

*The September issue contains Amendments to the Migration Regulations 1994 with its effects on the various visa classes. Detailed information on the Skills Assessment Requirements for Welfare Workers is also included.*

### **Amendments to the Migration Regulations 1994 14 September 2009 legislation changes**

A number of legislation changes regarding different classes of visas came into effect on 14 September 2009. These include:

#### **Repeal of the Subclass 418 – Educational visa**

From 14 September 2009, the Educational visa will no longer be available. Educational workers seeking to be employed in Australia on a temporary basis should consider applying for a Business (Long Stay) (subclass 457) visa.

Applications lodged before 14 September 2009 will not be affected by the repeal of this visa and will continue to be processed by the ACT's Temporary Specialist Entry Processing Centre after 14 September 2009, unless a decision on the visa has already been made.

#### *Temporary residence visa reforms*

From 14 September 2009, a new sponsorship framework has been introduced for a number of temporary residence visas with work rights. The changes aim to strengthen the integrity of the temporary residence visa program, while protecting the employment and training opportunities of local labour.

<http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/specialist-entry/whats-new.htm>

#### **Subclass 457 Changes - Temporary Business (Long Stay) – Standard Business Sponsorship**

This is the most commonly used program for employers to sponsor overseas workers to work in Australia on a temporary basis. From 14 September 2009, under the Subclass 457 visa program, there are no special arrangements for employers in regional areas across Australia.

Employers can be either:

- Australian businesses, or
- overseas businesses.

This visa is for employers who would like to employ overseas workers to fill nominated skilled positions in Australia.

Other changes has also been made which will be summarised in our next newsletter.

For further information contact [Diana Tong](#) at our office, or see:  
<http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/skilled-workers/sbs/>

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## Changes to expand onshore partner visa eligibility

From 14 September 2009, amendments have been made to the Migration Regulations 1994 to allow some partners of Australian citizens, Australian permanent residents or eligible New Zealand citizens who were previously barred from making an application to apply for a Partner visa in Australia.

A person who does not hold a substantive visa (that is a visa that is not a Bridging visa or a Criminal Justice visa) and has had a visa refused or cancelled since their last entry to Australia is prevented by section 48 of the Migration Act from applying for another visa while in Australia, except for certain prescribed visa classes.

From 14 September 2009, these people may now be eligible to apply for a Partner visa in Australia if they meet certain criteria. They must not have had a visa cancelled or refused on character grounds or have had a Partner visa refused since their last entry to Australia.

For further information contact [David Bitel](#), or see: <http://www.immi.gov.au/migrants/family/partner-visa.htm>

## Stronger measures for the protection of children

The Australian Government is strengthening policies around the sponsorship of minors for visas to enter Australia because it considers that the safety of children is paramount. The Government wants to ensure that children seeking to enter Australia under partner and child visas are protected from being sponsored by people with convictions for child sex offences or other serious offences indicating that they might pose a significant risk to a child in their care.

From 16 September 2009, sponsors of child visa applications and partner or prospective marriage applications which include a minor applicant will be required to provide a National Police Check as part of the process of assessing the application. This applies to existing applications that have not been decided on this date as well as to any new applications.

The results of the National Police Check will be used by the department to assess whether or not the visa application satisfies public interest criteria relating to the best interests of children.

<http://www.immi.gov.au/migrants/family/protection-of-children.htm>

## Immigration plan brings Australia's needs to the fore

Immigration officials are preparing a 50-year migration plan to ensure that intakes consider a range of long-term issues such as climate change, water needs and national security.

The Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Andrew Metcalfe, said the department was conducting a review of the nation's migration needs to ensure a more rounded and visionary approach. "In terms of the future, we are trying to lift ourselves away from year-to-year decisions to a 50-year vision," he said.

Mr Metcalfe said a well-planned skilled migration program could contribute to Australia's long-term economic, demographic and environmental goals.

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/immigration-plan-brings-australia's-needs-to-the-fore-20090903-fa11.html>

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## MODL List Review for Professionals and other Skilled Migrants

Submissions are now being welcomed in response to the Migration Occupations in Demand list (MODL) Review Second Issues Paper.

The MODL was introduced to target the General Skilled Migration program, to applicants who had skills in occupations and specialisations in short supply in Australia.

