

NZ numbers plummet

International student numbers in New Zealand took a tumble in 2005 with figures recording a decline of almost 10,000 students from January to August, in comparison with the corresponding period in 2004, according to New Zealand's Ministry of Education. Across all areas of the industry, the English language teaching (ELT) sector was the hardest hit.

The figures backed up the assertions of many schools that the operating environment is increasingly dire, and further figures revealed a loss in income of close to a third across the ELT sector. "We remain deeply concerned at the impact that this decline is having upon education exporters," said Robert Stevens, Chief Executive of Education New Zealand. "There are a number of reasons for the decline: changing requirements from students, the high rate of the Kiwi dollar, rapidly increasing global competition and more in-country delivery in key markets."

Stevens said that Education New Zealand was pushing for better market research to help education institutions of all kinds promote and develop products for their international markets. Other measures taken will include a focus on consistent student immigration policy. "These are macro measures that can support institutional ef-

forts to retain and rebuild market share alongside [institutions'] own investment and efforts," he said.

Figures relating to all education sectors revealed a broad dependence on Chinese students, who represented 41.4 per cent of the total market share. They were followed by Korean and Japanese students. Chinese recruitment has also been hard hit, however, despite its continued importance, and New Zealand Foreign Minister, Winston Peters, announced last year that he wanted to encourage more Chinese students to come to the country.

Speaking ahead of a visit to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) forum, Peters said he would be discussing the rapid drop in Chinese numbers with officials from the country. According to Statistics New Zealand, there was a 35 per cent decrease in long-term arrivals from China in the year ending October 2005.

The Association of Private Providers of English Language (Appel) welcomed Peters' comments. "The drop in the Chinese market has been very difficult, especially since it coincided with a rising dollar that has reduced demand in other markets," said Frances Woolcott, Appel Chairperson. "We hope to work with Peters and other ministers to find useful approaches to boosting demand." ●

AMIE is born in Mexico

A GROUP OF nine Spanish language schools in Mexico, some with more than one teaching centre, has grouped together to form the Asociacion Mexicana de Institutos de Español (Amie). The association was legally constituted in August last year and represents 12 different states in Mexico. Its aim is to promote Spanish language teaching and associated cultural programmes in Mexico.

Harriet Guerrer, President of the association, told *Language Travel Magazine*, "All of us offer strong complementary programmes [with language tuition]. So we focus on Mexican culture and history as well. Our aim is definitely to grow." ●

Acpet plays key role in forum in China

DELEGATES FROM Korea, Japan, the USA, France and Australia participated in an international forum on private education held in China last year, with the aim of enabling the Chinese authorities to broker new ways to develop the "non-government" education sector and work with overseas providers, particularly in relation to the private sector in Beijing.

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (Acpet) played a key role in the event with its National Executive Officer, Tim Smith, giving one of the keynote addresses. Acpet reported that the outcome was favourable for its members, with an agreement in principle signed to further collaboration between Australian and Chinese providers, with projects in the pipeline such as formalising credentials for Chinese teachers.

Smith commented, "The significance of this forum is the acknowledgement by the Chinese government of the close relationship between private industry and itself, and it clearly sees a number of features of Australian private training and education that it would like to use to develop its own private education industry."

Smith's address touched on the relevance of private education as an alternative pathway for providing a quality education, and he noted that commercial ventures from Australian providers in tandem with Chinese enterprises were expected to reap a reasonable return and not be subject to undue interference.

The forum was organised by the Beijing Municipal Commission of Education, the Beijing Association of Non-government Education and the Beijing Academy for Educational Sciences. Around 350 delegates attended from China as well as 30 from overseas, including speakers from the University of California, Los Angeles and University of Southern California. ●



Tim Smith, National Executive Officer of Australia's Acpet (left), presented one of the keynote addresses at the education forum



The Pacific-Rim Workshop
Date: February 28 - March 2
Venue: Tokyo, Japan
Email: info@icef.com
Web: www.icef.com

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 Alpha Korea Workshop
Date: March 11-13
Venue: Seoul, Korea
The Alpha Japan Workshop
Date: March 15-17
Venue: Tokyo, Japan
Email: jane@hothousemedia.com
Web: www.hothousemedia.com

Expolingua Portugal
Date: March 16-18
Venue: Lisbon, Portugal
Email: info@expolingua.pt
Web: www.expolingua.pt

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

US think tank pushes study abroad

A US THINK TANK has submitted a report to Congress calling for US\$50 million in funding to help encourage Americans to take up international exchange opportunities. Citing the phrase, "What nations don't know can hurt them", the USA's Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Programme has submitted its plans for funding over a number of years, to promote study abroad nationally and via support grants for students, until funding reaches US\$125 million annually.

