

IMMIGRATION NEWS

(Volume 59)

*An Appeal To Senator Evans
DIAC's New Minister - Regarding the
2 Year Study Requirement*



12th December 2007

Dear Students

Welcome to the new subscribers of IMMIGRATION NEWS and we hope you find this latest edition interesting. This service is brought to you by Australian Immigration Law Services.

Please feel free to e-mail this newsletter to any of your friends.

Second Appeal to the Minister

Now that the new Labour government has taken over we thought it was worth another try to have the 2 year study rule reviewed. We have particularly focused upon allowing more than one exemption in completing a two year course and requested some transitional period for applicants.

Please read my letter below and we encourage students who are affected having more than one exemption (or maybe have completed just a 78 week course over two years) to write to the Minister. Just briefly describe how these changes have affected you personally and financially. Be polite and to the point (don't ramble on for pages).

There is no need to be afraid to write so I encourage all of you to do so.

A copy of my letter sent to the Minister is below and we will let you when we receive a response.

12th December 2007

By Fax: 02 6273 4144

By Mail: Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600

*Hon Senator Chris Evans
Minister of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship*

Dear Senator Evans

I am writing today on behalf of international students who have contacted me expressing their concerns about the manner in which the new skilled migration program was introduced on the 1st of September 2007.

Under the old program which ran effectively since July 1999 with minor changes, students were permitted to complete their Australian qualifications with often a few exempted subjects based upon their overseas qualifications. In fact the universities often encouraged them to apply for these exemptions once they arrived in Australia.

In early 2006 information on the new visa classes were released. In general all the professionals I have conversed with and the students themselves saw merit in the proposals. Most students acknowledged they knew the requirements to obtain a residency visa seemed to more difficult and as such began planning to meet the stricter English requirements.

However it was not until June 2007 that the Director of Skilled Migration Mr. Peter Speldewinde released the news that from the 1st of September no exemptions granted for overseas recognised prior learning would be allowed to meet the new 2 year Study Rule Requirement. There was no indication of this new policy direction. It effectively gave students no chance to apply to the Universities to take back the exemptions granted. This was the first time such major change was being implemented without a transitional period for the enrolled students.

On the 22nd of July this year I wrote to the former Minister, The Honourable Kevin Andrews requesting that some transitional period be considered as an act of fairness. I have attached this letter and the response I received. Students were disappointed with the content.

Respectfully, we are hoping for a more compassionate response to a serious issue. The Australian Citizens in this company all voted for the Labour government because we are all looking for leadership which represents the Australian spirit of a fair go for all. In opposition Labour's stance on the unfair treatment of certain overseas nationals endured our respect and the hope that a new ministry would in fact represent what it really was to be Australian.

The official DIAC policy has changed twice since September with a degree of softening from the original stance and students can at least afford one exempted subject, which is better than none at all. However for the majority who made their decisions regarding exemptions back in the beginning of last year, they have more than one exempted subject.

These potential skilled migrants are going to be the cornerstone of growth in this country and all we ask is that they be treated with some respect and fairness where the previous government has failed them. Very few students will approach you directly because they are scared if they complain they will be asked to leave. Unfortunately the past government did not set a good example of the treatment of certain foreign nationals. We all hope you may be able to mend some of those wounds.

Our office also publishes a non profit E-Newsletter called IMMIGRATION NEWS. Currently it has nearly 5000 subscribers and the newsletter is further read by being forwarded around by e-mails. It is designed for international students studying in Australia. This letter today will be included in the next edition and our readers will all be eagerly waiting for your response.

I would like to request to make an appointment come to Canberra and discuss my concerns for these students in person and it would be an opportunity for you to express your vision of the skilled migration program to students in Australia for one of our later editions. If you would like to subscribe to find out what issues are of most interest to international students in Australia, then please send an e-mail to subscribe@australiavisa.com

We are looking forward to your response.

Kind regards

*Karl Konrad
Managing Director
Australian Immigration Law Services
Publisher of IMMIGRATION NEWS*

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Kind regards

Karl Konrad
Managing Director
Australian Immigration Law Services
Publishers of IMMIGRATION NEWS
MARN: 9904238

Australian Immigration Law Services
Level 1, 30 Carrington Street
Sydney NSW 2000
t: 61 2 9279 1991 | f: 61 2 9279 1994
e: sydney@australiavisa.com | w: www.australiavisa.com

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