

January 1st 2010 will see the introduction of many far-reaching changes to Australia's immigration system. This newsletter covers changes to VETASSESS, trades and other related skills. It also details tighter English language requirements and visa changes also coming into effect on January 1st 2010.

Changes to VETASSESS Assessment Process from 1 January 2010

From 1 January 2010, in order to receive a positive Skills Assessment, applicants will need:

- to hold a qualification which is assessed at the required educational level in a highly relevant field of study to the nominated occupation; and
- at least one year of relevant employment for all occupations. For some occupations, either one or two additional years of employment is required if the qualification/s has a shortfall in content relevance. Employment must have been completed in the last five years.

VETASSESS is the Gazetted Assessing Authority for pre-migration Skills Assessments for over 200 occupations on the Skilled Occupation List. In consultation with DIAC, VETASSESS has been revising its assessment procedures for its "general occupations", i.e. occupations in ASCO Managerial, Administrative, Professional and Associate Professional categories. These changes will be implemented on 1 January 2010 and are intended to ensure that migrants have the relevant skills and qualifications for employment in Australia in their nominated occupations.

Special arrangements for Skills Assessment for the purpose of a Skilled – Graduate (Temporary) visa (subclass 485)

VETASSESS will offer a Stage 1 Skills Assessment (educational assessment only) for on-shore international students who need a Skills Assessment for the purpose of a Skilled Graduate – Graduate Temporary (subclass 485) visa. The educational assessment will require a qualification at Australian Bachelor degree level in a field of study of high relevance to the nominated occupation. The nominated VETASSESS occupation needs to be in the ASCO Managerial, Administrative or Professional categories, i.e. in ASCO Major Groups 1 or 2. DIAC will require a full Skills Assessment (qualifications and employment) to support an application for permanent migration. Those applicants who have a positive Stage 1 educational assessment for the purpose of a 485 visa will have to reapply to VETASSESS for the full assessment (Stage 1 and 2) once they have evidence of the required employment experience for their nominated occupation.

This special arrangement for 485 visa applicants is intended to provide on-shore international students who lack relevant employment in their nominated occupation with the opportunity to gain that experience.

Overview of the revised assessment process

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All VETASSESS general occupations have been grouped into four groups - A, B, C and D. Although all of these groups have assessment criteria which require relevant employment/on-the-job training at an appropriate level, they are differentiated by their educational requirements. Group A occupations require an Australian Bachelor degree or comparable level qualification in a highly relevant field for entry to the occupation. Group B occupations also require a qualification at this level but not necessarily in a highly relevant field of study. Group C occupations require an Australian Associate Degree/AQF Diploma/Advanced Diploma or comparable qualification. Group D occupations require an AQF Certificate IV or comparable qualification.

Expiry date for Skills Assessments

All Skills Assessments issued under the new arrangements will have a validity period of two years. The expiry date will be twenty four months from the date of issue of the original Skills Assessment.

Transition arrangements

All new applications received from January 2010 will be assessed under the new process. VETASSESS recommends that applicants who apply in 2009 should submit all relevant documents and payment by 18 December 2009 to ensure that their application is assessed under the current system. Otherwise, the new criteria may apply. For applications received by VETASSESS in 2009, DIAC has allowed a three-month grace period from January to March 2010 for VETASSESS to finalise its pipeline cases for the general occupations. However, no applications under the old process will be accepted in 2010.

DIAC has advised assessing authorities that they will introduce ANZSCO to the skilled migration program later in 2010. VETASSESS will consult with DIAC about the transition arrangements from ASCO to ANZSCO.

Occupational profiles

VETASSESS has developed lists of relevant fields of study and relevant tasks for its general occupations. It is in the process of contacting relevant industry and professional bodies for feedback on those occupational profiles.

A range of resources were used to develop these occupational profiles including the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Australian Skills Recognition Information (ASRI) website; the Australian Bureau of Statistics websites for ASCO and ASCED (the Australian Standard Classification of Education); the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations website for Job Guide; the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) website sponsored by the US Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration; and education provider websites.

It is hoped that the changes to the assessment process will provide the relevant registration, licensing and professional associations in Australia with a pool of more suitable applicants. VETASSESS notes that many of these authorities have additional requirements for registration, licensing or membership. VETASSESS will continue to advise applicants accordingly. They may provide applicants with further information on the occupation, including links to relevant organisations.

Technical interviews

Under the new arrangements, as part of the assessment process, VETASSESS will telephone some applicants to clarify information in the application, and to discuss the applicant's occupational skills. No additional charge will apply for a

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technical interview.

Fees and application forms

New fees will apply to applications for a skills assessment under the new process. The new fee schedule will be available on the VETASSESS website from 11 November 2009.

For further details see: www.vetassess.com.au and click on "Upcoming changes".

Changes to Trades Skills Assessments for offshore skills assessments

Some trade occupations on the Skilled Occupation List have both Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) and Vocational Education Training and Assessment Services (VETASSESS) listed as the assessing authority. Currently VETASSESS, working in a consortium with a number of Australian registered training organisations, is the assessing authority for certain skilled trade occupations if the applicant is a resident of the United Kingdom, India, Sri Lanka, South Africa or the Philippines.

From 15 May 2009, applicants from other countries who are willing and able to be assessed in one of these five countries can choose to be assessed by the VETASSESS consortium, or can continue to apply to TRA for their skills assessment.

