

The 457 Visa Program dominates the February newsletter. The new Immigration Minister, Brandon O'Connor, has introduced extensive changes by tightening conditions to ensure that visas are only used for genuine purposes and address skills shortages. At the same time he has extended stays for skilled workers and backpackers.

### MIA Welcomes New Minister O'Connor

A new Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, was sworn in on Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2013. Formerly overseeing Small Business, Housing and Homelessness, Minister O'Connor replaces the Hon Chris Bowen MP, who has taken on retiring Senator Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and research, as well as Minister O'Connor's Small Business duties.

In a Statement this weekend, MIA CEO Maurene Horder welcomed Minister O'Connor and thanked Minister Bowen for his past service to the migration advice profession:

*The MIA congratulates Minister O'Connor and wishes him well during this transitional period. We look forward to meeting with him and building on the strong relationship the migration advice profession has had with Minister Bowen.*

Migration Institute of Australia News

### 457 visa program responds well to economic needs

Employer demand for the temporary skilled migration visa (subclass 457) has eased in the past six months, according to statistics released recently.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship's (DIAC) latest monthly report for 457 visas confirms downwards movement in temporary skilled migrants, a trend which has been developing since June 2012.

"Reinforcing this trend has been a drop in actual 457 visa grants since August. This movement demonstrates the 457 visa program's responsiveness to the changing needs of the Australian economy. While the subclass 457 visa stock figure is still high, new take-up of the program is declining, particularly in the construction and mining industries that have driven much of the recent growth in the program," the department's spokesman said.

The subclass 457 visa program is uncapped, demand-driven and designed to respond to the needs of the Australian economy.

While trade occupations have grown, the program remains concentrated on highly skilled managers and professionals. For example, of those 457 visa holders who were in Australia on 30 November 2012, 64 per cent were working in occupations that typically require a bachelor degree or higher qualification."

"Remuneration levels also demonstrate how successful the program is in targeting highly skilled workers. Average total remuneration of those 457 visa holders granted visas this program year to November was \$89 800. Managers and professionals, who together accounted for 66 per cent of the total number of visas approved this program year, had combined average total remuneration of \$109 000.

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Changes to the program in 2009 sought to address concerns that 457 visa holders were being exploited, or were undermining employment and training opportunities for Australians.

“As a result of these changes, all employers seeking to sponsor foreign workers on subclass 457 visas are now required to make a measurable contribution to training Australians by meeting one of two training benchmarks. They must also attest, in writing, to having a strong commitment to employing local labour and non-discriminatory employment practices,” the spokesman said.

“Potentially vulnerable applicants working in trade occupations are required to meet English language requirements, and may be required to have their skills formally assessed. DIAC has also made it easier for visa holders to change sponsors, reducing the risk of their being ‘bonded’ to an employer.

<http://www.newsroom.immi.gov.au/releases/457-visa-program-responds-well-to-economic-needs-3>

### **Australia ‘economically benefiting’ from foreign workers**

The latest KPMG Skilled Migration Survey found that through streamlined government administration - the 457 immigration visa system that allows workers to be employed on a temporary basis - is acting to absorb some of the economic shock from layoffs in some sectors.

Karen Waller, the national spokesperson for migration services with KPMG, said the imminently retiring baby boomers will create a vacuum in the workforce, which will need to be filled.

"This is good news as long-term demographic changes (including rising dependency ratios) will demand that we put a premium on enhancing workforce skills and productivity. Skilled migration should play an important role in that process."

The subclass 457 business (long stay) visa system has been found to be the most popular when bringing workers overseas because it is flexible and fairly straightforward. The majority are from English-speaking countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Ireland, India and the Philippines. Ireland and China have seen the biggest increase in these visas.

In terms of skills shortages, 62 per cent of respondents said they were understaffed in some way. The mining sector in particular displayed this, with two-thirds of resources companies saying that they are experiencing shortages.

