waikato was the first school to suffer, closing its doors to students in May. 'The severe market situation did have an impact,' said Owner, Luke Watson, in a newspaper in-



PHOTOGRAPH: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Airline passengers in Asia exercised caution when travelling

However, Hockertz was optimistic about an upturn. 'I believe things should go back to normal,' he said. 'Some notable exceptions will be in market segments that are sensitive about health issues - seniors and young kids with worrisome parents.'

In Indonesia, Kian Hwa of UCPA agency noted that some of his clients were postponing travelling to Asian countries to study. Schools in English language-

speaking countries were also losing business. Walmsey in Taiwan pointed out that students were worried about the possibility of being quarantined on arrival at a language school overseas, a precaution that many schools put into place earlier this year.

Kathleen McKenzie, of Cambridge College in Hurstville, Australia, commented that the restrictions imposed by the Australian health authorities were

At the time of going to press, there were hopes that the school would reopen, following 'strong interest from other parties', according to the *Waikato Times*. Students were taught in classes at Waikato's University language institute following the school's closure but their future remained uncertain.

A Christchurch relief-teaching agency, Select Education, confirmed that it was signing up teachers who had been made redundant by local language schools. 'There are lots of reasons for the drop, not just Sars,' commented Erena Rowe, Director of Trafalgar English School in Nelson, speaking to the *Nelson Mail*. 'The kiwi dollar is so high at the moment that we are competing with Australia for students and the Korean economy is taking a dive.'

Adding to the problems facing language schools in the

country is the perceived ineptness of the Education Ministry. One school director is furious that the Education Minister, Trevor Mallard, has asked language schools to alert government officials if two or more foreign students are living together in rented accommodation. In a letter written to the *New Zealand Herald*, he questioned the ministry's effectiveness in helping education providers in the current business environment.

'Are we to waste our precious management time dobbing in our well-behaved adult Japanese and Koreans for the crime of living together in flats?' wrote James Upton, Director of Nelson English Centre. 'Korean numbers are down 50 per cent, Chinese down 30 per cent and 10 per cent of English schools are likely to declare bankruptcy this year. New Zealand's success story looks a little shaky.' Upton called on the

## Calendar

### 10th New Zealand Int. Education Conference.

Date: 11-13 August  
 Venue: Wellington, New Zealand  
 Contact: Education New Zealand  
 Level 4, Dalmuir House  
 114 The Terrace  
 Wellington, New Zealand  
 Tel: +64 447 20788  
 Fax: +64 447 12828  
 Email: enquiry@educationnz.org.nz

### The Alpe UK Workshop

Date: 22-24 August  
 Venue: London, UK  
 Contact: Hothouse Media  
 11-15 Emerald St  
 London, WC1N 3QL, UK  
 Tel: +44 207 440 4037  
 Fax: +44 207 440 4033  
 Email: jane@hothousemedia.com

### Int. Languages & Education UK Fair

Date: 26-28 August  
 Venue: Brighton, UK  
 Contact: Annie Wright, Arels  
 56 Buckingham Gate  
 London, SW1E 6AG, UK  
 Tel: +44 207 802 9200  
 Fax: +44 207 802 9201  
 Email: info@arels.org.uk

### MEI-Relsa Agent Workshop

Date: 1 September  
 Venue: Co. Clare, Ireland  
 Contact: Gillian Nother, MEI-Relsa  
 17 Lower Camden Street  
 Dublin 2, Ireland  
 Tel: +353 147 53122  
 Fax: +353 147 53088  
 Email: info@mei.ie

### Language Parade 2003

Date: 5-7 September  
 Venue: Budapest, Hungary  
 Contact: Robert Goldmann  
 c/o PO Box 435  
 Budapest 62  
 H-1395 Hungary  
 Tel: +36 126 95489  
 Fax: +36 130 22863  
 Email: lingvisit@lingvisit.hu

### International Educational Fair

Date: 8 September  
 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@korea.com

### 15th Annual Conference of the EAIE

Date: 10-13 September  
 Venue: Vienna, Austria  
 Contact: EAIE Secretariat,  
 PO Box 11189,  
 Amsterdam, 1001  
 The Netherlands  
 Tel: +31 205 254999  
 Fax: +31 205 254998  
 Email: eaie@eaie.nl

### Expo Brazil Roadshow

Date: 11-19 September  
 Venue: Sao Paulo, Campinas, Belo Horizonte, Curitiba, Porto Alegre - 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

### Expo Estudiante

Date: 13-25 September  
 Venue: various, Central & Latin America  
 Contact: Rupert Merrick  
 C&S Asociadas

Alameda Santos,  
 Sao Paulo, 1470, Brazil  
 Tel: +55 112896599  
 Fax: +55 112510251  
 Email: rupertmerrick@csassociadas.com.br

### Fedeles Workshop

Date: 18-23 September  
 Venue: Valencia, Spain  
 Contact: Astrid Verlot,  
 Centro Internacional de Turismo de Andalucia  
 C.N. 340, Km 189,6  
 Marbella, 29600, Spain  
 Tel: +34 952 834 782  
 Email: info@fedelespain.com

