

IMMIGRATION NEWS

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Aerospace plummets back to Earth



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Last week the ABC 4 Corners “Holy Cash Cows” program launched the Sydney flying school **Aerospace Aviation** into public awareness like a dead chook fired from a chicken gun. The Sydney Morning Herald announced yesterday that Aerospace Aviation has been deregistered by the NSW government from teaching international students. You can read this article using the following link;

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/indian-student-pilots-hit-by-dispute-20090805-ea7d.html>

There is no word yet as to how the current international students at Aerospace will be looked after following their schools deregistration. How has VETAB and DEEWR let Aerospace Aviation fall to a level that requires complete deregistration? The answer to this of course can only be found in lax government supervision.

It was not as if DEEWR and VETAB were not warned of problems brewing at Aerospace Aviation. After all as 4 Corners pointed out, 28 students were invited into DEEWR’s office last year to discuss numerous complaints about the standard of teaching there. And what a surprise, soon after 4 Corners has aired its concerns and the distress of some students who studied at Aerospace, the NSW government has actually done something.

I hear my regular readers ask, well the NSW government VETAB has acted, what about the federal authority DEEWR? The answer to this involves a story that has more twists than Harry Potter’s wand.

DEEWR’s Famous Fax

The same fax that aired on the 4 Corners program regarding Aerospace Aviation made its way on my desk this week. It’s written by Ms. Tanya Taylor the Senior Case Manager of the DEEWR dated the 21st April 2009. Ms Taylor is one of the senior staff at DEEWR empowered to investigate education providers to ensure they adhere to the government laws in the standards of education given to international students. It’s a critically important role for her investigations can decide whether a school keeps its CRICOS registration status to allow it to enroll international students.

Over a million views watched the 4 Corners program last week but television has serious time constraints and could only spend a small amount of time examining DEEWR's letter. We'll have a look in more detail to see how DEEWR spends time policing the government standards and in the end you'll understand why I have.

The letter is addressed to Ms. Sue Davis the owner of Aerospace Aviation and revolves around a face to face meeting in Sydney. It opens with;

"Dear Sue

I have attached my notes of our meeting held last Thursday. Can you please advise if there are any changes required

Thank you for your time on Thursday I found the meeting to be very beneficial and as you can see from my notes shed quite a bit of light of each of the students whose files were examined.

Regards

Tanya Taylor

Senior Case Manager

ESOS Provider Support and Compliance Unit

Internal Quality Branch, DEEWR"

So here we have a senior case officer inviting the owner of a CRICOS registered school to read her report (presumably before it is officially filed) and requesting an input into the notes she made of the meeting. Intriguingly I would have imagined that a senior officer of DEEWR to be confident in the information she had gathered in the first place but to ask the registered provider to suggest changes is extraordinary.

It would be nice if police officers did the same thing wouldn't it? "*Dear Mr. Bank Robber, can you check the notes of our conversation to make sure I got it right when I arrested you?*" I could see that going down well in court.

So why did DEEWR send its senior representative to Sydney no doubt spending our taxpayers dollars enjoying a beneficial good lunch and perhaps an overnight stay at the harbour? Who made the request for the meeting, Sue Davis or DEEWR? On the 4 Corners program Sue Davis smugly remarks "*that's a question you'll have to ask DEEWR?*" Ok DEEWR, we're now asking for an explanation.

As it turns out Ms. Taylor she wasn't there to examine the standard of the schools

practices at all, she was there to find some dirt on just 8 students. Yes that's right, just 8. Not the 20+ who attended the DEEWR office last year complaining about Aerospace, only the ones who spoke to The Australian newspaper (shame on them) and who filed court proceeding against the school to have their course fees refunded.

Ms. Taylor writes;

"The following student's files were examined and the contents discussed with Sue. Each of these students made a range of allegations and complaints about Aerospace and have initiated legal action against Aerospace to be placed into liquidation. The students have also either contacted or been contacted by, The Australian."

Hmmmm, "The Australian". Thank god I mainly talk to the Sydney Morning Herald otherwise I'd have ASIO in my office by now sifting through my files. It seems like the SMH staff need to get their act together to lift their DEEWR disapproval ratings.

All this paints a dark landscape where it doesn't seem to pay to take an education provider to court. Watch out if you dare, for Canberra will send down their top watchdog to the rescue of the college's owner, sniffing through their files searching for something to dig up. It's a very somber reminder of the power of the government against those who blow the whistle in the public interest or perhaps even their own.

Ms. Taylor comments of "my notes shed quite a bit of light of each of the students" seem quite an understatement. In reality so much illumination was used it woke up every cockroach within a kilometer radius of the school. DEEWR's notes could only be described as a systematic character assassination of each student concerned. It makes sickening reading. For example;

"Prabmeet was regularly unprepared for his flights. He lost flying standard quickly and had to have remedial flying. He was hard to contact, not answering his phone or returning calls. Several bookings for flights were made which he did not turn up to take. Work was playing havoc with his training, after one flight he admitted to the instructor that he had only two hours of sleep".

Frankly I'm surprised DEEWR didn't interview the local canteen shop staff to see if the students eating habits influenced their flying ability. One would love to see the detailed documentary evidence to support such hearsay. In fact there were so many undocumented Chinese rumours in DEEWR's notes on each of these 8 students that I'm sure poor Prabmeet and the others would have heard the message in India.

Ms. Taylor neglected to contact any of these students to test the veracity of what was

being claimed about them by Aerospace. Bearing this in mind she authoritatively states in her conclusion;

"On the basis of the above it would seem that the students' claims have little or no foundation and while Aerospace's reporting and monitoring procedures could have been better in some respects, the actions of the provider contradict the student's claims".

Missing the obvious

So after this exhaustive investigation at the expense of the Australian taxpayer into Aerospace Aviation one important fact seems to have escaped DEEWR. Why was Aerospace deregistered yesterday?

DEEWR seemed so consumed in the reporting and monitoring procedures to keep students in check (particularly these 8) they seemed to have completely overlooked the serious allegations the students raised. Was it perhaps that DEEWR couldn't have cared less about the operating practices of the school but rather as it seems be focused upon the brave students who dared to complain?

Talk about shooting the messengers, we should get these students back to Australia and pin a medal on them. Well done lads.

On the 4 Corners program PRABMEET SINGH said *"It feels really sad, really bad, because I had gone there to fulfil my dream to become a pilot. But you know all my dreams have been shattered."*

It may be all well and good for DEEWR to tighten the laws governing the education providers but if they can't answer the questions raised in this article then we cannot trust them to do their jobs properly.

For those who missed the ABC 4 Corners program you can view it online at:

<http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/content/2009/s2637255.htm>

Today's News Article

Today's news article is from the SMH is about the Indian Foreign Ministers visit to Australia. Can someone please pass this newsletter to him before he goes home?

Minister's plea to protect students

Sydney Morning Herald, 7th August 2009. Link:

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/ministers-plea-to-protect-students-20090806->

[ebjl.html](#)

Readers Comments

I'll be covering all of them in the next edition.

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Kind regards

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