[http://migrationalliance.com.au/?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=800494405:foreign-workers-'benefiting-australia'-economically&catid=9&Itemid=147](http://migrationalliance.com.au/?option=com_content&view=article&id=800494405:foreign-workers-'benefiting-australia'-economically&catid=9&Itemid=147)

### **Rorted 457 visa scheme to be tightened**

The 457 visa scheme for temporary overseas workers will be overhauled to stop rorting of the system, with the federal government accusing some employers of discriminating against Australians.

Immigration Minister Brendan O'Connor says the 457 visas will be tightened to ensure they are only used to address genuine skills shortages, and local workers are getting a “fair go”. The number of 457 visas has soared from 70,000 to 100,000 in the past two years. He predicted this could stop “thousands” of foreign workers taking jobs from locals.

Under the crackdown, employers will be required to demonstrate they are nominating a position

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where there is a genuine shortage of workers. ACTU secretary Dave Oliver said there had been an explosion in using temporary foreign workers, despite the local job market being in decline. He said the construction sector had declined by 68,000 jobs in the past 12 months while there had been a 38 percent increase in 457 visas. "It doesn't make sense. Local jobs are disappearing and yet there is a significant increase nationwide of the amount of 457 visas that are being granted".

The changes announced by Mr O'Connor, include:

**EXTRA** investigation powers for inspectors to get information from bosses they suspect of being dodgy.

**A NEW** test to prove jobs were for "genuine" skills shortages because some employers were creating positions that were really "unskilled and possibly not even a real job".

**CLOSING** loopholes that allow foreign workers to be paid less than an Australian citizen by increasing from \$180,000 to \$250,000 the threshold at which they must pay "market rates".

**STOPPING** employers creating their own market to manipulate pay rates.

**RAISING** requirements for foreign workers to speak English.

**RESTRICTING** foreign workers being on-hired to a different employer to regions where there are not skill shortages.

**CHECKING** that employers offer training for locals to fill skills shortages before they seek foreigners.

It has become clear that the growth in the 457 program is out of step with genuine skills shortages. The 457 visa changes also have the support of the Migration Council Australia, which says they "strike the right balance".

For more information on the rule changes contact [Diana Tong](#).

<http://news.smh.com.au/action/printArticle?id=4056230>

<http://www.news.com.au/national/door-shuts-on-thousands-of-cheap-foreign-workers/story-fncynjr2-1226583823908>

### Skilled workers to double their stay

The Federal Government proposes to change the 457 visa system to allow certain businesses to employ foreign workers for six years rather than three to four.

The Immigration Minister said he was creating a new accreditation scheme. Businesses can become accredited if they've been an active 457 visa sponsor over the past three years, taking care of at least 30 overseas workers over the past 12 months - and can guarantee that their local workforce is at least 75 per cent Australian.

They'll then be allowed to bring in skilled workers for six years rather than three, and also be put into a priority queue for all future visa applications.

"This will continue to ensure that the 457 program is responsive to the economic cycle and provides a flexible avenue for employers to fill immediate and short-term skill vacancies, while maintaining opportunities and conditions for Australian workers. Average processing times for 457 visa applications are also 30 per cent lower than they were in 2006-07 - down from 31 to 22

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days," former Minister Bowen said.

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/1601673/Skilled-workers-to-double-their-stay>

### **Tightening visa access will hurt regional economies**

A move to tighten the 457 temporary visa program could do immense damage to regional economies, according to National Party Senate Leader Barnaby Joyce. "If there are companies rorting the system, then the government already has the power to exclude them from the scheme. It doesn't need to tighten the scheme as a whole," said Senator Joyce.

Immigration Minister Brendan O'Connor has announced the visa program would be tightened to protect the interests of Australian workers. He said that the growth in visa numbers had outstripped skills shortages and natural employment growth, leading to discrimination against local workers and lower wages.

"Australians deserve the chance to get local jobs on local projects and the Government is determined to make that happen. We have seen too many examples of abuse across the nation. We have seen situations where people's jobs have been 'dressed up' to be so-called skilled jobs but in fact when they come here they are working in unskilled or semi-skilled areas," Mr O'Connor said.