The Review, lead jointly by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship will examine and report on the following:

- The role and purpose of the MODL in targeting skill needs in relation to the GSM program, to complement the supply of tertiary qualified Australians.
- A proposal for a new methodology and structure for the MODL to meet its intended purpose, taking account of:
  - the long term needs of the Australian labour market
  - skill supply through domestic tertiary education.

The changes to the MODL will not affect the ability of Australian industry to meet its skill needs through the Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS) and Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS).

<http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/modl-review/>

## Citizenship changes for elite athletes

A Bill providing for changes to mandatory Australian residence requirements has been introduced into Parliament to enable elite athletes who have been granted permanent residence in Australia but travel overseas frequently to become citizens and thereby represent Australia at international events including the Olympics.

The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, said that it was difficult under the current legislation for some sports people and other specialist professionals who migrate to Australia to meet the requirements for Australian citizenship due to their international travel commitments. People who are out of the country for 90 days or more in the year before applying for citizenship are currently ineligible to become citizens. In 2007, the previous Government also changed the residence requirement for citizenship from two years to four years leaving a small group of people significantly disadvantaged. Elite athletes who have the potential to represent Australia at an international level but need to be citizens to do so have been disadvantaged along with some specialist professionals including international airline pilots and offshore oil rig workers.

'These changes will create a smoother path to citizenship for elite athletes and people in specialist professions and enable Australia to benefit from the talents and skills they bring to our country,' said Senator Evans. Under amendments to the Australian Citizenship Act 2007, people in special circumstances such as elite athletes will need to have been a permanent resident for two years before their application with at least six months physically in Australia, require citizenship to represent Australia in their sport and have their application supported by a recognised national peak body, such as the Australian Olympic Committee or Tennis Australia.

<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2009/ce09078.htm>

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## Protection for victims of torture and inhumane treatment

The Rudd Government is introducing new laws to provide a different mechanism to grant protection to people at risk of violation of their fundamental human rights if returned. The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans said the Migration Amendment (Complementary Protection) Bill 2009 allows all of Australia's international human rights obligations to be considered under the same visa process as claims under the Refugees Convention.

Complementary protection will cover circumstances in which a person may currently be refused a Protection visa because the reason for the persecution or harm on return is not for one of the specified reasons in the Refugees Convention - that is, not on the basis of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

For example, it is not certain that a girl who would face a real risk of female genital mutilation would always be covered by the Refugees Convention, whereas she would be covered under complementary protection. Women at risk of so-called 'honour killings' can also potentially fall through gaps in the Refugees Convention definition.

'This Bill will enable Australia to meet our protection obligations under international human rights treaties for people who may not be covered by the Refugees Convention but cannot return home because they would be killed, tortured or be subjected to inhumane treatment,' said Senator Evans.

<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2009/ce09083.htm>

## Student visa assessment levels

### *Assessment Levels and the Student Visa Program*

A record number of more than 278,000 student visas were granted in the 2007-08 program year. This represents more than 21 per cent growth in the student visa program in one year. Transparency in visa requirements and consistent decisions are a pivotal part of the student visa program.

There are five Assessment Levels in the student visa program. They serve to align student visa requirements to the immigration risk posed by applicants from a particular country studying in a particular education sector. Assessment Level 1 represents the lowest immigration risk and Assessment Level 5 the highest. The higher the Assessment Level, the greater the evidence an applicant is required to demonstrate to support their claims for the grant of a student visa.

### *How are Assessment Levels determined?*

Each country, across each education sector, is assigned an Assessment Level which is based on the calculated immigration risk posed by students from that country studying in that education sector.

To determine the Assessment Level of a particular country and education sector, the department examines that group's compliance with their visa conditions and other indicators of their immigration risk in the previous year.

Where these statistical indicators show that a group has a higher level of immigration risk over a sustained period, the department responds to this trend by raising the Assessment Level of that group. Where a group's indicators demonstrate that they tend to abide by their visa conditions, these lower Immigration risk groups have their Assessment Level lowered. This streamlines the visa process by reducing the level of evidence that these applicants need to submit to support their claims for a student visa.

### *What Assessment Level am I?*

The passport you hold and the education sector of your principal course will determine the Assessment Level of your visa application. To identify the Assessment Level for your visa application, match your passport type with the visa subclass for the education sector of your principal course.

Form 1219i contains a list of the current Assessment Levels for all passports and education sectors. Your Assessment Level is the one in effect for your passport and visa subclass on the date that you lodged a valid application with the department.

