



## New Vision for the MIA

The Board of the MIA recently undertook a complete review of the Strategic Plan for the Institute. The planning session focussed on what is most important for MIA Members and was aided by key external stakeholders, including a senior representative from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and Branch Committee members. The last such planning exercise was undertaken two years ago and action plans derived from the new Strategic Plan will be published soon.

“The new plan will chart a course of growth for the organisation in the coming years and consolidate Members standing and relationships with the wider community and Government,” said MIA President Sharon Harris. Rolling out these plans will be helped by the details gained from the membership survey currently underway.

The Strategic Plan covers the next three years for the Institute and provides a blueprint toward which staff and Member committees will work, with new directions reflecting an increased emphasis on the value of MIA Members’ professionalism through increased promotion and recognition, and featuring six strategies dealing with:

- membership engagement;
- quality education;
- developing strategic stakeholder relationship & alliances;
- creating new revenue streams;
- research and advocacy; and
- developing the organisation’s capacity.

## MIA Works to Reform International Education

In August 2009, the Government charged former MP Bruce Baird with initiating a comprehensive review of the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000* to address the overseas education industry’s integrity and student support mechanisms.

Since initiated, the Review has taken on even greater importance following the Government’s moves to sever the direct linkages between higher education and permanent residency in early 2010, a legislative change that in part caused overseas student numbers to plummet nearly 20 percent from 2008-09 levels.

The MIA has made submissions to the first two phases of this process in November 2009 and January 2011, and continues to closely monitor its developments.

The Baird Review’s first published report in March 2010 noted “the lack of a peak body for Education Agents [makes them] the stakeholder who has been least heard in this review process” and recommended the MIA “explore the development of education-specific elements that could be included in its program of professional development activities.”

After consultation conducted last year with the membership, the MIA Board has acted on this recommendation and agreed Members who also act as Education Agents can now upgrade

their status with the Institute and access additional specialised services and benefits, including professional support and educational offerings.

This initiative will expand in April 2011 to non-Member Education Agents. Those able to meet rigorous joining criteria; including tertiary education, English language qualifications, peer review and professional references will be welcomed as Affiliates of the Institute.

In welcoming these new Members, the MIA is able to simultaneously expand its membership base, provide much needed support and benefits to an overlooked sector and strengthen Australia’s entire higher education reputation, particularly with regard to its nexus with migration.

Senator Chris Evans, Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, oversees a comprehensive and ongoing review of the *ESOS Act* that includes a recommendation for the incorporation of Education Agents within Institute membership.



## Newsletter for the Migration Institute of Australia – Highlights

- MIA Commences Lecture Series
- Distance Learning Brings MIA Education to Far Flung Members
- Professional Standards and Member Support, Services and Advocacy
- Board Reform Complete with Appointment of New Directors
- Migration Case Law Newsfeed
- MIA Consumer Expos

## Master Class & Lecture Series

Federal Magistrates, MRT Members, community representatives and senior Members came together for the inaugural Master Class delivered by Professor Mary Crock in December.

Co-hosted by the MIA's Australian Centre for Migration Education and Research (ACMER) and the University of Sydney, Professor Crock discussed the recent case of Plaintiff M61/2010E v Commonwealth and its implications on administrative decision making and potential Pacific strategies.

Spread periodically throughout the year, Master Classes represent an opportunity to hear directly from experts and advocates on complex topics that span the breadth of the migration advice profession.

The next Master Class will take place in Sydney this month, featuring Accredited Specialist David Prince, who will discuss his recent win in the Federal Magistrates Court involving a case that considered the issue of validity with respect to onshore skilled migration applications.

ACMER is also hosting a series of free public interest lectures over 2011. Commencing in April, Michal Morris, Executive Manager, Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health (CEH) will speak in Melbourne about issues relating to The Right to Health of migrants; whilst Sydney will hear from Anti-Slavery Program Director and University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) Senior Lecturer Jennifer Burn addressing the intersection of slavery and Migration Law.



Professor Mary Crock opened the MIA's Lecture Series with a presentation on the High Court and the processing of asylum seekers in December 2010.

## Distance Learning Reaches All

The MIA unveiled in January the Ecampus online learning system, a distance learning tool that allows Members a greater diversity of course types and subject matter and enhances the accessibility and flexibility of the Institute's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program. Run through a central online portal, Ecampus is also notable for its fully integrated Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA) reporting system.

Agents working overseas and in regional Australia as well as those too busy to attend face to face courses can now choose from more than 30 unique Private Study Modules, delivered through three distinct formats and allowing access any time of day, anywhere in the world.

In addition to the traditional Private Study Workbooks familiar to Members, January also marked the launch of Private Study Lectures, which are pre-recorded video lectures by expert presenters. In the coming month, the MIA will roll out further Private Study Presentations, self-guided online educational offerings.

