

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 3
Output Group: 3.3

DEST Question No. E161_05

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

Skilled Independent Regional Visas and international students

- a) Can you confirm that, from July 2004, international students with a degree from a “regional university” – including all three universities in South Australia – will be able to apply for a new visa category, the Skilled Independent Regional Visa, without leaving Australia?
- b) How is “regional university’ defined in this context? Is it the same definition as used by DEST for other purposes?
- c) Can you provide a list of all universities to whom this new rule applies?
- d) Can you confirm that the benefit available to regional university graduates, in terms of qualifying points, is only five points out of a necessary 110 points?
- e) How many graduates is it expected will benefit from this new provision per annum?

Answer:

Skilled Independent Regional Visas and international students

- a) According to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA)’s annual report¹, from 1 July 2003, overseas students who have studied and lived in regional Australia or a low-population growth metropolitan area for at least two years, can apply for a new visa category, the Skilled Independent Regional Visa, without leaving Australia; and can be awarded five bonus points under the General Skilled Migration points test.

DIMIA defined the entire State of South Australia as regional Australia and all Australian tertiary educational providers in South Australia as regional university. Hence, all three universities in South Australia (the Flinders University of South Australia; the University of Adelaide; and University of South Australia) are ‘regional university’, according to the DIMIA definition.

- b) DIMIA defined ‘regional universities’ as any universities located in regional Australia, i.e. with a population under 200,000 persons, or a low population growth metropolitan area - that is all of Australia except Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong, the NSW Central Coast, Melbourne, Perth, Canberra, Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

The definition of ‘regional university’ used by DIMIA is *not* the same as that used by DEST. The term ‘regional universities’ used by DEST mainly depends on how the programme defines it. DEST would have used the term in the past for universities

¹ Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (2004), *Population Flows: Immigration Aspects 2002-03 edition*, March 2004.

that had the main campus in a regional area, outside the capital city, eg. the University of New England at Armidale. According to that definition the South Australian universities would not have been termed regional universities in higher education programmes, since their main campuses are based in the capital Adelaide.

Most metropolitan-based universities now have campuses in regional areas. So DEST tend to talk about regional campuses rather than regional universities. Some of the new places in recent years in nursing, etc, have been allocated to regional campuses rather than to regional universities.

In the recent reforms, DEST are providing a regional loading from 2004, that is extra funding per student place for regional campuses, to take account of the higher costs they may incur in servicing students and the reduced opportunities they have for commercial partnerships with industry and business. DEST apply a definition for the regional campus – it is outside a mainland capital city (excluding Darwin) and is in a location that does not have a population of more than 250,000 people. The focus is on the regional campus and not whether the university is a regional university. The University of Tasmania qualifies for the regional loading as does Charles Darwin University in Darwin.

- c) The list of DIMIA's regional universities by campus location is at Attachment A.
- d) According to DIMIA's Point Test information, available at their website http://www.immi.gov.au/migration/skilled/points_test.htm, the current pass mark for 'Skilled-Independent Overseas Student' category is 115 points which will be increased to 120 from 1 April 2005. Regional university graduates who have lived and studied for at least 2 years in regional Australia as defined by DIMIA or low population growth metropolitan areas, can claim an additional 5 bonus points on top of points available for Australian qualifications. On the basis of at least two years of Australian study, the points available for Australian qualifications are as follows:
 - o graduates with an Australian qualification (degree, diploma, trade certificate) can claim 5 points.
 - o graduates with an Australian Masters or Honours degree(at least upper second class level) completed following an Australian undergraduate degree can claim 10 points.
 - o graduates with an Australian PhD obtained after at least two consecutive study years in Australia can claim 15 points.
- e) Based on the DEST 2003 Students Selected Higher Education Statistics, the number of *onshore* overseas students studying in the DIMIA defined Regional universities was around 97,000. Of those onshore overseas students, approximately 24 per cent (or 23,280) students were studying in the DIMIA defined *regional campuses*.

ATTACHMENT A

DIMIA's Regional Australia/low population growth metropolitan area campuses²

New South Wales

Institution	Campus
Charles Sturt University	Albury Wodonga
	Bathurst
	Broken Hill
	Dubbo
	Goulburn
	Wagga Wagga
Southern Cross University	Coffs Harbour
	Lismore
	Port Macquarie
University of New England	Armidale
	Coffs Harbour
University of Sydney	Menzies School of Health Research – Darwin
	One Tree Island–Great Barrier Reef (near Herron Island)
	Orange Agricultural College
University of Wollongong	Batemans Bay
	Bega
	Nowra

Victoria

Institution	Campus
Australian Catholic University	Ballarat
Deakin University	Geelong
	Geelong Waterfront
	Warrnambool
La Trobe University	Albury Wodonga
	Beechworth
	Bendigo
	Mildura
	Mt Butler
	Shepparton
Marcus Oldham College	Waurin Ponds
Monash University	Gippsland (Churchill)
RMIT	East Gippsland (Bairnsdale)
	Hamilton
University of Ballarat	Ararat
	Horsham
	Mt. Helen
	SMB (Ballarat)
	Stawell

Victoria (Cont.)

² is available from DIMIA website <http://www.immi.gov.au/migration/skilled/regional.htm>

University of Melbourne	Creswick
	Dookie
	Gilbert Chandler
	Glenormiston
	Longerenong
	McMillan (Warragul)

Queensland

Institution	Campus
Central Queensland University	Bundaberg
	Emerald
	Gladstone
	Mackay
	Rockhampton
James Cook University	Cairns (Smithfield)
	Townsville
University of Queensland	Gatton
University of Southern Queensland	Toowoomba
	Wide Bay (Hervey Bay)
University of the Sunshine Coast	Maroochydore
	Sippy Downs

Western Australia

Institution	Campus
Curtin University of Technology	Esperance
	Kalgoorlie
	Muresk
Edith Cowan University	Bunbury
University of Notre Dame	Broome

South Australia

Institution	Campus
The Flinders University of South Australia	All campuses
The University of Adelaide	All campuses
University of South Australia	All campuses

Tasmania

Institution	Campus
Australian Maritime College	All campuses
University of Tasmania	All campuses

Northern Territory

Institution	Campus
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	All campuses
Northern Territory University	All campuses

Note: no educational institution or campus in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) is included.