

Submission No:	73
Date Received:	07/06/10
Secretary:	



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**Review of Australia's Relationship with the
Countries of Africa**

Organisation: Department of Education, Employment and
Workplace Relations - Answers to Questions on
Notice



Dr Margot Kerley
Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Kerley

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade – Inquiry into Australia’s Relationship with the countries of Africa

On 21 April 2010, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) appeared at the Canberra Public Hearings for the Committee’s Inquiry into Australia’s Relationship with the countries of Africa.

Attached for your information are DEEWR comments on the draft Hansard for the 21 April 2010 Canberra Public Hearings and responses to questions on notice arising from these Hearings. I note the Department’s response includes some confidential information which is clearly identified as not for public release.

I understand that following a review of all submissions and evidence provided at Public Hearings, the Committee may have further questions relating to DEEWR portfolio responsibilities. The DEEWR contact for these questions is Jane Press, Director, Migration Policy and Analysis Section who can be contacted by telephone on (02) 6121 6703 or email to jane.press@deewr.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

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4 June 2010



Question 2: LLNP, ESL-NA and LNSLN program outcomes. Does DEEWR capture outcomes information on the 3 programs for African born migrant students, and if so can any comparison to outcomes from migrants from other regions be made? (page FADT 80)

Answer 2:

Language Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP)

The Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) assists eligible job seekers whose language, literacy, and/or numeracy skills are below the level needed to secure employment or pursue further education and training.

New arrivals to Australia who are job seekers may also be eligible for LLNP as the program has provision for humanitarian entrants and migrants who are subject to the Centrelink two year newly arrived residents waiting period.

LLNP is a highly successful program and has achieved measurable improvements in job seekers' language, literacy and numeracy skills. For example in 2008-09 over 80 per cent of job seekers who completed 160 hours of LLNP training achieved satisfactory progress against established benchmarks.

LLNP services a broad range of job seeker groups and does not collect specific information about migrants' originating country.

Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs (LNSLN) and English as a Second Language – New Arrivals (ESL-NA) Programs

DEEWR does not have outcomes data from the English as a Second Language – New Arrivals (ESL-NA) Program or the Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs (LNSLN) Program for African born migrant students, or data which would allow comparison with outcomes for migrants from other regions.

Effective from 2009, Australian Government funding for targeted programs in government schools, including the Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs (LNSLN) Program and the English as a Second Language (New Arrivals (ESL-NA) Program, was consolidated within the National Education Agreement (NEA) as part of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations agreed in the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) forum. DEEWR continues to administer the ESL-NA for non-government schools within the legislative framework of the Schools Assistance Act 2008.

State and Territory education authorities are responsible for the detailed administration of the programs for government schools and any data enquiries would need to be directed to the relevant education department. Non-government authorities in each jurisdiction are responsible for the detailed administration of the ESL-NA Program for non-government schools and any data enquiries would need to be directed to the respective peak non-government organisations in each State and Territory (the relevant Catholic Education Commission or Association of Independent Schools).

Possible additional information

Government and non-government school students' outcomes in literacy and numeracy are measured through their participation in the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests which are conducted annually. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) are now responsible for the NAPLAN tests and associated reporting. Migrant or refugee students who participated in ESL support programs for newly arrived students would, however, qualify for exemption from the NAPLAN tests by reason of their lack of proficiency in the English language. National protocols for exemption specify that students with a language background other than English, who arrived from overseas less than a year before the NAPLAN tests, may be treated as exempt from testing. Students who qualify for exemption are counted as part of the cohort of assessed students and are included in the below minimum standard calculations for national reporting purposes. Such students are expected to participate in NAPLAN testing in subsequent years.

NAPLAN and other assessment data are reported by specified student background characteristics, including language background, using nationally agreed definitions of the characteristics. The following detailed data on students' language background other than English (LBOTE) status is collected from students' parents via the school enrolment process:

- the student's and both the student's parents' 'main language other than English spoken at home', with responses linked to the ABS Australian Standard Classification of Languages (ASCL) coding index; and
- the student's 'Country of birth', with responses linked to the ABS Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC) coding index.

