



New MIA Advocacy Unit Created

A new advocacy unit has been created within the MIA's National Office to provide a service for members.

One of the difficulties faced by the Migration Institute of Australia over the past decade was the conflict between being both the regulator of Migration Agents (as the MARA) and its own constitutional objectives to be a representative body of its members. This often resulted in a conflict of interest for MIA Directors as Board members of both.

The dual function of regulator and advocate often put the MIA in a difficult position with its own membership. Such matters were resolved in favour of the statutory responsibilities leaving members to fend for themselves when dealing with the MARA.

Since mid 2009 the Federal Government has assumed the statutory functions for the migration profession. "Not having the responsibility for the MARA has unshackled the MIA from this burden and freed it to focus on the direct representation of its Members". National President Stephen Sinclair said.

The new services offered are free to Members and include:

- Legal advice if complaints lodged to MARA
- Representations to Government and its agencies on policy and other procedural problems
- Arrange professional indemnity coverage of Members in complaint situations.

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The Australian Centre for Migration, Education and Research

The MIA has been working behind the scenes to broaden its role in the fields of education, training and research in migration to benefit its members and their clients.

One of the MIA's key initiatives for 2010 is the creation of the new Australian Centre for Migration Education and Research which the MIA Board agreed to establish last year. The Centre is now operational and staffed by an experienced team of migration and educational professionals.

The objective is to ensure migration services and outcomes for Australia are of the highest standards. This will be achieved through quality advice and by ensuring the knowledge and training of MIA members is up to date and delivered

in the most comprehensive professional and ethical manner.

A key addition to the Centre is Manager of Education and Training, RMA Grant Williams who has joined RMA Kevin Lane and Dr Pamela O'Neill. Grant is a very experienced and successful RMA and educator. His career includes working in accountancy and other areas of business and management.



(L-R) Kevin Lane, Grant Williams, Pamela O'Neill

"The Centre has some exciting programs and projects planned for the year" said CEO Maurene Horder who explained its creation as a new milestone in the

commitment of the Institute to advancing the professionalism of its members.

The Centre will take on responsibility for the MIA's:

- Extensive Continuing Professional Development Program (CPD) with face to face, online and private study courses
- Co-ordination of the universities which offer the entry level courses in Migration Law and Practice (through agreements with the MIA)
- Mentoring projects in partnership with Victoria University and through MIA State Committees
- Research projects into clients satisfaction with their migration experiences
- National Conference and related forums
- Special interest programs e.g. for lawyers and paralegals.

See detailed brochure which outlines these and the full listing of MIA's **CPD Courses for 2010**.



Newsletter for the Migration Institute of Australia – Highlights

- New MIA Advocacy Unit Created
- The Australian Centre for Migration, Education and Research
- A new Code of Conduct
- MIA Committees create new member opportunities
- Moneycorp Sponsors MIA
- MIA Award Recipients
- English Language Standards
- Government Keeps RMA Funds

The unit is staffed by former MARA staff and can provide initial legal advice and assistance to any member who has a complaint raised against them. This unit will also be able to monitor problems encountered in dealing with Government which affect members practices.

Senior members and practitioners will also be providing the guidance and direction for the service. Applications are now open for suitably qualified members to join MIA Service Registers and our Code of Conduct Panel. Members should check **myMIA** for further details or contact Chris Thompson at National Office.

A new Code of Conduct

A new Code of Conduct has been adopted for members in an effort to increase the standing of the profession and the esteem members are held in. The Institute has incorporated the highest ethical levels of professionalism in formulating the Code, as well as grounding it in the practicalities of a migration advice business. This Code applies to all members and outlines a framework for integrity, objectivity, competence, confidentiality and professional behaviour.

National President Stephen Sinclair recently confirmed the MIA Board's commitment to requiring the highest standards of practice for all members and the preparedness to show no tolerance for breaches of the Code of Conduct or Ethics amongst Institute Members. The new conduct panel will help advise MIA members of best practice.

The newly developed Code has been discussed with the Office of the MARA as a possible way forward for the entire profession and was originally developed after a discussion paper was released to the profession for comment early in 2009.

What is a good RMA? - Clients Sought

The MIA has commissioned an independent study on client satisfaction of the migration advice profession. This qualitative research focuses on the clients of Registered Migration Agents and builds on *Changing Together: Perceptions and proposals for reform from stakeholders in the migration advice community* (2009).

The goal of the research is to understand what contributes to a client's satisfaction or dissatisfaction in their experience of using a Registered Migration Agent. The findings will be used to guide the profession's development and members' success.

If you are interested in submitting Sydney or Melbourne-based clients who may be randomly selected to participate in the independent study, please email info@mia.org.au

Members Update

There will be a special general meeting held on the 14 April in Sydney to decide on any changes to the Constitution and the structure of the Board. This will conclude the consultation period commenced in August 2009 and will be the opportunity for all members to cast their preference.

MIA Committees create new member opportunities

The committee structures of the MIA have been extended to gain greater involvement of the membership in the professional activities and work of the Institute. The new structure includes the five executive committees covering each State and Territory which are elected by all members every two years and required by the constitution as well as the Disciplinary Committee.