The Minister said that employers will be required to demonstrate that a genuine lack of skilled workers exists, and that they are committed to training local workers.

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/tightening-visa-access-will-hurt-regional-economies-says-joyce-20130223-2ey2z.html>

### **Backpackers are set to extend their stays**

Backpackers are set to stay longer in Australia following moves from the tourism industry to extend work visas.

In what could be a billion-dollar boost to the economy, Federal Cabinet-in-confidence plans reveal moves to open up working holiday visas, lift the upper age limit and allow up to a two-year stay if visitors work in regional tourism jobs.

Chinese speakers are set to head the new wave of working holidaymakers with Hong Kong visitors and Taiwanese the fastest growing group of working-holiday visa applicants.

Tourist operators are pushing for the proposed changes with figures showing the one-year extension would boost the economy by \$700 million in the coming decade alone. Jobs are temporary and often unskilled, such as hospitality, house keeping and fruit-picking.

"Ken" Liu Chao An, 24, of Taiwan, has spent four months as a dive instructor on Green Island, on the Great Barrier Reef off Cairns. "I feel like I'm living a fairytale," said the mechanical engineering student on a year's break. "I love my life. I love my job. No pressure. Not like the stress at home. But time is too short. If they extend the visa rules, I'd definitely stay an extra year."

Visitors on working holiday visas can stay for a year in Australia. They can extend this to two years if they work for 88 days in defined regional industries such as agriculture.

Don Morris, of Hamilton Island, the biggest single resort in the country, said young travellers filled a desperate shortage in staff. "These working holidaymakers are reliable, educated and smart. They work hard, play hard, spend big money and travel all over. The more we can do to

[impact of child sexual abuse](#)

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get them to come here, and stay longer, the better.”

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/backpackers-are-set-to-extend-their-stays-in-australia-following-moves-to-lengthen-work-visas/story-e6freon6-1226579085782>

### **Fine imposed for underpayment of foreign workers**

The Australian arm of a global retail company has been fined \$59,400 for under paying 13 employees – including many foreign workers – in Adelaide and Brisbane. Lycamobile Pty Ltd has received the penalty in the Federal Magistrates Court in Brisbane, following a prosecution by the Fair Work Ombudsman. The company underpaid 10 employees in Brisbane and three in Adelaide a total of \$28,034 between February and September, 2011.

Twelve of the employees were foreign nationals. The employees ranged in age from 19 to 36 and several of them were in Australia on student, working holiday and other types of visas. Employees were also variously underpaid casual loadings, wages in lieu of notice and annual leave entitlements. The underpayments were subsequently rectified.

Fair Work Ombudsman, Nickolas Wilson, Said the Court’s decision sends a message that underpayment of vulnerable workers is a serious matter.

<http://www.fairwork.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/2013/02/pages/20130213-lycamobile-penalty.aspx>

### **Budget Estimates hearing – Summary of recent changes**

Martin Bowles PSM, Secretary, Department of Immigration and Citizenship reported that the department is working hard to deliver the largest permanent migration program on record of 190,000 places for 2012-13, this program is made up of 129 250 skill stream places, 60 185 family places and 565 special eligibility places.

We will also be delivering an additional 4000 family places as part of the implementation of the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers report.

The first six months of SkillSelect, our new online system for selecting independent skilled migrants, has been successful. More than 25 000 individuals have completed expressions of interest in skilled migration to Australia. More than 13 000 people have then been invited to make a skilled migration application stemming from their expression of interest through SkillSelect.

This landmark reform means that the government has greater control of the queue for independent skilled migration in Australia, unlike the previous system where large queues of people able to meet minimum requirements were allowed to apply.

Since the last meeting of this committee, we have seen a number of activities designed to enhance our offerings including:

- A significant investor visa designed to provide a boost to the Australian economy.
- In the temporary visa space, a new work and holiday visa program arrangement between Australia and Uruguay was signed in late November 2012.
- We are also progressing negotiations for new reciprocal work and holiday arrangements with key partner countries, with the recent announcement of the commencement of new negotiations with the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Latvia, Poland, and the Slovak Republic.
- In November 2012, the department implemented changes to facilitate longer tourist visas for parents of Australian citizens and permanent residents.