The ultimate goal of the commission is to see one million students study abroad annually by 2017 – half the number of students who currently earn undergraduate degrees each year in the USA. "Study abroad is not a frill," said Chairperson of the group, M Peter McPherson. "Greater engagement of American undergraduates with the world around them is vital to our nation's national security, economic competitiveness and public diplomacy. The only way we will reach this goal is if we invest in this fellowship programme now."

The fellowship programme is the recommended system of grants that would be available for overseas study, awarded dependent on financial need and the length of an intended placement overseas. ●

Canada improves immigration routes

CANADA HAS overhauled its immigration system and is investing an additional CAN\$700 million (US\$601 million) to reduce the backlog of applications and attract more immigrants. Those applicants with Canadian experience or a Canadian education will be able to apply for permanent resident status under a new scheme known as "In-Canada Economic Stream".

"Today's announcement is an important step forward towards fixing and improving the immigration system," said Immigration Minister, Joe Volpe, who last year indicated he would seek to enhance immigration routes to the country

(see *Language Travel Magazine*, December 2005, page 7). "By beginning to reduce the number of outstanding applications and moving to actively recruit those who best meet Canada's labour market needs – such as temporary foreign workers and international students already in Canada – we will build on the improvements already underway," he said.

Volpe said the switch to permanent residency would be a smooth transition for applicants – who have to spend a minimum period of time in Canada – and talked of a "proactive and responsive" visa system. The immigration department expects 5,000 additional students per year and 11,000 temporary foreign workers to apply to reside in Canada permanently. Other ways in which the funding will be used will be to improve visa-processing times. Additional funding has already been granted to set up a "Going to Canada" web portal and improved settlement services too.

Meanwhile, Australia has agreed a Work and Holiday Visa deal with Turkey, allowing university-trained candidates of either nationality to work in the other country for up to 12 months. The scheme is different to the Working Holiday Maker scheme, because candidates from Turkey, who must be under 30 years old, need the support of their government and to have some ability in English. ●

MEI~Relsa's study kit for key Asian markets

IRISH SCHOOLS' ASSOCIATION, MEI~Relsa, has produced a teaching aid which it hopes will help explain more about Ireland to potential English language students in Korea and Japan. The aim is to encourage such students to study English in the country.

The photocopiable book and CD, *Exploring Ireland*, is being distributed to high schools and high school teachers in both countries via English teachers' associations and networks. Brian Burns, Manager of MEI~Relsa, said hundreds of high school classrooms would now be using the resource.

"Over the past five to 10 years, MEI~Relsa has been eager to increase its market share in countries like Korea and Japan," Burns explained. "One of the main obstacles to this has been the lack of awareness in each country of Ireland as a study abroad destination. MEI~Relsa members felt that we needed to target our future clients in these countries at an earlier stage."

The 104-page book explains, in separate units, about areas of interest such as Irish literature, history, sport, dance and food. The accompanying CD features stories, music and Irish people talking about their life. "We wanted to see more students coming to agents saying 'I'd like to study in Ireland,'" explained Burns, who said that initial response to the book had been very positive.

"Agents were highly impressed by the amount of work and funds we had invested," he said, noting that the project was funded by the Irish government. "It demonstrates clearly that member schools represent quality, stability and true commitment to the Korean and Japanese markets." ●



The book and CD package available in Korea and Japan

Currency

		1xUS\$ =currency*
Argentinean	Pesos	3.038
Australian	Dollar	1.330
Brazilian	Real	2.293
British	Pound	0.566
Bulgarian	Leva	1.619
Canadian	Dollar	1.164
Chilean	Pesos	531.34
Chinese (PR)	Yuan RMB	8.067
Czech	Koruny	23.85
Danish	Kroner	6.179
Egyptian	Pound	5.733
EU	Euro	0.828
Hong Kong	Dollar	7.754
Hungarian	Forint	207.72
Icelandic	Kronur	61.36
Indonesian	Rupiah	9,459.5
Israeli	New Shekels	4.622
Japanese	Yen	115.76
Maltese	Lira	0.355
Mexican	Peso	10.533
New Zealand	Dollar	1.448
Norwegian	Kroner	6.705
Polish	Zloty	3.180
Russian	Rubles	28.345
Singaporean	Dollar	1.635
Slovakian	Koruny	31.112
South African	Rand	6.037
South Korean	Won	987.77
Swedish	Kronor	7.715
Swiss	Franc	1.283
Taiwanese	NT Dollar	31.997
Thai	Baht	39.733
Turkish	New Lira	1.336
Venezuelan	Bolivar	2,147.3

*Rates are subject to change and should be used as indications only. 17/01/2006

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

MEI~Relsa Agent Workshop and Fam Trips
Date: April 2-7

Venue: Cork, Ireland
Email: info@mei.ie
Web: www.mei.ie

UIEF Education & Career 2006
Date: April 7-9
Venue: Kiev, Ukraine
Email: veronika@dteducation.com
Web: www.dteducation.com/en/

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

English Australia Agents' 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