In addition to these there are three standing committees of the Board which cover Finance Risk and Audit; Governance; and Membership Standards to aid the Board in meeting its responsibilities.

Reference Groups dealing with policy are being drawn from members to cover:

- Legislation
- Education, Training and Mentoring
- Professional Standards Committee.

Also, from time to time **Working Groups** are formed which deal with particular matters, for example the Board Restructure Group and the Membership Structure Group. Ad hoc **policy committees** are also formed as required to prepare submissions to government eg trades assessments, international students and 457 visas. See **myMIA** for more.

Plans are underway to create new **Special Interest Groups** to cover selected countries or offshore geographic regions such as the Indian sub continent and UK/Europe to assist State sections and the Board to formulate responses to Government and to enable better and directed networking within the Institutes diverse membership. Invitations will be out soon on **myMIA**.

MIA Award Recipients

Former Senator and refugee campaigner **Andrew Bartlett** was the inaugural winner of the MIA's **Distinguished Service to Australian Immigration Award** for his significant and noteworthy contribution to Australian immigration. Andrew received the award at the National Dinner in Melbourne late last year

The **Henry Giblett Award** for outstanding contribution in the area of CPD or education was awarded to **Jennifer Burn**, senior lecturer in Law at the University of Technology, Sydney and general editor of the Immigration Review for LexisNexis.

Associate Fellowships were awarded to those who have demonstrated by conduct and service a commitment to the aims of the migration advice profession. Recipients were **Libby Hogarth (SA)**, **Junichi Horie (NSW)**, **John Hourigan (ACT)** and **Graham Mander (Tas)**.



Andrew Bartlett, inaugural recipient of the 2009 Distinguished Service to Australian Immigration award

Moneycorp Sponsors MIA

The MIA is proud to announce it has signed a major annual sponsorship deal with leading commercial foreign exchange company, Moneycorp.

“Our partnership with Moneycorp will have a positive impact on our members and their clients.” said MIA CEO, Maurene Horder.

The Moneycorp commitment ensures MIA members and their clients have access to a foreign exchange service that will save them time and money.

“We offer a range of innovative products and services to assist companies and individuals make overseas currency transfers at the best possible exchange rates. With a dramatic increase in exchange rate volatility since the advent of the global financial crisis, good advice from a foreign exchange specialist is more important than ever.” said Andrew Franklin, Moneycorp’s Country Manager.

Moneycorp has more than 30 years experience of providing foreign exchange services to both private and corporate customers, with offices in the United Kingdom, Europe, North America and Australia.

For more information on how members can benefit from partnering with Moneycorp, see mia.org.au/our-sponsors



(L-R) MIA National President Stephen Sinclair, Moneycorp Country Manager Andrew Franklin, Moneycorp Business Development Manager Nat Davison

STREET TALK TO THE TREASURY
THIS AUSTRALIAN NOTE
IS IN CIRCULATION THROUGHOUT
AUSTRALIA AND ITS TERRITORIES

TIP

Did you know that currency markets are constantly fluctuating? Making a transaction at the right time can make a big difference to migrants, whether they are bringing money to Australia or sending money overseas. Changing £50,000 into Australian dollars on the dates specified below, someone would have received the following:

10 July 2009 = AUD \$23,810
14 October 2009 = AUD \$28,590

That's a difference of AUD \$4,780 in just over 3 months!

For more information on how Moneycorp can help your clients make the most of movements like this, visit www.moneycorp.com.au

English Language Standards

A higher standard of English (IELTS Academic overall band score of 7.0) is now required for initial entry to the migration advice profession.

Whilst the MIA recognises the value and benefit of other languages when dealing with clients, we believe that it is essential that Registered Migration Agents have a high standard of English to fully and effectively advise and represent clients.

Should the Government consider introducing higher English standards for currently registered agents, the MIA suggests ways to ensure higher standards and yet not disadvantage proven competent agents.

The Board agreed that where a current RMA is unable to achieve the required level of English, the agent be allowed two years to reach a satisfactory level. Demonstration of English language competency should be required once only for registration purposes. These views are being taken up with the Office of MARA, when the MIA will propose the following exemptions for currently Registered Agents;

- have a Bachelor degree from an educational institution where the language of instruction was English, or
- have NAATI accreditation as a translator or interpreter, or
- have completed five years' secondary schooling (or equivalent for the purpose of entry into a tertiary education institution) in schools where the language of instruction was English, or
- have been registered and practising in the profession for more than five years, without a justifiable or demonstrable complaint made about their English language competency.

Government Keeps RMA Funds

In the last issue of *Institute News* it was reported that MIA had approached the Federal government to set up a fund to protect consumers who had been defaulted on by an RMA. The fund was proposed to be established using the significant surplus accumulated by the MIA on behalf of the MARA prior to the handover. These funds, over \$4million, were collected from registered migration agents through their registration fees. The surplus funds were set aside by MIA for consumer protection purposes and given to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship in October.