These enhanced Private Study CPD options supplement a robust program of classroom courses, delivered through both Elluminate and face to face lectures and workshops courses across Australia and overseas.

The new MIA educational program is part and parcel with the course level differentiation initiated last year that allows Members to identify CPD sessions quickly and easily that best suit individual experience and knowledge levels.

All courses meet the new MARA requirements for CPD

## Professional Standards and Member Support, Services and Advocacy

The MIA's Advocacy Unit provides Members with assistance in dealing with government bodies like the Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA) and with professional support in ethics and other areas of practice.

The Unit has produced information sheets on commissions, MARA audits and Code of Conduct issues and updated the Institute's standard client representation agreement, and stands by to assist Members dealing with regulatory or legal difficulties.

"The Advocacy Unit is here to help Members with enquiries such as ethical and Code of Conduct issues and with representation to the government," said Manager Chris Thompson, a former MARA Senior Professional Standards Officer. "On any given day, I might help a Member draft a letter to the regulator defending an impending bankruptcy, work on a CPD course assessment, draft a submission to the government and assist a Member with interpretation of the Code of Conduct! It is great to be able to help" Thompson can be contacted on [advocacy@mia.org.au](mailto:advocacy@mia.org.au).

## Board Reform Complete with Appointment of New Directors

The 17-18 February Board of Directors meeting was an occasion marked by the inclusion of the Institute's newest directors, Ainslie van Onselen and Katie Malyon.

Following constitutional changes made last year, the Board now consists of the five Branch Presidents and two appointed persons, one from the membership, one independent.

"In reforming the Board, we agreed to bring in two new Directors with expertise and knowledge within and outside of the migration advice field," said MIA President Sharon Harris. "Ainslie and Katie are dedicated, accomplished and intelligent, and will help the Institute reach new heights over the coming years."

van Onselen is a lawyer specialising in corporate and human rights law and a senior lecturer at Edith Cowan University in Perth. She will serve as the MIA's appointed Independent Director.

Malyon is a solicitor and an RMA with more than 15 years Migration Law experience, and the principal of Katie Malyon and Associates. She is the Institute's appointed Member Director.



Ainslie van Onselen (front right) and Katie Malyon (front left) joined State President (clockwise from back left) Boniface Town (VIC/TAS), Brian Jones (SA), Stephen Sinclair (WA), Mark Webster (NSW/ACT) and National President Sharon Harris (QLD/NT) on the MIA Board of Directors in February.

## MIA Joins Professional Bodies

As the Institute's vision is for the professionalism of MIA Members to be recognised by all stakeholders, it is pleased to announce it's recently commenced membership within Professions Australia, the national organisation of professional associations. Aiming to advance and promote professionalism for the benefit of the community, Professions Australia counts amongst its members the Australian Computer Society (ACS), Australia CPA the Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (AIQS).

The MIA has also joined the peak business body for the service industries in Australia, the Australian Services Roundtable (ASR), the main function of which is to stimulate informed policy oriented networking by members with Government, the research community and industry.

"The move to join both Professions Australia and ASR provides MIA Members with confidence they are represented by a true professional association," said CEO Maurene Horder. "The information flow and the business opportunities available through these peak bodies will also connect the Institute with the larger corporate sector that is influential in governmental policy discussions."



## Your Institute Needs Your Input

As the Institute continues to grow in size and scope, it's more important than ever for Member Agents to drive the direction of the MIA's education, resources and products.

The best and easiest way for Members to help is by completing the 2011 MIA Member Survey, a vital element in gaining an overall picture of the membership's needs and concerns regarding the Institute and the broader migration advice profession.

Following the 2010 MIA Member Survey, the Institute introduced a range of benefits and services, including the Migration Case Law Newsfeed, SMS notifications of MIA Notice eBulletins and a greater range of online CPD courses.

Open for the past month, the 2011 Survey's preliminary results demonstrate that MIA Notices are the most important Member benefit and that agents' preferences are split amongst the MIA's five CPD delivery formats. For the Survey to be truly effective, however, the Institute needs to hear from more Members. Please complete the hard copy included and fax or email it to the National Office, or login to *myMIA* and complete it online in less than 10 minutes. The Survey will close at the end of March.

## LEAP E-Visa Solution

E-Visa is the latest technology in LEAP Migration Manager's solution for the Migration Profession. Using information for the applicants, sponsor and agent stored in the MM database, E-Visa integrates with DIAC's online visa application portal and does the typing into it; cutting time, keystrokes, copy/paste and typos. Click "Next" as each page auto-fills and in seconds the application is ready for agents to review, lodge and pay, or to save and continue anytime. Whether your client's application is paper-based or online, LEAP Migration Manager can handle it for you [migrationmanager.com.au](http://migrationmanager.com.au)

## Migration Case Law Newsfeed

In February, the MIA launched the Migration Case Law Newsfeed Member service. A weekly eBulletin delivered to the membership, the Newsfeed is compiled and edited by highly respected Barrister John Gibson and is an upgrade of his popular monthly Legal Newsletter, to which the Institute has subscribed on behalf of Members for several years.