See: Information form 1219i Overseas Student Program - Assessment Levels (58KB PDF file)

*What Assessment Level are my family members?*

Your family members may be eligible to apply for a visa to accompany you to Australia. Family members are subject to the same Assessment Level as the student, regardless of the type of passport the family member holds.

See: Bringing Family

*Assessment Level changes – 1 September 2008*

The department last published a review of the student visa Assessment Levels (ALs) with effect 1 September 2008. This review resulted in changes to the Assessment Levels for 52 countries in one or more education sectors.

It has not been announced when the next assessment will come into effect.

<http://www.immi.gov.au/students/student-visa-assessment-levels.htm>

### **Student visa checks strengthened**

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship is strengthening checks on student visa applications to stamp out fraud and ensure students have the financial capacity to live and study in Australia.

Coupled with the increase in the IELTS language threshold to 6 in each band to GSM applicants who nominate trades, it is highly likely there will be a significant decline in the numbers of overseas students coming to study vocational courses, especially from South Asia.

The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans said that applications for student visas grew by 20 per cent to 362 193 in 2008-09, with almost 28 000 student visas refused, an increase of 68 per cent on the number of refusals in 2007-08. 'While overall student visa compliance rates remain high, there are elements of concern within this large caseload,' the minister said.

The targeted measures will address the potential for document fraud and other issues around financial capacity, identification and bona fides in some parts of the student caseload. The measures implemented with immediate effect include:

- upgrading the interview program to build a strong evidence base around fraud;
- removing or restricting eVisa access for some agents where there is evidence of fraud or inactivity, and
- restricting access to eVisa for some segments of the caseload if analysis demonstrates restricted access would allow for better control of fraud.

'These measures are consistent with those used by other countries that receive large numbers of student visa applications, such as the United States,' Senator Evans said.

'Australia's student visa program supports the entry of genuine international students. For those students, the department provides a convenient, efficient service.

<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2009/ce09075.htm>

## Skills Assessment Requirements for Welfare Workers

The Australian Institute of Welfare and Community Workers is responsible for assessment of qualifications and experience in welfare work only in connection with applications for migration to Australia under the skilled migration scheme and for the assessment of overseas qualifications for admission to membership of the AIWCW.

There are two pathways which may be used to assess suitability for welfare work. These are briefly described below:

### PATHWAY A

Graduates of a course which is equivalent to one with AIWCW Basic Approval – such courses will generally:-

1. be at least equivalent to an Australian Qualification Framework 2-year Diploma
2. have a curriculum which includes:
  - A. Studies of society, including:
    - (i) the link between the individual and social and political structure
    - (ii) patterns of family and community life (e.g., including introductory sociology, family studies, politics, economics, human geography)
  - B. Studies of individual human structure and function, including:
    - (i) a range of physical, social and psychological aspects (e.g., including introductory psychology, biology, health studies)
  - C. A range of welfare services, including:
    - (i) the ongoing provision of services, service development, and the rights and interests of clients
    - (ii) studies which relate the practical application of aspects of welfare services (e.g., Aged Care, Alcohol and Other Drugs, Child Protection, Community Work, Community Housing, Mental Health, Youth Work, or Disability, and the like)
  - D. Foundations of welfare work, including:
    - (i) work with individuals (case work)
    - (ii) work with groups
    - (iii) work with communities
    - (iv) ecological, systems and structural approaches, values and ethics, and the development of welfare systems
    - (v) Skills acquisition (including some experiential work separate from field education; such as videoed or role-played counselling, meetings, group leadership experiences, and field study of communities, either during or separate from formal class sessions)
  - E. Research and evaluation
  - F. At least 400 hours of professionally supervised field work, in two separate placements, which is included and assessed as part of the academic qualification
  - G. At least 52 weeks of full-time study over two calendar years OR at least 1000 hours of class contact.

## PATHWAY B

The following may also be used for assessment:-

Graduates with an Other Relevant Qualification who have at least three years of relevant professional experience and who can satisfy the AIWCW Core Competencies Requirements.