- We continue to make progress in implementing the recommendations arising from the government's response to the Hon Michael Knight AO's Strategic Review of the Student Visa Program. 22 of the 41 recommendations have been implemented and the remainder are under way.

For detailed information on other programs such as:

- Citizenship program
- Expert panel on asylum seekers
- Sri Lankan IMA returns
- Joint Select Committee Inquiry into Australia's Immigration Detention Network
- Capability Review

Read the full report of Martin Bowels, *Additional Budget Estimates hearing, Parliament House, Canberra – 11 February 2013* at:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/about/speeches-pres/transcript-opening-statement-2013-02-11.htm>

### **Scam warning for student visa holders in Australia**

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) has warned international students to be aware of individuals impersonating departmental officers seeking payment for alleged breaches of their visa conditions.

The scammers are targeting overseas students in Australia who have limited working rights as part of their visa conditions. Some students, the department has been told, have received "fine notices" demanding payment of thousands of dollars for unlawfully working above 40 hours a fortnight. A departmental spokesman said it was a well-organised ruse to con visa holders into transferring a purported "penalty payment" offshore, when none is needed.

"Anyone contacted by people seeking such payments should refuse to pay, and should report the incident to police", the spokesman added.

<http://www.newsroom.immi.gov.au/releases/scam-warning-for-student-visa-holders-in-australia>

### **Korean citizen pleads guilty to visa application fraud**

A South Korean woman is awaiting sentencing after pleading guilty in Sydney's Downing Centre Local Court today to making false statements in a spouse visa application lodged with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC).

A department spokesman said the woman, a citizen of the Republic of Korea (South Korea), obtained permanent residence by dishonestly omitting from her application that she had previously visited Australia using another name and was excluded from returning to Australia by the department's Seoul visa office.

The woman's prosecution is part of a department-led national identity fraud campaign involving the cooperation of state, Commonwealth and international agencies working to identify criminal activity through data matching activities. "The department takes immigration fraud very seriously and actively pursues the prosecution of people found engaging in this serious crime," the spokesman said.

Intending applicants for a partner visa are reminded that it is an essential criteria for eligibility that the partner relationship is genuine and continuing both at the time of application and at the time of decision. Strict criminal sanctions apply for false declarations in this area.

For more information contact [David Bitel](#).

<http://www.newsroom.immi.gov.au/releases/korean-citizen-pleads-guilty-to-visa-application-fraud>

## Visa change helps foreign buyers

In the new “significant investor visa”, which applied from November 24, simplifies option and fast-tracks migrant visas for foreigners who invest more than \$5 million.

These investments need to be in government bonds, managed funds or companies. The Policy was having a spin-off effect as the migrants then looked for somewhere to live. Once the investment was approved, Australian residency was granted.

Interest has already been significant. A Department of Immigration spokesman confirmed there have been more than 200 expressions of interest in the new visa. Jonathan Granger, of the NSW Migration Institute of Australia, said the new system gave migrants more flexibility to maintain business interests in Australia and China. Information on the Significant Investor visa can be found on the Department of Immigration and Citizenship’s website.

For more information on visa changes for foreign buyers please contact [Diana Tong](#).

**See:** [www.immi.gov.au/skilled/business/whats-new.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/business/whats-new.htm)

**Email:** [business.innovation@immi.gov.au](mailto:business.innovation@immi.gov.au)

<http://smh.domain.com.au/real-estate-news/visa-change-helps-foreign-buyers-target-trophy-homes-20130201-2dpy0.html>

## Jail term sought for people smuggler

An Afghan man involved in organising an asylum-seeker boat that sank on the way to Christmas Island knew the vessel was overloaded but still insisted it set off on its deadly voyage, prosecutors say.

At least 90 people perished when the rickety boat went down in the Sunda Strait on June 21 last year while on the way to Christmas Island. Another 110 were rescued.