While detailed data on students' specific language background and country of birth are collected at the school level and may be available for analysis at the state/territory or school system level, data are only required to be provided to ACARA (for linking with assessment data) with students' language background described as 'LBOTE' or 'non-LBOTE'. The national definition currently used is: 'A student is classified as LBOTE if either the student or either of the student's parents/guardians speaks a language other than English at home'. The limitations of this (very broad) definition, particularly its failure to distinguish between those LBOTE students who are educationally disadvantaged and those who are not, have become evident and the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) has tasked ACARA with developing a LBOTE measure that better identifies students whose language background has a measurable effect on their outcomes.

Both the government and non-government school sectors are required to report on student performance disaggregated by specified student background characteristics, including language background. The NEA also includes a commitment to reporting on the number of students who are provided with additional support, including students from non-English speaking background (including newly arrived migrants and refugees), disaggregated by sector.

Question 3: Can we get some historical data on Africa scholarships generally and how much money and number of scholarships to that continent (*Africa*) in the last 10 years? (page FADT 76)

Answer 3:

Categories of scholarships offered to African students?

International students hoping to study in Australia may be eligible for a number of scholarships, which are offered by the Australian Government, education institutions and a number of other organisations. They cover various educational sectors, including vocational education and training, student exchanges, undergraduate and postgraduate study and research. Students from Africa are eligible for a number of these scholarship programs, whether specifically targeted towards Africa or not.

Historical data on scholarships offered to Africa generally and how much money has got in scholarship terms to that continent in the last 10 years?

The only scholarship program for international students overseen by DEEWR is the Australian Government's Endeavour Awards program. The Endeavour Awards program is the Australian Government's internationally competitive, merit-based scholarship program providing opportunities for citizens of the Asia-Pacific, Middle East, Europe and Americas to undertake study, research and professional development in Australia. Awards are also available for Australians to undertake study, research and professional development abroad.

As students from Africa are not, and have not previously been, eligible for the Endeavour Awards program, no scholarship funding has been provided to Africa in the last ten years by DEEWR.

DEEWR is not in a position to provide information on scholarship funding that may have been provided to Africa from other sources, including other Australian Government departments or universities.

Information on scholarships more generally, and on what proportion of these scholarships are going to Africa.

The primary provider of scholarships to international students within the Australian Government is AusAID. African students may be eligible for a number of AusAID scholarships. However, DEEWR can not provide information on scholarships offered to African students by other Australian Government departments.

Australian universities also provide substantial scholarship programs for international students, many of which are open to students from Africa. Australian universities are autonomous and make their own decisions regarding the allocation of scholarships. DEEWR does not collect information on these programs and is not in a position to be able to provide information on the proportion provided to Africa.

Data about which universities are providing the most cash scholarships, in terms of unis both in Australia and in Africa.

DEEWR does not collect information on scholarship programs offered by Australian universities and is not in a position to provide financial data related to allocation of scholarships to Africa.

DEEWR understands that African universities may offer scholarships, possibly in conjunction with Australian universities, for African students to study in Australia. Again, this information is not collected by DEEWR and DEEWR is not able to provide information on the nature, number or value of these scholarships.

Students seeking to study in Australia must prove their financial capacity to support themselves in order to obtain a student visa. In the case of students on scholarships, this may entail providing information on any scholarships as part of their visa application. Therefore, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship may be better placed to answer questions relating to the number of scholarship students arriving in Australia from Africa.

Question 4: Why are there a disproportionately large numbers of students from Mauritius in Australian degree-conferring institutions (page FADT 82).

Answer 4:

For full year 2009, 5 253 enrolments in Australian institutions by African students came from Mauritius. These students accounted for around 40 per cent of all student enrolments from Africa, and the proportion is similar for the latest available data.

Although DEEWR is aware that there is a large cohort of education agents working in Mauritius who may promote Australian education, DEEWR does not collect information from individual countries or student cohorts as to their motivations for choosing to study in Australia except as part of occasional surveys of international students. Therefore, DEEWR does not have information on why large number of Mauritian students are choosing to study in Australian higher education courses.

