



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday 23 March 2010

AS ANOTHER COLLEGE CLOSES, INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION MUST LOOK TO THE FUTURE

For the Migration Institute of Australia (MIA), the Monday 22 March lockout of international students from the Austech Institute of Further Education as a result of the college entering voluntary liquidity was as dispiriting as it was familiar.

The closure of this well-attended, phenomenally expensive private college in Sydney's inner west is just the most recent in a series of shock shutdowns.

The school's 765 hospitality students now join thousands of their full-fee paying peers across the country, stranded with little financial recourse or migration mobility.

'This isn't the first or the last of these private colleges we'll see close,' said Maurene Horder, CEO of the MIA, the peak professional body for Migration Agents. 'This is a painful time for the industry, but with the Baird review, we can look toward greater stability and professionalism in the future.'

Developed by former federal MP Bruce Baird to provide international students with improved protections, the Government commissioned report paints a withering portrait of an overenrolled, under-regulated international education market, open to manipulation and exploitation.

Baird recommends a number of actions to change this, including:

...Government could expand the work being done to establish a professional peak body for [Education] Agents, which would establish standards for entry into the profession and impose an element of self-monitoring...Recognising that many Migration Agents also work as Education Agents, the Migration Institute of Australia could explore the development of education-specific elements that could be included in its program of professional development activities.¹

'The MIA has developed a Discussion Paper, currently under Member review, which will extend Institute membership to qualified and registered Education Agents,' Horder said. 'Participation in a peak professional body such as ours will pull professional Education Agents out of the shadows and help repair the reputation and quality of Australia's flawed international education industry.'

'For us, it's simple: If the Education Agents responsible for bringing overseas students to Australia are better – better trained, better regulated and better represented – future international students will receive better advice and attend better institutions.'

The MIA holds its members to a strident, enforceable code of conduct, and will offer affiliate membership only to Education Agents who have completed the Education Agent Training Course (EATC) and are registered with the Qualified Education Agent Counsellor Database (QEACD).

Available for Interview:

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¹ *Stronger, Simpler, Smarter ESOS: Supporting International Students* (Ch 5.4, p 32)