Prosecutors have demanded a seven-year jail term for Dawood Amiri, who has admitted to helping organize the people-smuggling venture that netted about \$1 million from the 200 asylum seekers who paid as much as \$6000 to be on the doomed boat.

But Amiri claimed he was only a small part in the operation, adding that he didn’t share in the profits being made by those in charge of the syndicate. “I deserve to be in here but not for seven years,” he said. However, prosecutors maintain Amiri knew the boat that left Java on June 21 was overloaded and unfit for the perilous crossing to Christmas Island.

Amiri was also allegedly responsible for collecting payments from asylum seekers by either taking cash or providing details of accounts to which money was to be transferred. He is accused of arranging for the transport of passengers to beaches around Java, from where they would be ferried in smaller boats to larger vessels for the trip to Christmas Island.

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/jail-term-sought-for-people-smuggler-20130214-2efsf.html>

## Accused people-smuggler beats extradition bid from New Zealand

New Zealand High Court has blocked the extradition to Australia of an Iraqi-born man to face charges relating to the Siev X asylum-seeker tragedy, in which 353 died.

Maythem Radhi, 31, who moved to New Zealand from Indonesia as a refugee in 2009, is accused of being one of three men responsible for trying to smuggle hundreds of asylum seekers aboard the Siev X which sank south of Indonesia en route to Christmas Island in October 2001. Mr Radhi appealed a district court decision to extradite him to Australia.

Justice Edwin Wylie said Mr Radhi could not be extradited to Australia because if his alleged offence had occurred within New Zealand jurisdiction, it would not have been punishable by more than a year's imprisonment. "Mr Radhi is therefore not eligible for surrender in relation to the offence for which extradition is sought because he is not an extraditable person pursuant to the provisions of the Extradition Act 1999," the judgement said.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/accused-people-smuggler-beats-extradition-bid-from-new-zealand/story-fn59niix-1226575630162>

### **Manus ban thrown out of court**

Papua New Guinea's National Court has thrown out a bid to stop asylum seekers being sent to the Manus Island processing centre. On Thursday, Justice David Canning said he was not convinced that a bid by the PNG Opposition Leader, Belden Namah, to have the centre declared unconstitutional should be heard in his court.

He was also not convinced the asylum seekers on Manus would be subject to an "injustice" if the injunction went ahead. "I can by contrast see that the defendants would reasonably perceive an injustice if the court were to, without being fully satisfied that something unconstitutional or unlawful had occurred, to injunction arrangements that had been entered into in good faith by two independent governments."

Justice Canning ordered that Mr Namah's lawyers be granted access to the Manus Island processing centre. Mr Namah brought on the court challenge arguing that the PNG constitution forbade people being detained without charge

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/manus-ban-thrown-out-of-court-20130214-2efuk.html#ixzz2LJa8tmzs>

### **Grim UN report on Manus**

A Scathing report on conditions of Manus Island has urged the new Immigration Minister, Brendan O'Connor, to stop sending asylum seekers to the remote Papua New Guinea island until sweeping recommendations are considered.

The report by the United Nations refugee agency accuses the Australian and PNG governments of being in breach of international treaty obligations and expresses particular alarm at the plight of children in the facility.

"It should be recognised that UNHCR has a longstanding position of opposition to offshore processing that goes back to the time of the previous government", a DIAC spokesman said, describing facilities at the centre as "in line with the living standards and amenities for local PNG residents on Manus island."

The UN report calls for an early start to processing of claims for refugee status "in order to prevent increased levels of psycho-social and physical harm amongst asylum seekers in the detention centre". More than 20 recommendations include calls for review of pre-transfer assessments in Australia to ensure that vulnerabilities of individuals who may have suffered torture or trauma are considered.

It says no further transfers of children should occur until "appropriate legal and administrative safeguards" are in place, including their placement in an open centre, as opposed to "the current environment of detention. Asylum seekers are distressed and confused about their situation. They are in closed detention, without a process in sight. They feel they have been forgotten," the UNHCR's regional representative, Richard Towle, said.