1. Other Relevant Qualification – at least equivalent to an Australian Qualification Framework 2-year Diploma which has a curriculum relevant to a closely related occupation, e.g. work with disabled, youth, aged, nursing, physiotherapy, and the like, OR which is equivalent to at least a bachelor degree with a major in Psychology or Sociology. Other Bachelor degrees need not be vocationally or occupationally oriented, but must be in the Social Sciences or a similar discipline – e.g., a degree with a Politics or Economics major, plus at least one year of either Psychology or Sociology; or a degree in English Literature or History with a year of Social Science; or a degree in Theology; may be acceptable, but would depend upon the subjects and the content of the subjects included in the degree (e.g. substantial content of Pathway A assessment requirement)
2. Relevant Professional Experience – Can be paid or voluntary but must average at least 30 hours per week for a total of three years during the past 10 years. Voluntary work must be supervised by a professional person. Relevant occupations may include psychologist, nurse, community worker, social policy analyst/planner, residential care worker, teacher, pastor, social researcher, and the like.
3. Core Competencies – 35 questions which must be satisfactorily answered (and supported with appropriate evidence) using your background knowledge and experience.

If you think that you can satisfy the requirements for a positive assessment using either Pathway A or Pathway B, then you should obtain the appropriate application form and more detailed information from our website ([www.aiwcw.org.au](http://www.aiwcw.org.au)) or request that the information be emailed or posted to you. You should also obtain information about the General Skilled Migration scheme from your nearest Australian Embassy.

<http://www.aiwcw.org.au/downloads/oseabrief.htm>

## English language requirements for Welfare Workers

The AIWCW has amended the implementation date of the English Language Requirements for recognition as a welfare worker under provision of the General Skilled Migration program to now take effect from 1 February 2010 (the previous implementation date was 30 September 2009). The AIWCW amended the implementation date to minimise the impact on students completing their two years of study during 2009. The first four recommendations below will apply to applications received from 1 February 2010 for recognition as a welfare worker under the General Skilled Migration program.

1. An overall score of 7.0 on the IELTS is required, with no component having a score less than 7.0.
2. The score of 7.0 for each language component (Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking) may be obtained at any test session over a period of 12 months. This may apply even if scores in some components at a particular test are lower than 7.0. As soon as a score of 7.0 is obtained for all four components these satisfactory scores are valid for a period of two years thereafter.
3. Either the general or the academic form of the IELTS test be recognised until 1st February 2012 by which time currently enrolled students will have graduated. Thereafter, only results from the academic IELTS test will be recognised. Provision 2. will still apply.
4. Exemptions will apply to those who were fully educated (for at least 10 years in formal schooling) in a country with English as the main or official language, as already allowed by other

relevant professions. Included among these countries are: Australia, United Kingdom, Ireland, USA, Canada, New Zealand.

5. AIWCW will review these language requirements by 30th June 2011.
6. As part of that review, an empirical study of welfare worker communication skills be considered to include both international and domestic graduates and students, and including representation from across urban, provincial and rural centres in Australia. Also included should be equity issues raised by this study.
7. Within that review, consideration be given to exemptions applying to those who are continuously employed for at least 30 hours per week during the three years prior to application, in a community welfare work position in Australia that is recognised by the AIWCW.

See: <http://www.aiwcw.org.au/downloads/ENGLISH-FINAL2.htm> and <http://www.aiwcw.org.au/downloads/ENGLISH-FINAL3.htm>

### Big drop in temporary overseas workers

There has been a significant drop in the numbers of temporary skilled overseas workers coming to Australia on Subclass 457 visas as a result of the global economic slowdown and changes implemented by the Rudd Government to ensure that the wages and working conditions of Australians are not undermined.

The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, released the State/Territory Summary Report for the Subclass 457 Business (Long Stay) Visa for the financial year to June 2009.

The report shows that:

- Primary applications lodged in 2008-09 were 11 per cent below 2007-08 and primary applications granted were 13 per cent below last year
- Primary visa applications in June 2009 were 45 per cent lower than June 2008 and 40 per cent lower than in September 2008, before the global economic crisis hit
- Of the top 15 occupations for primary applications granted, only registered nurses increased, up 18 per cent
- Among the top 15 source countries for primary applications granted, only Ireland showed any growth with an increase of 8 per cent. All other top 15 countries declined by up to 32 per cent
- There were 77 330 primary visa holders in Australia at 30 June 2009, compared to a peak of 83 130 at the end of February 2009
- The average nominated base salary for Subclass 457 visa holders has increased by 6 per cent from last financial year to \$77 500 while average total remuneration increased to \$91 400.

'The Subclass 457 visa program is a demand driven scheme that has responded to the slowing economy and reduced demand in the Australian labour market,' Senator Evans said.

'The Rudd Government's priority is to provide training and job opportunities for Australians but there will continue to be demand for skills in some sectors, such as healthcare, so there will still be a need for employers to access skilled overseas workers to fill gaps on a temporary basis.'

