



## **DEEWR update on the former Department of Education, Science and Training's submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's Inquiry into Australia's relationship with India**

- India remains a high profile country for DEEWR with a Counsellor, Ms Kelly Raj, based at the Australian High Commission in New Delhi.
- Following the election of the Rudd Government, Machinery of Government changes moved the science portfolio from the former Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) to the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR). This means DEEWR, including the DEEWR International Network of Counsellors, no longer has responsibility for science matters.

### *Joint Working Group Meeting*

- The education and training relationship is underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding known as the Education Exchange Program. The next Australia-India Joint Working Group of Education and Training Cooperation will be held in New Delhi on 16 September 2008. Issues to be discussed include qualifications/professional recognition, university collaboration, vocational education and training (VET) sector collaboration and monitoring education agents.

### *Student recruitment*

- The number of Indian students choosing to study in Australia continues to increase. India remains the second ranked source of international students, with Indian student enrolments accounting for 17% of total international student enrolments. A total of 51,762 Indian students studied in Australia in calendar year 2007.
- There has been particularly high growth in Indian student enrolments in VET and English language courses. Year to date June 2008 data shows that Indian student enrolments are largely in the VET sector (53%, up from 14% in 2005) and the higher education sector (32%, down from 80% in 2005).
- The strong growth in Indian student enrolments in the VET sector results from some education agents, providers and students taking the opportunity presented by Australia's skilled migration policy which gives points for skilled migration on the basis of qualifications related to occupations on the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL). Almost half of all Indian student enrolments in the VET sector are in hospitality management and 96% of these enrolments are with private providers, mainly in Victoria and New South Wales.

Sector	2005	2006	2007	June 2008 YTD	2005-06 % change	2006-07 % change	June 07-08 % change
Higher Education	22,193	25,085	26,800	21,113	13%	7%	3%
VET	3,855	10,307	27,114	34,943	167%	163%	112%
ELICOS	1,314	3,034	9,048	8,753	131%	198%	84%
Schools	51	63	87	83	24%	38%	9%
Other	168	315	555	485	88%	76%	28%
Total	27,581	38,804	63,604	65,377	41%	64%	55%

*Vocational Education and Training sector engagement*

- Australia-India engagement in the VET sector is moving forward as a result of the DEEWR led 'Whole of Australia' delegation to India in September 2007. The delegation, which included senior representatives from the Australian government and state, industry, peak bodies and public and private VET providers, visited New Delhi and Bangalore to assess opportunities to initiate long-term engagement with the India VET system and industry.
- Key representatives from the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the Confederation of Indian Industry will visit Australia in October 2008. The visit will showcase both the Australian VET system and specific providers with strengths in areas of Indian interest such as manufacturing, services (retail, hospitality, tourism, financial), agriculture and food processing.
- The Government of India has given priority to increasing India's skills base by providing for Sector Skills Councils in its National Policy. With Australia as Country Partner, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) will host its "Global Summit on Skills Development 2008" in New Delhi, 17-18 September 2008. Participants will include business, industry, skills professionals and government, with representatives from Germany, UK, New Zealand, Singapore and Japan.

*Professional recognition*

- The Australian Government supports arrangements that improve international professional mobility. It encourages the adoption of fair and transparent assessment practices and the development of mobility frameworks and mutual recognition arrangements by Australian professional bodies with their overseas counterparts.
- The Australian Government does not enter into mutual recognition arrangements on behalf of professions, as professions are regulated at State and Territory government level. International professional recognition arrangements need to be driven and supported by the relevant professional bodies in each country. Many peak professional bodies in Australia set national standards for their profession and also assess skilled migrants seeking entry to Australia. These bodies are best placed to discuss mutual recognition with their overseas counterparts.

- DEEWR supported the Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (AIQS) in its work to facilitate professional recognition between Australia and India. DEEWR provided \$57,200 to AIQS in 2007, enabling it to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Institution of Surveyors India as a first step towards a full Reciprocity Agreement. The intent is to streamline recognition processes for quantity surveyors educated in Australia who are seeking to work in India and vice versa. Negotiations towards a Reciprocity Agreement continue through information exchange on educational and professional standards.

#### *Skills recognition*

##### Trades Recognition Australia

- Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) is the skills assessing authority that provides skills recognition services for Australian residents with work rights (including people in Australia under temporary visa arrangements which allow them to work) and potential migrants to Australia for most trade and associate professional occupations.
- TRA is the relevant assessing authority under the *Migration Act 1958* for 170 trade and associate professional occupations listed on the Skilled Occupation List (SOL). Under the Migration Regulations TRA has the authority to set the standards against which the skills of a person are assessed as being suitable for their skilled occupation.
- In 2006/07, 40% (14,614) of international migration skills assessment applications received by TRA were from Indian applicants. Of these, 70% were successful. The most requested occupations were hairdressers, refrigeration and air-conditioning mechanics, cooks and electricians.

##### VETASSESS

- In 2006, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed on a national approach to apprenticeships, training and skills recognition to alleviate skill shortages in the economy. This initiative required the development of a system for recognition of overseas qualifications to enable migrants with skills to Australian standards to work as soon as they reach Australia. Offshore skills assessment enables qualification recognition and occupational licensing, whilst maintaining Australian standards.
- In September 2007, VETASSESS, a consortium of Australia registered training organisations, commenced assessing residents of India (amongst other countries) seeking skills recognition prior to migration in the following occupations: electrician, plumber, refrigeration mechanic, motor mechanic, carpenter, joiner, electrical powerline tradesperson, bricklayer, and related supervisor occupations.
- VETASSESS has established a MoU with the Higher and Technical Education Department of the Indian state of Maharashtra to provide practical skills assessments in Industrial Training Institutions throughout Maharashtra.

*Institutional linkages with India*

- According to information from Universities Australia, 25 Australian universities had 98 formal links with Indian higher education institutions as of November 2007 ([http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/content.asp?page=/policies\\_programs/international/activities/index.htm](http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/content.asp?page=/policies_programs/international/activities/index.htm)).