<http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/grim-un-report-on-conditions-at-manus-to-pressure-minister-20130203-2dskz.html>

### **Age assessment in people smuggling cases**

The outgoing President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, Catherine Branson QC, recently completed an *Inquiry into the treatment of individuals suspected of people smuggling offences who say that they are children*. The majority of these individuals of concern to the Inquiry were Indonesian nationals who had worked as crew on boats bringing asylum seekers to Australia, and who were subsequently been investigated for people smuggling offences. The Inquiry has considered all cases where age has been in dispute since September 2008.

The Inquiry report, *An age of uncertainty*, was tabled in Parliament on 27 July 2012. The report details how the Australian Government's failure to seriously question age assessment practices and procedures resulted in some children spending long periods of time detained in adult correctional facilities. The report encourages the Australian Government to take steps to ensure that in the future, the human rights of all those who come in contact with Australia's criminal justice system are respected.

<http://humanrights.gov.au/ageassessment/index.html>]

### **Illegal workers detained in Perth**

Compliance officers from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) today located 11 illegal workers at a residential property in the northern Perth suburb of Girrawheen. The group of eight Malaysians and three Indonesians (including four women and seven men) were transferred to Perth Immigration Detention Centre and will face removal from Australia as soon as possible. The Immigration compliance officers were acting on a community tip-off that a number of people were working illegally in the WA agricultural industry. "We repeat the warning to employers that it is a criminal offence to knowingly or recklessly allow a person to work illegally or to refer an illegal worker for work." Employers convicted under Commonwealth legislation of giving jobs to illegal workers face fines of up to \$20 400 and two years' jail while companies face fines of up to \$102 000 per illegal worker.

<http://www.newsroom.immi.gov.au/releases/illegal-workers-detained-in-perth-compliance-operation>

### **Rescued Burmese in limbo after boat deaths**

The 32 surviving Burmese asylum seekers who were forced to throw nearly 100 dead shipmates overboard as their Australia-bound boat drifted in open seas off Sri Lanka face a state of limbo – the Burmese embassy is so far refusing to claim them as citizens.

The 31 men and one boy were rescued from their stricken and sinking vessel by the Sri Lankan navy more than 200 nautical miles from land. They told their rescuers 98 others on board had died of dehydration and starvation during nearly two months adrift and their bodies had been pushed into the sea. They said they were from a village on the Burma-Bangladesh border and were headed to Australia or Malaysia to claim asylum. Several remain in hospital suffering severe dehydration and malnutrition, while others have faced court and are being held in immigration detention.

An embassy spokesman, Aung Soe Moe, said the process of determining the men's nationality was under way. Sri Lanka Police spokesman Prishantha Jayakody said the men were the responsibility of the Burmese government. But Sri Lankan police sources have said the men are refusing to go back to their home country, saying they were fleeing persecution. The men are believed to be Rohingya, a Muslim community in Burma the United Nations has described as one of the world's most persecuted minorities.

The 32 men are the second group of Burmese asylum seekers saved by Sri Lanka this month. On February 3, the Sri Lankan navy rescued 138 Bangladeshi and Burmese nationals from a sinking wooden boat.

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/rescued-burmese-in-limbo-after-boat-deaths-20130221-2euci.html>

## **Human Rights**

### **Australian delegates for international women's forum**

The Minister for the Status of Women, Julie Collins, announced the four exceptional women who will join her in representing Australia at the 57th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 57) in New York in March.

Ms Collins said the delegation she will lead represents a wide range of Australian women. "Each of these four delegates will make a valuable contribution to this important gathering. They have been selected from a strong list of candidates and each one is a leading advocate in her field. The theme of the Commission on the Status of Women this year is the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls," Ms Collins said.