These measures include the implementation of formal skills assessments and an increase in the English language requirement for trade occupations from 1 July 2009; the introduction of a market-based minimum salary for temporary overseas workers from next month; and a requirement that employers of overseas workers have demonstrated commitment to employing local labour.

The report is available online.

See: [www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/statistical-info/temp-entrants/subclass-457.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/statistical-info/temp-entrants/subclass-457.htm)

For further information see:

<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2009/ce09071.htm>

### **Victorian compliance sweeps net 51 in three weeks**

A series of compliance operations in regional Victoria has seen Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) officers locate 51 people who were either in Australia unlawfully or working in breach of visa conditions. A DIAC field team located three Chinese nationals, a couple and a second man working illegally in two restaurants in breach of their visa conditions. DIAC also located 18 illegal farm workers in the Shepparton area, who had also either been working unlawfully or had overstayed their visas.

[http://www.newsroom.immi.gov.au/media\\_releases/744](http://www.newsroom.immi.gov.au/media_releases/744)

### **Australia delivers on refugee commitments**

Refugees from Iraq and Burma comprised about 40 per cent of the 13 507 refugees and other people in greatest humanitarian need who were granted visas to start a new life in Australia in 2008-09, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, said today.

'This is directly in line with commitments made by the Australian Government in June 2008 to resettle 13 500 people who had fled their homes in search of safety, an increase of 500 places on the 2007-08 program,' Senator Evans said. More than 12 per cent of refugee visas were granted within the 'woman at risk' category, exceeding the 10.5 per cent target.

During this period a number of Nepalese refugees from Bhutan also arrived in Australia in a new programme coordinated with UNHCR.

<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2009/ce09079.htm>

### **Work and holiday visa (Subclass 462) – Indonesia**

Certain Indonesian citizens will now be eligible to apply for the Work and Holiday (Subclass 462) visa, which is for young people aged 18 to 30 who want to travel and work for up to 12 months in Australia. This visa allows the visa holder to supplement the cost of their holiday through periods of temporary or casual employment. The visa holder can work temporarily up to six months with one employer; and can study for four months. It is an alternative to the Subclass 417 visa which is available to nationals of other countries. See:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/visitors/working-holiday/462/indonesia/>

## **Human Rights**

### **AHRC welcomes changes re bridging visas and immigration detention debt**

The President of the Australian Human Rights Commission and Human Rights Commissioner, Catherine Branson, today welcomed two key changes in the federal government's treatment of asylum seekers and immigration detainees: the removal of the so-called 45-day rule which restricted access to work rights for bridging visa holders and the abolition of detention debt for most immigration detainees. Changes to the Migration Regulations (introduced from 1 July) remove the 45-day rule and provide certain people on bridging visas with the opportunity for work rights.

[http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media\\_releases/2009/84\\_09.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media_releases/2009/84_09.html)

## Virgin Blue becomes more accessible

Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Graeme Innes, has congratulated Virgin Blue Airlines on the increased accessibility of their airline for Australians with disabilities. 'Travel is something that we are all doing more and more of, and it is important that people with disability can participate equally in this activity,' Commissioner Innes said.

[http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media\\_releases/2009/86\\_09.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media_releases/2009/86_09.html)

## Prisons Conference Report

At the important conference: Our Prisons – Human Rights, Mental Health and Privatisation organised by the Community Justice Coalition and The International Commission of Jurists Australia at the State Library on Saturday 5 September 2009, one hundred people attended.

Speakers raised issues including:

- The need to consider alternatives to prison and ways of reducing the prison population through legislative reform including reform of the Bail Act.
- The need to have a principled approach to dealing with prisons that
  - (1) respects human rights,
  - (2) and especially for mental health patients has better options,
  - (3) gives protection to the community, and
  - (4) reduces recidivism by emphasis on rehabilitation.

These four principles should apply to police, the courts, the prison system and community-based services.

- The need to explore and understand the moral and legal responsibilities of government in the current debate about privatisation of prisons.

The papers of the presenters are now published on the CJC and ICJA websites. See:

<http://www.icj-aust.org.au/>

## Terrorist Organisations specified in Criminal Code Amendment Regulations 2009 – No. 15 (SLI No. 214 of 2009) and No. 16 (SLI No. 215 of 2009)

These Regulations made under the Criminal Code Regulations 2002 specify amongst others Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and Kurdistan Workers Party as terrorist organisations for the purpose of paragraph (b) of the definition of a terrorist organisation in sub-section 102.1(1) of the Criminal Code Act 1995.