### Scope on the Globe

Date: 9-11 October  
 Venue: Utrecht, Netherlands  
 Contact: Sita Baarsma / Janine Bekker  
 Aronomia Events,  
 Postbus 90510,  
 Amsterdam, 1006  
 Netherlands  
 Tel: +31 206 646127  
 Fax: +31 206 646168  
 Email: scope@aronomia.nl

### International Education Fair

Date: 11-12 October  
 Venue: Taipei, Taiwan  
 Contact: Albert Lee, Tosa  
 Room 1122  
 No.15 Fuhsing Rd  
 Taipei, ROC 105, Taiwan  
 Tel: +886 277 39330  
 Fax: +886 277 39481  
 Email: info@tosa.org.tw

### WYSTC 2003

Date: 12-18 October  
 Venue: Pattaya, Thailand  
 Contact: Peter de Jong  
 WYSTC Secretariat  
 Bredgade 25H  
 Copenhagen, 1260  
 Denmark  
 Tel: +45 339 39620  
 Fax: +45 339 35646  
 Email: mailbox@wystc.org

### The Alpe Asia Workshop

Date: 19-21 October  
 Venue: Phuket, Thailand  
 Contact: Hothouse Media  
 (as above)

### Salon "Education"

Date: 15-19 October  
 Venue: Namur, Belgium  
 Contact: Frank Leglise  
 People & Places sprl  
 Blvd Emile Bockstaal 191  
 Brussels, 1020  
 Belgium  
 Tel: +32 242 32880  
 Fax: +32 242 32889  
 Email: info@saloneducation.be

### CEAIE Annual Conference & Int. Forum on Education

Date: 18-19 October  
 Venue: Beijing, China  
 Date: 25-26 October  
 Venue: Shanghai, China  
 Contact: Fairlink Exhibition Services  
 Room 1155, Jingxin Building  
 A3 Dongsanhuan Beilu  
 Beijing, 100027, China  
 Tel: +86 1064660654  
 Fax: +86 1084510572  
 Email: fairlink@public.gb.com.cn

### The Asia-Pacific Education Workshop

Date: 23-24 October  
 Venue: Shanghai, China  
 Contact: Karl Badde  
 ICEF, Am Hofgarten 9  
 Bonn, 53113, Germany  
 Tel: +49 228 201190  
 Fax: +49 228 2011944  
 Email: icefbonn@icef.com

quite stringent. 'Many of the private high schools are not accepting students straight back into their classes if they have been to one of the affected areas, even if they are not sick,' she said. 'They are making the student stay home, in Australia, for 10 days before they return to school.' Similar situations occurred in other countries, including New Zealand and the USA.

In the USA, the popular University of California at Berkeley imposed a ban on admitting students from affected areas into its summer programme, and then later relented to say 80 of its 500 accepted students would still be offered a place, and it would monitor the situation with a view to further relaxing the rule.

US study abroad programmes to Asian countries were also affected by concern about Sars. Many universities cancelled or postponed planned study abroad semesters or field trips to China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Vietnam, while some US students already on exchange trips returned home early.

In China, the decision by the government to ban public gatherings above a certain size also affected the market, as Ielts and Toefl examinations were both put on hold. Many students need to gain a Toefl or Ielts qualification in order to satisfy school entry requirements or, in particular, immigration criteria for entry into Australia. 'Sars is [an] issue for everyone here,' said Sue Blundell of English Australia. 'The cancellation of Ielts testing in China for April and May is going to have an impact on Chinese students being able to get visas, and of course there is the general reluctance to travel as well as the potential long-term effects on the economies of the region.'

Industry events were cancelled when the outbreak seemed to be at its height, amid concerns about travelling overseas. The Distance & Open Learning fairs in Singapore and Hong Kong, organised by Nexus and scheduled for late May/early June, were postponed to a later date. One school closure was also partly blamed on Sars (see below left). □

### Bold plans for cross-sector group in Canada

THE COUNCIL of Second Language Programmes in Canada (CSLPC) has bold plans to enlarge and become a truly national association representing both public and private language schools in Canada.

Having overhauled its standards, the association - which has represented university and college language programmes for 25 years - has decided to invite private language schools to join.

Jay Jamieson, Executive Director of CSLPC, said, 'Our goal is to create one national organisation representing standards and excellence in English and French language training.'

At the time of going to press, language schools were being contacted by the Council with invitations of membership and other Canadian language school associations were in dialogue with CSLPC about their plans. □

minister to apologise and address the real issues - or resign.

Mallard made the request following a scandal surrounding Japanese students who were living in a boarding establishment that called itself an academy. A group of students is charged with the murder of another member of the group. Takase said Mallard believed 'requiring schools to report the whereabouts of students is going to solve the problem'.

Another reason for the sudden deflation in the market could be the rapid rise in the number of language schools in the last year (see *Language Travel Magazine*, February 2003, page 4). *The Press* reported that there are still schools waiting to receive approval from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority to open and that the total number of language schools in the country stood at 141, up from 125 in February. □