



IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MORE REFORM REQUIRED

The professional association representing migration agents, the Migration Institute of Australia, is concerned about allegations raised on tonight's *Four Corners* program on migration and education scams.

"Unfortunately, hearing reports about international students and visa applicants falling prey to unscrupulous operators is not a new issue", says Maurene Horder, CEO of the Migration Institute of Australia. In May 2008, the MIA reported 60 rogue agents from Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and is unaware if any of these were prosecuted.

Any unethical or illegal behaviour by registered migration agents is not tolerated by the Institute and should be cracked down on by the Department.

"We've been asking government to sort out problems with education agents and illegal or unscrupulous operators for an extended period of time. The announcement that education agents will have a register is a first step but doesn't go far enough in reforming the sector," says Ms Horder.

A recent independent report, entitled *Changing Together*, confirms the nature of some of the problems which affects the profession – that the bad behaviour of a minority of unscrupulous operators' impacts negatively on the entire migration advice profession. "Following the report's release, the MIA is acting on a comprehensive range of reforms to strengthen standards and ethics of migration agents." says Ms Horder. These include:

- Comprehensive reform to the education and training of agents
- Requiring current Registered Migration Agents to requalify to a higher standard of English language and professional competence
- Introduce a tiered system of registration to protect consumers
- Formation of an independent complaints body with the power to review fees

Responsibility for change should be shared by education providers, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. "I wait with interest to see tonight's *Four Corners* episode and hope that it will provide an added impetus for the key stakeholders to come together and develop appropriate policies to meet Australia's educational and immigration interests without anyone being exploited."

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