

IMMIGRATION NEWS

(Volume 70)

TODAY'S NEWS STORIES



Today's Newspaper Stories Concerning International Students

6th February 2008

1) **Foreigners are 'exploited' : The Australian**

This confirms our recent stories that international students are often taken advantage of and they should not be viewed as cash cows for education institutions.

2) **Education Trumps Tourism : The Australian**

The international student market is now bringing in more money than tourism into the economy.

3) **Migrant intake just right: business : The Australian**

The Business Council of Australia is calling for an increase in the migration intake. Students can be at least be happy that more of you will be needed to migrate here.

This year IMMIGRATION NEWS will try and extract the interesting newspaper articles in Sydney that will be of direct relevance to international students. We know many students don't have the time to read the paper everyday so this way it will be easier for you to keep in touch with what's been talked about in the media.

If any student has an interesting article to report from other cities around Australia please send us an e-mail.

Foreigners are 'exploited'

Milanda Rout | *February 06, 2008* (The Australian)

CONTRARY to their image as cashed-up BMW drivers, many overseas students cannot afford to eat, are paid well below the minimum wage and are among those most vulnerable to exploitation in this country, new research says.

More than one-third of overseas students struggle financially and about 60 per cent are paid less than the legal minimum wage, according to the research.

The alarming findings come as education overtakes tourism as the nation's biggest services export, increasing by a huge 21 per cent in 2007 to \$12.5 billion. The number of international student enrolments rose 18 per cent on the previous year to more than 450,000, the latest figures

show.

The authors of the joint Monash University and University of Melbourne studies slammed universities for treating foreign students like "cash cows", and criticised the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (now known as Universities Australia) for failing to include overseas students in a recent student welfare study.

They wrote that "many internationals are disadvantaged by their relative deficit of language and cultural skills, they are crowded into a narrower range of jobs than is available to their domestic peers, and they commonly offset these disadvantages by working for less than the legal (minimum)".

The two papers, one on international students in the workforce and the other on the financial difficulties faced by overseas students, were based on interviews with 200 students at nine universities across Australia.

The researchers found that almost 60 per cent of students earned below the minimum wage and 37 per cent had experienced financial hardship, including not having enough money to travel to university or even eat.

"I had a very hard time finding a job. (For the) first two months I was unemployed," one 36-year-old Indian student told researchers. "My rent is very high - it's \$120 a week - and other than that you have travelling, eating, everything.

"So I starved."

The researchers discovered 70 per cent of international students worked at some stage during their studies in Australia and a number admitted to working more than the maximum 20 hours allowed by their study visas.

"Of the students who reported their hourly rate, 58 per cent earned between \$7 and \$15 per hour at a time when the legal minimum for a casual waiter was \$16.08 an hour and the rate for a casual shop assistant was \$17.97 per hour," the study states.

Conducted by Simon Marginson, Chris Nyland, Erlenawati Sawir, Gaby Ramia and Helen Forbes-Mewett, the research also found foreign students were more likely to be exploited because of their lack of English skills and ignorance of workplace rights. The researchers called for urgent action by governments and universities.

They urged better education for international students about their workplace rights and better investigations by workplace authorities to expose the injustices experienced by working overseas students.

Professor Nyland and his colleagues wrote that the decision by UA not to include overseas students in its finances study "sadly lends credence to the much repeated claim that Australian university managers view international students primarily as customers who exist to be milked".

But UA chief executive Glenn Withers rejected the claim that tertiary institutions treated international students like cash cows and don't care about their welfare.

He defended the decision not to include international students in their student finances survey, saying that that survey was targeted at the federal government to try to improve income support for domestic students.

Dr Withers said universities were helping overseas students where they could by providing support services and going into public-private partnerships to construct accommodation for students close to campuses.

"The biggest problems are the exchange rate - and universities cannot control that - and expensive housing, and universities cannot control that either," he said.

Link: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,23166220-12332,00.html>

Education trumps tourism

Milanda Rout | *February 06, 2008* (The Australian)

EDUCATION has replaced tourism as Australia's biggest services export and become the country's third top export overall, trailing behind only coal and iron ore production.

But the \$12.5 billion generated by 450,000 international students last year comes amid serious concerns for their welfare, as new research reveals more than a third are struggling financially.

Researchers from Monash University and the University of Melbourne found some foreign students could not afford to eat properly and that more than half were exploited in their part-time jobs, being paid below the minimum wage.

The authors of the study also take aim at university chiefs, saying they treat overseas students "primarily as customers who exist to be milked" and that urgent action is needed to protect these "vulnerable" workers.

The latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show revenue from education exports increased by 21 per cent last year, to \$12.5 billion, eclipsing the tourism industry, which brought in \$11.5 billion.

The top export was coal, which generated \$20.8 billion, followed by iron ore, worth \$16 billion.

Leading international education agent IDP said more than 450,000 overseas students were enrolled in Australian schools, universities and TAFEs last year, up 18 per cent on 2006.

IDP Education chief executive Tony Pollock said the fastest growing area for international students in this country was in TAFE and English language courses.

China was the country with the most students coming to Australian universities, followed by India, South Korea, Malaysia and Hong Kong.

"Education is a bigger drawcard for visitors to Australia than Uluru, the Great Barrier Reef and all other tourist attractions put together," Mr Pollock said.

"Nearly half a million people are living in Australia who would not be here if we stopped education for international students. All these people and their dependants are living in Australia and purchasing their food, transport, accommodation and other daily needs in Australia. The flow-on effect to the economy is enormous."

But Monash University's Chris Nyland said it was appalling that data were collected on the spending habits of international students but there were no statistics on their income.

He said he and his colleagues interviewed 200 foreign students at nine universities and found more than a third struggled to make ends meet. "There are some that come from affluent families but people don't appreciate how poor lots of these kids are," Professor Nyland said. "I think they are treated as cash cows."

Universities Australia chief executive Glenn Withers said institutions were not responsible for the extra costs faced by foreign students.

"The biggest problems are the exchange rate, and universities cannot control that, and expensive housing, and universities cannot control that either," Dr Withers said.

He said the growth in overseas student numbers pointed to the quality of the education on offer. "We would like to see it continue to grow but it should be accompanied by an increase in government funding for core activities at universities."

Link: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,23167117-2702,00.html>

Migrant intake just right: business

Siobhain Ryan | *February 06, 2008* (The Australian)

BUSINESS has backed Australia's current level of immigration, despite a call for the intake to jump by more than a quarter by 2021.

A new Academy of Social Sciences in Australia paper yesterday said the nation needed to bring in 227,000 people a year by 2021, up from 177,600 last year, if it was to fill the growing gap in local supplies of labour.

But Business Council of Australia policy director Patrick Coleman said his organisation put the country's future need for workers from abroad at closer to 175,000 a year.

"Over recent years, there have been increases in the permanent migration level and we're now at the point where the migration level is broadly in line with where we've asked for it to be," he said.

Australian National University demographer Peter McDonald, co-author of the paper, said the Rudd Government's "education revolution" alone could not provide the skilled labour needed.

"The domestic supply of labour will be inadequate for the demand, even with migration running

at its present level, which is very high," he said.

The other author of the paper was Glenn Withers, who headed the Economic Planning Advisory Commission under the previous Labor government.

The entry of baby boomers and more women into the workforce has, together with migration, kept average annual growth in the labour force at 1.9 per cent since 1980. But the ageing of the population and the high number of women in the workforce meant the room for further growth in participation was shrinking, Professor McDonald said.

The growth rate had slipped to 1.2 per cent by 2006 and would plummet to 0.7 per cent by 2021 unless the intake of foreign workers increased, he estimated.

By 2051, Australia's annual immigration level would have to double on current levels, to 316,000, to meet demand.

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Peter Anderson said Australia generally had its immigration policy right.

"I think constructive suggestions should be considered - no radical changes needed, but fine-tuning," he said.

Link: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,23167122-5013404,00.html>

Subscription to IMMIGRATION NEWS?

If you haven't subscribed yet to IMMIGRATION NEWS but would like to join the other 5000+ recipients, send us an e-mail, subscribe@australiavisa.com

Wish them to stop then, unsubscribe@australiavisa.com

Coming up next? 1) Navigating the State Sponsorship maze for permanent residency (886 visa) and temporary residency (487 visa).
2) What to do with an Offshore Spouse? Bringing your spouse to Australia on the 485 visa.
3) Education Agents and Global College blame each other for the Cooking Course enrolment fiasco. Who's telling the truth and what's VETAB been doing about it?

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

Disclaimer and Copyright

IMMIGRATION NEWS is intended to provide general information on migration issues and does not constitute legal advice and no responsibility is accepted by Australian Immigration Law Services (AILS) for the accuracy of material appearing in IMMIGRATION NEWS.

People seeking advice on migration law should seek advice from a registered migration agent.

The copyright of IMMIGRATION NEWS belongs to Australian Immigration Law Services (AILS) and no part of IMMIGRATION NEWS is to be reproduced by any means without the written consent of AILS.

06022008KK