[http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/num\\_reg/ccar200915n214o2009414/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/num_reg/ccar200915n214o2009414/) and  
[http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/num\\_reg/ccar200916n215o2009414/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/num_reg/ccar200916n215o2009414/)

## Education

### **Good Practice Guide to assist international colleges**

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, said that details of the best performing international college providers will be made available so that all colleges can learn from best practice.

The Good Practice Guide which helps colleges to make international students welcome in Australia can be found on the Australian Education International website:

<http://aei.gov.au/Aei/Default.aspx>

## United Nations

The United Nations General Assembly meeting is now in session. Visit the UN website for detailed news on this important annual meeting.

[www.un.org/ga/](http://www.un.org/ga/)

## Multicultural Affairs

### **Multiculturalism report: Policy for a successful future**

Following the release of a new report on multiculturalism in Victoria, Race Discrimination Commissioner Graeme Innes recently stressed the importance of multiculturalism in Australia. 'As a policy that has a particular focus on access, equity, justice, respect and cross-cultural understanding, multiculturalism is a policy that is vital for present and future community harmony in Australia,' said Commissioner Innes. 'It is also a policy that is important for Australia's international reputation, economic development and security.' Commissioner Innes said the Australian Human Rights Commission was pleased that these policies were in development and looked forward to a renewal of bi-partisan support and a whole-of-parliament recognition of the importance of multiculturalism.

[http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media\\_releases/2009/85\\_09.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media_releases/2009/85_09.html)

## Foreign Affairs

### **Displaced persons in Sri Lanka**

Australia will contribute \$5 million to support the resettlement of internally displaced people in northern Sri Lanka. Australia remains concerned, however, that over 250,000 people displaced by the conflict remain in temporary camps, and supporting their resettlement will be a major focus for Australia's assistance in coming months. There is serious international concern about the welfare of these people and the real unstated policy objectives of the Sri Lankan government.

<http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2009/fa-s090914b.html>

## Grassroots Landcare Approach

A new book detailing the rich experiences of landcare facilitators and farmers involved in the ten-year Philippines-Australia Landcare Project has been officially launched in Australia as part of National Landcare Week. The Australian project leader who worked on the Philippines-Australia Landcare Project for its ten years, said farmers and their communities were encouraged to take control of their own problems and to implement appropriate solutions.

[http://www.ausaid.gov.au/media/release.cfm?BC=Latest&ID=684\\_4940\\_8788\\_5191\\_2960](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/media/release.cfm?BC=Latest&ID=684_4940_8788_5191_2960)

## **Grameen Bank founder receives US highest civilian honour**

Professor Muhammad Yunus from Bangladesh, founder and chief of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, has been awarded the USA's highest civilian honour, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Dr Yunus received this award from President Barack Obama at a special White House ceremony on 12 August 2009.

Professor Yunus was honoured for his work on behalf of poor people worldwide. His humble leadership and pathbreaking ideas changed lives and motivated people at all levels of society to envision and work towards a poverty-free Bangladesh.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is the USA's highest civilian honour and recognises those who have made significant contributions to the United States, the world, peace and culture. On receiving his award, Dr Yunus joins a distinguished group of individuals that includes Nelson Mandela, Mother Theresa and Martin Luther King, Jr.

## **Special Reports**

During his recent visit to Australia Prof. James Anaya, United Nations Special Rapporteur, issued a Statement on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people. He spoke at the National Library of Australia on 28 August 2009. For more details see:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/rapporteur/>

## **David Bitel in Madrid**

Our senior partner David Bitel will be attending the International Bar Association (IBA) Annual Conference in Madrid, Spain from 4-9 October 2009. The IBA is the world's leading organisation of international legal practitioners, bar associations and law societies. It influences the development of international law reform and shapes the future of the legal profession throughout the world.

## **A.P.B. Education Specialist IELTS Test Training and Coaching**

Passing an IELTS test is now an essential requirement for all applicants for General Skills Migration, student visas, and for many employer sponsored applicants. Adrian Bitel provides individual lessons to assist applicants achieve proficiency to the required levels in:

- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking
- Listening

He gives comprehensive ONE to ONE Personalised Coaching in any or all of the above areas.

Contact: Adrian Bitel on (02) 9286 8700 or Mobile: 0412 656 026

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