An expert in Refugee Law and Judicial Review, Gibson is president of the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA), has years of experience before the High Court and the Tribunals and is the writer and editor of many legal publications and submissions to government.

The Newsfeed provides case notes and summaries vital to Member Agents' practices, covering cancellation and refusal of visas, protection visas and refugee law, detention and removal, and procedure and procedural fairness. This valuable resource is provided to the membership at no additional cost.



Barrister John Gibson, who compiles and edits the MIA's weekly eBulletin, the Migration Case Law Newsfeed, addressed the Migration 2009 Conference in Melbourne.

## MIA Consumer Expos

The MIA has long participated in various client focused expositions, including a major DIAC expo in London last year and the recent Australian Visa Expo in Sydney, and will roll out a number of similar events dedicated to promoting the use of the Institute's Member Agents directory in *Migrating to Australia*.

Providing a broad overview of Australian immigration to a large audience of prospective clients, these events are valuable for the opportunity they provide to meet with migrants and find out first hand their motivations, needs and plans.

They also represent an ideal opportunity to reinforce the professionalism of MIA Members, and were identified as a key project for the Institute this year.

## SMS Notices of Legislative Change

For a small annual fee, MIA Members can now receive valuable Notices of legislative, regulatory and policy change in SMS as well as eBulletin form, allowing agents greater mobility and accessibility when away from their offices.

Agents use their phones in idiosyncratic ways, with some conducting a virtual office out of their smart phone or PDA, and others needing a simple reminder to help cut through the mass of emails that pile up daily.



## Speaking for the Profession

The Institute regularly addresses gatherings of political and business leaders on behalf of the membership, providing background on issues of importance within immigration and perspective on particular source countries and industries.

The Institute has presented at a series of launch events addressing international business leaders as well as hosting informal politician and senior departmental officer roundtables on issues of importance in Australia migration.

The Institute has also officially supported its own promotional text, the *Migrating to Australia* publication and strives at all time to support the value of Australia immigration and the professionalism of MIA Member migration advice professionals.



Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration, Senator Michaelia Cash, met with MIA CEO Maurene Horder, former Treasurer Ivan Chait and other Members and staff at the MIA National Office in February.

## MIA Research Commitment

Research is an increasingly important area for support by the MIA, which will set up a new Research Fund with a seed grant of \$20,000 to be used to support external research projects that advance the evidence basis for migration policies. This fund can be added to by external contributions or bequests.

The Institute is also already collaborating on the Sydney University-led research project *Small Mercies, Big Futures*, which explores the processes for and treatment of children seeking asylum.

An ACMER \ MIA-commissioned piece of research by Think: Insight & Advice Managing Director Randall Pearce and covering the experiences of Migration Agents' clients is due for public release in March and will be presented at MIA Member forums.

## MIA Code of Ethics and Practice

The Institute has released an updated MIA Code of Ethics and Practice, a rationalised document comprising the substance of two former Codes governing the ethics and professional behaviour of MIA Members.

This new Members' Code is designed to protect the membership and the reputation of the profession by assisting agents to maintain the highest standards of professionalism and services as the singular guide to the spirit as well as the details of all migration agents' professional activity.

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## Call for Papers for Migration 2011

The Institute has opened a call for papers for the flagship immigration event of the year, the Migration 2011 Conference. The annual event attracts hundreds of MIA Members, immigration experts and advocates, government officers and politicians and industry leaders.

The 2011 event is scheduled for 16-17 September in Surfers Paradise, Queensland and its program will centre on the theme "Facing Australia's Migration Challenge". Those interested in submitting an abstract should visit [www.migrationconference.com.au](http://www.migrationconference.com.au) for guidelines.



The Migration 2011 Conference will run 16-17 September on the Gold Coast, Queensland.

## AustJOBS

Open For Business

AustJOBS joins with the membership to operate a new Talent Exchange for Australian Business.

The AustJOBS Talent Exchange presents a new opportunity for agents to provide more professional assistance to clients. Our service helps your clients prepare a professional profile of their career, which is approved for publication by you. Our network of employers is looking for new sources of skilled professionals for their business use our service to establish contact through you to your client.

Agents who join now will have free access to their own private client profile management system helping their clients gain exposure to more employment opportunities. AustJOBS and our business partners provide information, direction and assistance for internationally skilled people who want to work in Australia either temporarily or permanently. Our website and talent exchange helps skilled professionals to:

- Find easy to understand information about work opportunities and visa options in Australia:
- Connect with the migration profession for expert help and assistance: and
- Have their profile listed where employers find skilled, professional people for their business.

MIA wishes to congratulate Ausjobs on this great new service

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