



Tiered Membership

The tiered membership scheme, which was announced in Institute News Issue Seven following Member consultation, will be available to Members in the second half of 2011. The MIA Board met in June and endorsed the principles under which the scheme will operate, acting on advice from the Membership and Education committees and experts in migration law education and approving the framework for the Assessment of Competency and a short course to be presented as preparation for the Assessment.

Later this year, Registered Migration Agents (RMAs) with five years' registration and a record of integrity will have the opportunity to demonstrate their advanced knowledge and skills by completing the Assessment of Competency (or alternative) and applying for admission to the Associate Fellow category of membership. Applicants will also need to have completed approved Continuing Professional Development (CPD) or other professional activities above and beyond the MARA minimum, and to provide a letter of reference from an MIA Member of ten years' standing. An applicant for Associate Fellow must have been an MIA Member for a minimum of one year at the time of application, and for a minimum of two years at the time Associate Fellowship is awarded.

Following the rollout of the Associate Fellow process, RMAs of ten years' standing will have the opportunity to be assessed for admission to the Fellow category of membership, along similar lines. It is envisaged that opportunities to apply for both levels will be made available at least once a year, depending on demand.

Acknowledging the diversity and specialisation of the migration advice profession, the Board approved two alternative streams for the Assessment of Competency. Members will have the choice of completing the economic and family Assessment or the refugee, humanitarian and family Assessment.

Through this scheme, the MIA aims to establish a clear career path for RMAs, to appropriately recognise professional migration agents of good standing and professional ethics and to enhance consumer confidence in the professionalism and dedication of RMAs. The tiered membership structure recognises the importance to the profession of Members who have attained a high level of knowledge, skills and experience and give back to the profession.

Migration Expo

This year, the Institute will embark on a new project that is designed to offer Members the opportunity to meet potential clients face to face in an interactive exhibition here in Australia called the Migration Expo.

The event is a joint venture between the MIA and Expertise Events, one of Australia's leading exhibition organisers, and the inaugural Migration Expo will be held in Melbourne at the Royal Exhibition Building on the weekend of 29-30 October 2011.

The Expo is designed to target individuals, families and business professionals who are interested in information about visas and migration related matters. Along with MIA Members, the expo will also host exhibitors from a wide range of sectors and industries, including banking and finance, housing and relocation, education and language training, and recruitment and government agencies.

The Institute is offering Members the opportunity to exhibit at a preferred discount rate and MIA Members will receive exclusivity in the migration agent category, subject to the event reaching a minimum threshold level of Member support.

The Institute chose to partner with Expertise Events as that company has the local experience to deliver an outstanding event attracting top quality exhibitors as well as a large number of migrants and interested attendees.

Members interested in exhibiting should contact Liz Rimmer at Expertise Events directly at sales@migrationexpo.com.au or 02 9452 7538. The MIA will also be releasing the details of Sydney's first Migration Expo shortly and, as the event builds traction, will aim to take this event nationally over the coming years.



**MIGRATION
EXPO**



Newsletter for the Migration Institute of Australia – Highlights

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**MIGRATION 2011
CONFERENCE**
Presented By The Migration Institute Of Australia



Brochure inside

MIA Member Survey Results

The Institute conducted its annual Members Survey earlier this year, with results proving an interesting and useful snapshot of where the membership is today in terms of composition, experience and employment. Survey results also help the MIA better understand what benefits and services Members most value. Some highlights include:

Age and Experience

The Institute's membership skews slightly older than the broader working population, with about 40 percent of Survey respondents aged 50 or older, which roughly corresponds with survey data that shows about 30 percent of MIA Members have at least 10 years of experience in the migration advice field.

Employment

There has been rise of about six percent in the number of Member Agents employed in a firm rather than as sole practitioners, with more than 30 percent of Members now working for someone besides themselves – and the number of agents working part time rising similarly. That trend, however, does not seem to have had a downward effect on average earnings, with increases in the numbers of high earning agents and decreases in the number of Members just scraping by.

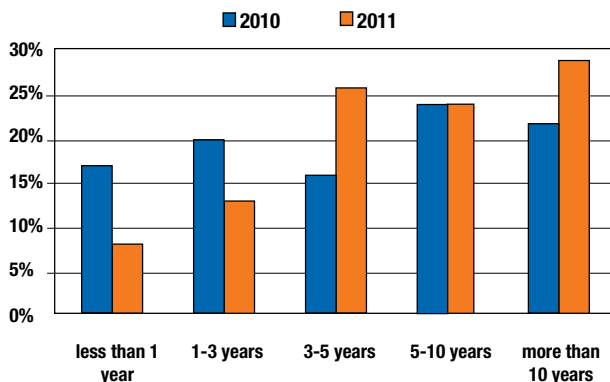
Value

The Survey has also provided a useful measure of what agents value in their membership, with nearly every respondent ranking both MIA Notices and the weekly email newsletter as "Important" or "Very Important" aspects of their membership package. Members also appreciated, to the tune of more than 90 percent "Important" or "Very Important", MARA and political representation, MIA submissions to government reviews and discussion papers, Institute-provided profession support and Member discounts on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses.