Question 5: Why are there are so many students from Mauritius in both higher education and VET and whether there is any work done by institutions or schools in Australia to particularly recruit in Mauritius and, if so, why they are doing so? (page FADT 82).

Answer 5:

Anecdotally, it is possible Mauritian students have undertaken courses of study in Australia to support applications for permanent residence, as there are high numbers of Mauritian students enrolled in VET courses which traditionally have attracted students seeking to apply for residence under the Australian Government's Skilled Migration Program. However, DEEWR does not collect data on applications for visas, including any claims to permanent residence that may arise from completing a course of study. The Department of Immigration and Citizenship may be able to provide data on this issue.

DEEWR does not collect information on marketing activities undertaken by Australian education providers overseas, or in-country based education agents, including in Mauritius, and is therefore unable to provide information on these activities. In terms of promotion by the Australian Government or information on promotional activities of Australian education providers, Austrade may be better placed to provide a response to this question. After 1 July 2010, responsibility for marketing and promotion of Australian education will be transferred to Austrade. Austrade already conducts and oversees these activities in a number of regions, including Africa.

Question 6: Is there any particular work done in the source country that is atypical in providing such a disproportionately large number of students (from Mauritius) to this country? (page FADT 83)

Answer 6:

In terms of DEEWR's activities in Mauritius, due to concerns regarding the activities of education agents recruiting students for Australian education institutions, Australian Education International (AEI) Middle East has taken a number of steps to assist students in Mauritius who wish to find out more about studying in Australia. These include a visit to Mauritius by Consul (Education) in December 2008 to run information sessions about study in Australia, as well as the provision of links to the *Study in Australia* and Department of Immigration and Citizenship websites for use on the Mauritian Ministry of Education's website. In addition, AEI Middle East has provided training and has introduced the online Education Agent training course to the Business Development Manager at the Australian High Commission in Mauritius.

However, these activities are not atypical and are DEEWR undertakes them in many other countries as the need arises.

Question 7: What courses are being undertaken by Mauritian students in Australia? (page FADT 82)

Answer 7:

Mauritian students are primarily enrolled in courses in Management and Commerce (2 119 enrolments), Society and Culture (863 enrolments), Food, Hospitality and Personal Services (751 enrolments).

At the VET level, which accounts for nearly 70 per cent of enrolments with 3 644, the most popular courses for Mauritian students include Hospitality Management (753 enrolments), Hairdressing (378), Business and Management (346), Welfare Studies (313), Hospitality (179) and Cookery (133).

At the higher education level, which accounts for around a quarter of Mauritian enrolments with 1,333, the most popular courses are in Business and Management fields, including Business and Management (127 enrolments), Accounting (126) and Management and Commerce (92).

Table 1 – Enrolments by Mauritian Students by Broad Field of Education

Broad Field Of Education	2009
_Dual Qualification	88
Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	34
Architecture and Building	142
Creative Arts	246
Education	40
Engineering and Related Technologies	467
Food, Hospitality and Personal Services	751
Health	112
Information Technology	243
Management and Commerce	2,119
Mixed Field Programmes	45
Natural and Physical Sciences	108
Society and Culture	863
Grand Total	5,258

Question 8: Are there any particular problems that are arising in relation to students coming from Mauritius to Australia? (page FADT 83)

Answer 8:

The vast majority of students from overseas countries report a safe, satisfying experience and regular surveys of the satisfaction rates of international students are very positive. However, inevitably, some students experience problems. These problems can include pre-arrival information and visas, quality of education, access to services, social integration, accommodation, equitable treatment and the cost of education. Mauritian students may also be particularly affected by student violence issues, given the significant Indian population in Mauritius. Additionally, given over half of Mauritian students are enrolled in private VET providers, the closures of private colleges is also a significant concern.

To address these problems and improve international students' wellbeing and experiences in Australia, the Australian Government has put in place a number of measures.