The four delegates are:

- Rebecca Vassarotti, as a community sector delegate
- Michelle Deshong, as an Indigenous delegate
- Karin Swift, representing women with disabilities
- Adut Zita Deng Ngor, representing women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

<http://juliecollins.fahcsia.gov.au/node/303>

### **Long-term impacts of child sexual abuse**

New research released recently shows child sexual abuse has significant lifelong negative impacts for survivors, affecting their behaviour, relationships, mental health and physical health, and increasing their likelihood of addiction.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies research report, *The long-term effects of child sexual abuse*, by Associate Professor Judy Cashmore AO and Dr Rita Shackel of the University of Sydney, analyses the findings of Australian and international studies to provide a picture of how child sexual abuse can affect people over their lifetime.

Evidence examined in the report found that people who were sexually abused as children are more likely to develop mental health issues, including major depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia.

This Government believes every child has the right to grow up safe and strong and recognises the terrible lifelong consequences of child sexual abuse. That's why the Government established the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

This Government will do everything it can to make sure that what happened to children in the past is not allowed to happen again, and is committed to doing everything it can to help survivors of past abuse receive support and justice.

<http://jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/node/2222>

## **Foreign Affairs**

### **Ties between Australia and New Zealand strengthened**

To mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Closer Economic Relations (CER) agreement between Australia and New Zealand, their leaders agreed to give their independent regulators new powers. CER has been critical in the economic development of both countries – bringing down barriers to trade, reducing costs for business, encouraging investment and creating jobs and economic growth. Since CER came into effect in 1983, two-way trade has grown on average 8 per cent per year.

To further deepen economic integration between the two countries, the two Prime Ministers also announced that Australia and New Zealand would be:

- streamlining travel between the two countries through an \$8 million trial of automated border processing technology for departures from Australian airports;
- assisting Australians and New Zealanders to consolidate retirement savings in their country of residence, and avoid paying fees and charges on accounts held in two countries; and that
- New Zealand has agreed to resettle 150 refugees who are subject to Australia's offshore processing legislation

<http://www.pm.gov.au/press-office/ties-between-australia-and-new-zealand-strengthened-annual-leaders-talks>

### **Australia triples in popularity with Chinese and Indian visitors**

Over the last ten years, people from China and India more than tripled their visits to Australia breaking all previous records. China went from 190,000 visits in 2002 to 630,000 in 2012, and India from 45,000 to 160,000.

Other countries in Australia's top ten visitors list include Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea & Hong Kong - meaning Asian countries are now seven of our top ten source countries for short term visits to Australia.

Assistant Director of Demography, Neil Scott said "New Zealand remains our biggest source of overseas short-term visitor arrivals with 1.2 million trips in 2012 or one in five visitors coming from there, but China is now in second place with one in ten, followed by the UK, the USA and Japan. The top five countries alone provided more than half of last years overseas visitors."

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/3401.0Media%20Release1Dec%202012?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=3401.0&issue=Dec%202012&num=&view=>

### **Speeches**

Opening statement to Legal and Constitutional Committee

Additional Budget Estimates hearing, Parliament House, Canberra – 11 February 2013.

Martin Bowles PSM, Secretary, Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

<http://www.immi.gov.au/about/speeches-pres/transcript-opening-statement-2013-02-11.htm>

### **Resources**

1. Launch of *An age of uncertainty*

Catherine Branson QC,  
President, Australian Human Rights Commission

Friday, 27 July 2012

[http://humanrights.gov.au/about/media/speeches/speeches\\_president/2012/20120727\\_age\\_uncertainty.html](http://humanrights.gov.au/about/media/speeches/speeches_president/2012/20120727_age_uncertainty.html)

## **A.P.B. Education**

### **Specialist IELTS Test Training and Coaching**

Passing an IELTS test is now an essential requirement for all applicants for General Skills Migration, student visas, and for many employer sponsored applicants. Adrian Bitel provides individual lessons to assist applicants achieve proficiency to the required levels in:

- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking
- Listening

He gives comprehensive ONE to ONE Personalised Coaching in any or all of the above areas.

Contact: Adrian Bitel on (02) 9286 8700 or Mobile: 0412 656 026

### **Parish Patience Immigration**

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