

IMMIGRATION NEWS

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TODAY'S NEWS STORIES

Migration con artists rife in big cities



Today's Newspaper Story Concerning International Students

5th January 2009

Dear Students

Welcome to the latest edition of IMMIGRATION NEWS. Today's article comes from the Sydney Morning Herald.

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

Migration con artists rife in big cities

Chris Johnston
Sydney Morning Herald
January 5, 2009

UNREGISTERED migration agents selling black-market paperwork to international students were "con men and con women" and operating in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, the head of the Migration Institute of Australia has said.

The shadowy agents offered fake documents for thousands of dollars to naive young Chinese and Indian students, said the institute's chief executive, Maurene Horder.

"It is rife. These people are in effect trying to sell visas. Some of what goes on is pretty sinister."

She said the institute had reported 60 rogue agents to the federal Immigration Minister, Chris Evans, in May.

"The Howard government gave this a very low priority. We are trying to get the new government to act on it, but so far we know of very little action."

The institute controls registered migration agents, but unregistered and

deregistered agents fall under the jurisdiction of the Immigration Department.

A spokesman for Mr Evans said the 60 cases were being investigated by the department.

Nine businesses in Melbourne were raided and evidence was seized last month after a year-long inquiry by immigration officers and federal police into one of the largest migration scams.

It will be alleged that international students in Melbourne seeking permanent residence were charged up to \$20,000 for fake education and work experience certificates and that a Chinese-owned business consultancy was a front for an unregistered migration agency.

International students need documents from both the colleges they attend and the employers for whom they do work experience before they can apply for permanent residency.

If an application is made with fake documents it is deemed migration fraud.

An investigation last year resulted in allegations that an Indian-run training college in Melbourne charged about \$3000 for fake certificates, and a Chinese-owned company advertised migration advisory services in *The Australian Chinese Age* even though it did not have an agent registration number.

A migration review made public by the Federal Government has called for independent regulation of the industry, a proposal Ms Horder said she supported. The institute regulates its own members under an arrangement that expires in March.

End Story

Link: <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/migration-con-artists-rife-in-big-cities/2009/01/04/1231003848109.html>

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