Client Profile

Members' Survey responses demonstrate a breadth of professional knowledge across visa and client type, with at least 80 percent of the membership reporting work done in the past year on Family, General Skilled and Employer Sponsored visa types. Similarly, more than 40 percent of all agents worked with clients from the United Kingdom, Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent in the last year.

MIA Members Profession Experience



Medibank Continues Partnership

Boniface Town, Medibank National Vice President and Medibank's Jeremy Norton has signed up for another three years to work in partnership with the MIA to provide high quality health services insurance for students and other visa holders.

Audit of Student Visa System

In June, the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) tabled in Parliament the comprehensive Management of Student Visas report, examining Student visa processing and compliance and detailing a poor record of collaboration between the DIAC and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

The "critical enabler" of the nearly \$20 billion international education industry, the Student visa segment's rapid expansion came at the expense of program integrity. "The Student visa program requires a strong reform agenda," said MIA CEO Maurene Horder. "While DIAC's commitment to addressing Student visa issue is laudable, change will require better resourcing and oversight."

Amongst the Audit's recommendations, better oversight of the eVisa system and more thoughtful visa conditions compliance checks are legitimately achievable goals, as is a strengthened relationship between DIAC and DEEWR. For the audit to positively impact overseas students and local educational institutions, however, the Department requires greater resourcing to match its willingness to implement reform.

Refugee Forum

The University of New South Wales (UNSW) Centre for Refugee Research recently hosted the 2011 Refugee Conference, attended by delegates from the legal, academic, policy and community settlement fraternities.

The Conference proved a productive forum for discussion of ideas enhancing humanitarian settlement and onshore protection regimes, with several MIA Members providing valuable contributions to policy positions to be taken to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva and the Australian Government.

Despite a minor disruption from protestors, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, the Honourable Chris Bowen MP, launched an insightful report by Professor Graeme Hugo of the University of Adelaide detailing the economic, social and civic contributions of humanitarian entrants and discussing aspects of the planned Malaysian regional processing deal.

2011 Achievement Awards

Each year the MIA seeks to recognise those who contribute in a significant way to migration. This year, the Board has added the additional category of student. The Institute is committed to advancing the standing of the profession as well as the education and professionalism of its Members and this new Award seeks to recognise the "Student of the Year" from any Australian Institution who has excelled in studies relating to migration law or an associated discipline.

Other MIA Awards honour those who contribute to specific areas, namely enhancing the profession and migration generally through:

- Education;
- Providing significant and sustained service to MIA Members;
- Providing distinguished service to Australian immigration; and
- Outstanding coverage of migration issues in the media.

Nominations for all of the above categories are now open, and anyone can nominate suitable recipients for these awards. The Institute also bestows the pinnacle Award for MIA Members, Life Membership, a rare honour reserved for those who have demonstrated a worthy and lasting bond with the MIA. Nomination forms can be found on the MIA website.

A panel of judges will assess all nominations and reserve the right to not offer any particular Award if there are insufficient grounds or nominees. All Awards will be presented at the MIA Awards Night.

New Strategy for MIA

The way forward for the MIA has been chartered in a new, three year Strategic Plan developed with input from surveys of members that identified what is most valued by the profession. State Executive Members completed surveys and then joined with key stakeholders representing ethnic communities, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, the voluntary sector and the MIA Board of Directors to help define the Institute's vision and objectives.

"The release of the new plan for the current year and the next two will help shape the profession's growth and standing," said MIA CEO Maurene Horder. "The new Strategic Plan has been developed with growth as an important objective, as well as advancing the value of migration to Australian society." The new plan is now available to Members.



GSM Changes Are In

A group of studious Agents in Melbourne recently. They are typical of the many groups of MIA Members across Australia keen to keep up to date with the 1 July changes to GSM

New Election Format

As part of the continuing reform and modernisation of the Migration Institute, the 2011 elections of State Committee office bearers to be conducted soon will be more representative of today's migration advice profession and its maturing profile.

Each of the five state-based branches will be up for election in August, and the resulting Committees will be streamlined and focussed, representing large and small commercial practices, not for profit practices, lawyers and students.

Nominations will open in July for all financial members who are eligible to nominate and vote within their region. This new mix is designed to ensure a broadly representative Committee.