In August 2009 Minister Gillard asked the Hon Bruce Baird AM to review the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS) and its associated legislation and regulations and report back to the Government with changes designed to ensure Australia continues to offer world class quality international education. The review looked at the current ESOS legislation and how it could be strengthened to better protect international students and enhance Australia's reputation for quality education and training services.

On 9 March 2010 the Deputy Prime Minister released the Baird Review final report, *Stronger, simpler, smarter ESOS: supporting international students*. Among its recommendations, the report calls for stronger registration requirements, compliance and enforcement, simpler tuition protection measures and access to information and smarter information for students and management of education agents.

The recommendations of the report follow extensive consultation with students, education providers, regulatory bodies, state and territory government officials, student organisations, diplomatic missions, international education professionals, education unions and industry bodies. The report is available at: www.aei.gov.au/AEI/GovernmentActivities/InternationalStudentsTaskforce/ESOS_REview_Final_Report_Feb_2010_.pdf.

On 12 June 2009 the Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education announced the establishment of an International Student Taskforce which would develop strategies to support the wellbeing of international students. Minister Gillard also convened a roundtable of international student representatives in Canberra over 14 to 15 September 2009, to discuss matters of concern, including safety. At this Roundtable, a Communiqué was developed and provided to Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Education Ministers.

On 2 July 2009, COAG committed to the development of a National International Student Strategy by a Senior Officials' Working Group of COAG for implementation in the 2010 academic year. Major areas of focus for the strategy include the pre-departure experience (especially the provision of information); the education experience and quality of education; student welfare (including student safety); and post-education outcomes. Additionally, COAG noted jurisdictions have implemented a range of additional initiatives to improve student safety including a crackdown on crime around metropolitan transit hubs and heightened community engagement by police. COAG agreed such initiatives should be maintained.

The International Student Strategy for Australia (ISSA) is progressing for implementation in the 2010 academic year. The Strategy builds on efforts undertaken at all levels of government to improve the safety and wellbeing of international students and to ensure the ongoing quality and sustainability of the sector. COAG acknowledged measures to focus on and increase police surveillance of high crime areas, and the engagement of police multicultural affairs agencies and other community groups in programs to improve the safety and wellbeing of the community, including international students.

At its April 2010 meeting. COAG noted a staged response to the Baird Review of the ESOS Act was underway by the Commonwealth, including consultation with the states and territories as well as the international education sector. Recommendations contained in the report included that the ESOS Act be amended to require providers to demonstrate that they deliver a comprehensive induction program and access to information on a continuing basis that is reasonably adapted to the needs of their students, allows students to easily access the information on an ongoing basis and includes information of safety, student rights, and where to seek support in making complaints. Another recommendation was that the Australian Government, working in conjunction with states and territories, establish international student hubs in each capital city as a place for international students to seek information, access referral and advocacy services, build ties with the Australian community and strengthen the voice of international students to providers.

From DEEWR's point of view, the major issue is ensuring there is up to date authoritative information for students. DEEWR is currently updating the AEI website and building an on-line portal with information for students, including safety. In addition, following the International Student Roundtable, on 28 September 2009, Commonwealth, State and Territory Education Ministers agreed to provide accurate, up to date information about studying and living in Australia through an online manual. The Study in Australia website is being enhanced to also be a portal to assist international students to connect to a range of new resources and information.

The Government is also working with the National Union of Students and the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations to establish an ongoing voice with the Australian Government for international students.

Governments are also working together to develop rapid response protocols to better support students in the event of a provider closure.

DEEWR provided \$66 000 to Universities Australia to develop Good Practice Guidelines for enhancing student safety both off and on campus. The Department also provided \$34 100 to ISANA: International Education Association to develop some good practice guidelines for enhancing the international student experience.

Question 9: How many African migrants take up apprenticeships when they receive their permanent resident status in Australia? (page FADT 81)

Answer 9 :

DEEWR does not collect information on when a new apprentice became an Australian Permanent Resident (PR) or Australian Citizen. Information is supplied by Australian Apprentices as to whether they are currently PR or citizens and their country of birth.