The Federal Treasurer, Hon Wayne Swan MP told MIA it was a matter for the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship Hon Chris Evans to deal with. Senator Evans declined to meet and discuss the options and seems to have been advised that it was not agents funds MIA was proposing be used, when he told the Senate, “this is Commonwealth tax payers money – full stop.”

CEO Maurene Horder said the money should be returned to agents if it is not to be set aside for consumer protection. “Whilst \$4 million may not seem much for national financial issues, it is outrageous that money paid to the custodians of the profession by hard working migration agents just be given to the government’s coffers. If the MIA had known the money was to be confiscated by government, it would have reduced registrations fees.” Ms Horder suggests that the government should reconsider the MIA’s proposal and in so doing, prove that consumer protection and prudent management are important for the government and the new Office of the MARA’s agenda.

Strategic Alliance with tradesrecognition.com

The MIA welcomes our newest strategic alliance partner, tradesrecognition.com.

Tradesrecognition.com provides a holistic service of Skills Assessment and Recognition of Prior learning (RPL) by like-minded Registered Training Organisations. Its services cover more than 180 qualifications and operate nationally and overseas in the UK, EU, South Africa, New Zealand, Asia and India.

Industry areas covered include: Construction, Civil Construction, Engineering, Hospitality, Mechanical, Business, Government, Project Management, Design and Printing, Safety and Security and Risk Management. Tradesrecognition.com is working hard to include more scope by Registered Training Organisations, such as Horticulture and English language including IELTS.

"We are all about providing easily accessible solutions. Whether you require skills assessments or advice, our RTOs ensure that the requirements of TRA are met and maintained." says Kevin Jarick, Director.

Tradesrecognition.com provides:

- Timely personal response to all enquiries (within 24 hours)
- Proactive response to service delivery on a global basis
- Full disclosure of costs, products and services up front
- Efficient and easy-to-understand documentation.

Tradesrecognition.com provides Australian qualifications that are respected and accepted across all trade industries globally.

For further information on tradesrecognition.com please see



MIGRATION 2010 CONFERENCE



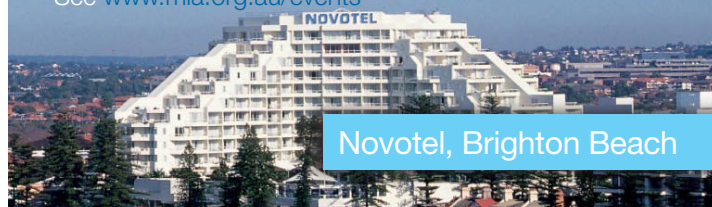
Hosted by the Migration Institute of Australia

The premier forum for the migration advice profession this year will be the Migration 2010 Conference, which will provide a thought-provoking and stimulating overview of issues affecting practitioners and industry, government and community stakeholders.

It's on in Sydney from 7 – 10 October. Conference venue Novotel Brighton Beach is just 20 minutes from the CBD and a short drive from the domestic and international airport.

This year's program will focus on the major labour market demands coupled with the increasing pressures on Australia as a refugee destination. The importance of migration to the population debate will also be a key theme.

A Call for Papers opens on 8 March and closes 31 May. See www.mia.org.au/events

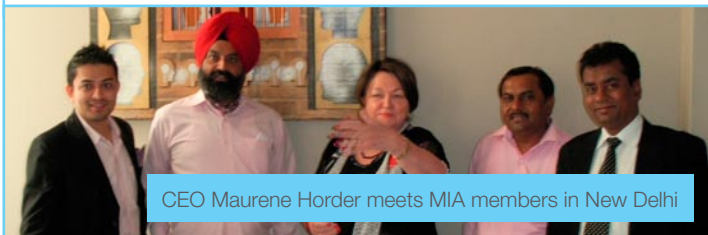


Australia-India Relations

The MIA is forming a Special Interest Group of MIA members who do business in India and the subcontinent. This network will encourage knowledge-sharing amongst those with similar business interests and expertise.

In recognition of India's importance to Australian migration, CEO Maurene Horder spoke at a trade conference for Indian business leaders in New Delhi in October 2009. While there, she met with members as well as education agents to hear first-hand how the recent focus on Indian students was affecting migration advice practice. She also addressed the Australia-India Business Council in Sydney in December.

If you are interested in joining the Special Interest Group, see **myMIA**



Advertise with the MIA

MIA members, not-for-profit organisations and businesses can now take advantage of advertising with the Institute. We have competitive options available to advertise in the members only section of the website **myMIA**, direct mail inserts and email newsletters. Members can still advertise a vacancy within their organisation on our Jobs page for free.

See www.mia.org.au/become-a-sponsor

Migration in the Media

Interested in the latest media reports on migration? The MIA homepage now has a scrolling RSS feed of current media stories updated daily. Stories are sourced nationally and cover journalists writing on immigration, visas, skilled workers, international students and other related topics.

By logging in to **myMIA**, members have exclusive access to archived stories dating back to July 2009.

The MIA strives to be positioned as the leading destination for Australian migration matters as well as providing exclusive resources for members to increase their knowledge of issues affecting the profession.



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