The new Committees are very important to the conduct of the MIA and will ensure communication on behalf of the membership with DIAC and governments more generally is effective and appropriate. The key purpose of re election and the roles of new Committees include:

- Selecting a state Board representative and President;
- Supporting Members to liaise with government;
- Meet to promote MIA Members and their clients to Governments;
- Support and guide professional development and education programs for membership.

Participation in a professional body is an effective way to grow one's own practice, ideas and skills as many members have gained new personal and organisational skills through their Committee participation and made good and effective contacts as well as to help manage their business. Indeed, the busier Members are also often the most effective Committee Members, because they have a lot to give.

IELTS™ and MIA Partnership

IELTS Australia is a proudly Australian organisation that co-owns the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) alongside British Council and the University of Cambridge Examinations. IELTS Australia manages a network of test centres in more than 40 countries across Asia Pacific, the Middle East, the Americas and Africa.

MIA Members can access:

- Emergency test places (proof required);
- CPD explaining the test format (Academic and General Training modules), the scoring system, test security and insights from research illustrating how language is learned and how language skills need to be maintained; and
- The IELTS Scores Explained DVD directly from MIA.

IELTS is the world's most popular high-stakes English language proficiency test. The test is administered in over 130 countries up to 48 times a year.

www.ielts.org
www.mia.org.au/our-sponsors

Membership Levels Highest Ever

The MIA has burst through a significant glass ceiling, with over half of all RMAs now paid up Members of the Institute to the end of the 2009-2010 financial year, representing the organisation's highest ever water mark. Since ceding MARA functions two years ago, more agents feel comfortable aligning themselves with their professional body, with the previous joint responsibility arrangement a deterrent for some to join.



"This new level of Membership augurs well for the profession and confirms that those who want to be serious and effective agents know the value of being part of a true professional body," said MIA CEO Maurene Horder. "Our surveys reveal that Member Agents of the MIA highly value being able to ensure they are always up to date with legislative changes, as well as knowing that their views are represented to government. It costs less than a cup of tea a day to be a Member of the Migration Institute, and really, given the turnover rate of the profession, membership becomes the cost of staying in business. Those who participate within their professional association are less vulnerable to the churn of the migration advice field, and I see the membership's growth over the past years as a sign of the increasing maturity of the profession."

MARA Raises English Standards

Christine Sykes, CEO of the Office of MARA announced recently that, "The Government has decided that the once-off English language requirement for all applicants for repeat registration will be IELTS 7 (general) (with minimum scores of 6.5 in each subtest) or internet based TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score of 100 (with minimum scores of 22 in each subtest). There will also be specified exemptions based on education in English speaking countries. This will be a requirement from 1 January 2014."

The MIA has long been committed to improving standards of migration practice and that includes levels and standards of language including English. However, this latest move has not been well received by many long term members who are concerned about the retrospective nature of this decision and the exemptions are seen by some as inadequate and unfair. The costs will be another impost on RMAs. MIA plans to survey members on these changes for an update of member sentiment on this important issue - when it was debated at the 2009 conference members were evenly divided on setting English language standards for existing Agents.

New Europe Chapter Committee

At a meeting in London in early June, a new Committee was selected by Europe Chapter members. Last week, the MIA Board endorsed the Committee's appointment, to be headed by Graham Igglesden. Other members are Darren Chatt, Cameron Stone and Darren Le'Ake.

When the European group met, a number of important issues for the profession were raised. Skills Assessments was of particular interest to clients who had gained skills in the United Kingdom and were looking for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Communication with the Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA) was also raised as an issue. The value of Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) Expos for members was considered, as was the ethics of some recruiting firms in relation to Subclass 457 visas.

As with all MIA Members on and offshore, Europe Chapter agents' clients are experiencing problems with General Skilled Migration (GSM) and in particular the frustrating backlogs associated with that program and the lag in granting of visa's related to State Migration Plans (SMPs). The new Committee will coordinate views on these issues and communicate these back to its MIA liaison.



MIA CEO Maurene Horder meets with new Europe Chapter Committee Members Darren Le'Ake, Cameron Stone and Graham Igglesden.

Noodle Box

The MIA is pleased to announce Australia's fastest growing noodle franchise, Noodle Box, as the newest Strategic Alliance Sponsor of the Institute. The MIA and Noodle Box have been in discussions over the past two months on how each organisation can assist both one another and MIA Members.

With over 80 stores nationally, 72 of which are franchised, Noodle Box is interested in expanding operations and believes it can offer genuine opportunities to new migrants interested in owning and operating a Noodle Box restaurant. "With our growing support network, migrants will have great support in training, business management and general operations for running a successful food business," said Noodle Box Managing Director David Milne.

Keep an eye out over the coming months as the team from Noodle Box share some fantastic opportunities for your clients through some great Member interactive programs. Noodle Box will also be on hand at this year's National Conference on the Gold Coast in September.



NOODLE BOX™



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