

IMMIGRATION NEWS

(Volume 92)

TODAY'S NEWS STORIES



Today's Newspaper Story Concerning International Students

28th August 2008

Dear Students

Welcome to the latest edition of IMMIGRATION NEWS. Today's article comes from The Australian Newspaper.

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

Comment

Today's story shines some light upon the current government Nazi type regime within DIAC when it comes to locking up international students in detention centers. Australian citizens should bow their heads in shame over these issues.

Not only does it psychologically scar many innocent students it also wastes the resources of the police departments who have better things to do than putting students in their prison cells or taking them to detention centers.

Recently one of my clients was questioned by police over a traffic matter. After electronically checking of his visa status it was discovered his visa has been cancelled months ago without his knowledge. He had changed his school and his details were not properly recorded on DIAC's system so his visa was cancelled. He was placed into the local police station prison cell like a criminal because it was after hours and his visa status could not be normalised.

There is no excuse for these types of events to occur even in a single instance. Other options could be made available if we have a leadership which cares about human rights.

Overseas students held like terrorists

Guy Healy, Higher education writer | The Australian : *August 28, 2008*

NEARLY 300 overseas students have been thrown into detention centres in Sydney and Melbourne in the past three years after falling foul of Australia's immigration laws.

Documents obtained by The Australian under Freedom of Information laws reveal that in the three years to the end of March, 299 overseas students were put into the Villawood detention centre in Sydney or the Maribyrnong centre in Melbourne. Most were deported and five are still in detention.

University, TAFE and secondary school students from 24 countries were detained. Most came from China, India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

Of the detainees, 207 were held for overstaying their visas, 30 for attendance breaches, 14 for failing their courses, seven for not starting their courses, four for withdrawing from their courses, one for a work breach and 36 for other reasons.

University of Sydney senior psychology lecturer Christopher Lennings said overseas students could be easily overwhelmed by conditions in Australia, leaving them vulnerable to breaches of migration law. "People's English is not as good, they get overwhelmed, have financial problems or illness. They get depressed and fail their studies, and next thing they know they are on a rollercoaster and have lost control of their lives," he said.

"The trauma period is within a few to 10 days, especially if they don't know how long they would be incarcerated for."

Students who have their visas cancelled -- often for working more than 20 hours a week, for attending less than 80 per cent of scheduled contact hours, for unsatisfactory academic results, for completing a course early, deferring study or transferring to another provider -- become unlawful non-citizens.

Once located, they are usually detained pending removal from Australia, granted a bridging visa or made to arrange their own departure.

Motahar Hussein, a 34-year-old former Charles Sturt University IT student, said he spent almost three years in Villawood after missing an official immigration notice because of a mix-up over access to his postbox.

"I was dealt with very harshly," he told The Australian. "I am not a criminal. I am a student and want to study electrical engineering. People arrested me and put me in a cell

like I am a terrorist. My hair still rises on my body thinking about Villawood."

The Australian has learned that a former Bangladeshi university student has been detained for almost three years and one of the 27 Chinese nationals was detained 371 days.

Universities Australia chief executive Glenn Withers said that while illegal residency should be dealt with by deportation, these processes "should minimise the need for detention and ensure a proper allowance for associated refugee claims".

National Liaison Committee president for the country's 250,000 international students, Eric Pang, said it was "shocking to know that it's such a big export industry for Australia, where students are treated as cash cows, yet others are receiving such harsh treatment in detention ... If they overstay they should be deported."

Student detainee advocate Milchaela Rost said she was appalled by the figures and Australia was the only country in the world to detain some full-fee-paying international students.

Immigration Minister Chris Evans recently announced that mandatory detention for overstayers and unlawful non-citizens would only apply in certain circumstances, such as where a person presents a risk to the community, or where there is repeated non-compliance.

Link: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24253189-601,00.html>

End Story

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Kind regards

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