<http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/whats-new.htm>

Introduction of a JobReady Test

The Government is introducing a JobReady Test (JRT) from 1 January 2010 for all GSM applicants nominating trade occupations for migration purposes. This measure complements similar measures previously announced for the subclass 457 visa and is designed to ensure a supply of 'job ready' applicants to supplement Australia's labour market needs. The JobReady Test will also ensure a consistent standard of skills and competencies across trade occupations.

The JRT will ensure that GSM applicants who wish to migrate to Australia are able to successfully compete in the Australian labour market in the area of their nominated occupation.

Particulars of the test have not yet been announced.

<http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/gsm-reforms.htm>

Changes for Occupational Trainee visas - Lodgement and processing arrangements

From 9 November 2009, all Occupational Trainee visa (OTV) processing will be consolidated in the Adelaide Trainee Processing Centre (AOTPC) in Australia. All Occupational Trainee visas, nominations and sponsorships must be lodged directly with the AOTPC, Department of Immigration and Citizenship in Adelaide from this date.

The OTV is for people from outside Australia who want to improve their

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occupational skills through training with an Australian organisation or government agency. This visa may be valid for up to two years to undertake an approved training program.

Within one week of receiving the application, the AOTPC will contact the client (either by mail, phone or email) with the name and contact details of their case officer. If clients are requested to attend an interview, they will be asked to attend their nearest overseas post or departmental office in Australia. They will not need to go to the AOTPC, unless it is the nearest departmental office.

Applications lodged prior to 9 November 2009

Where an application from a client who is not in Australia was lodged and receipted prior to 9 November 2009, the departmental office overseas that originally received it will finalise it.

The new arrangement will consolidate nominations and visa processing to the one site regardless of the location of the applicant and will result in best practice and improved service standards.

For more information about the Occupational Trainee visa see:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/students/sponsored/otv/>

For information on where to apply and how to pay visa application charges in Australia, please visit the departmental website at

www.immi.gov.au/allforms/990i/how-to-pay.htm

Tighter English language requirements for GSM visas from 1 January 2010

As from 1 January 2010, there will be two English language changes. The first relates to people who nominate a trade occupation. The second relates to applicants for a Skilled-Regional Sponsored visa.

The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship announced on 12 May 2009 that the English language requirement for all General Skilled Migration (GSM) visa applicants who nominate a trade occupation will be increased to a minimum of 6.0 (Competent English) in each of the four components of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test in one test. This will replace the previous English language threshold of Vocational English (a minimum of 5.0 on each of the four components of an IELTS test).

For Skilled-Regional Sponsored GSM visa subclasses where concessional competent English is accepted, the threshold English language standard will be raised from an average of 5.5 to an average of 6.0 in one IELTS test. The change was introduced for applicants for the offshore Skilled-Regional Sponsored (Subclass 475) visa from 1 July 2009, and will apply to the onshore Skilled – Regional Sponsored (Subclass 487) visa from 1 January 2010.

Applicants affected

The increased language requirements will apply to all new GSM applications lodged after 1 January 2010. Applicants who applied for a GSM visa before the commencement of these changes will not be affected.

In recognition of the increased language requirements, no Subclass 487 visa applicants will be required to enrol in an English language training course. This is already the case for Skilled-Regional Sponsored (Subclass 475) visa applicants. Further information about all visa requirements is available on the department's website.

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Holiday Schedule**

David Bitel in India

APB Education

Why English language requirement is changing

The aim of the GSM Program is to select migrants who, because of the skills they possess, are more likely to find skilled employment shortly after they arrive in Australia. A high level of English language ability is recognised as being essential for achieving this objective. In recognition of the importance of English language skills, since 1 September 2007, the GSM Points Test has been adjusted to award more points to applicants with very strong English language skills. Those applicants who demonstrate Proficient English (a minimum of 7.0 in all four components of an IELTS test) are awarded 25 points, while applicants who meet the English language threshold are awarded 15 points. The allocation of these extra points means that most applicants who achieve the higher English language standard will be eligible for a permanent GSM visa.

There will be no more transitional arrangements for overseas students enrolled in trade courses. Overseas students currently enrolled in a trade course have already been given seven months since the Minister's announcement to either lodge a visa application or to increase their English language skills prior to making a GSM visa application.

Applicants who apply for a student visa to study a Certificate III trade course (from category 4 countries) are expected to have an English language level of an IELTS 5.0 if they enrol in a preliminary 20 week ELICOS course, or 5.5 with no preliminary ELICOS course.

Given that overseas students must have studied for a total of two years in Australia before being eligible to apply for GSM, the Government considers it to be reasonable to expect students to have improved their English to IELTS 6.0 in each band over this period.

The Government is committed to ensuring that skilled migration continues to meet the needs of the economy, particularly in the wake of the global economic crisis. Combined with the Government's Nation Building and Jobs Plan, a responsive skilled migration program will help Australia emerge sooner from the global economic downturn.

Reforms have been introduced to GSM to ensure that the skill stream of the Migration Program is driven by the needs of industry and targets skills in critical need across a number of sectors, particularly those skills in shortage and which contribute to the health of the economy. The Government will continue to monitor the skilled migration intake and has set the 2009-10 Migration Program, including priority processing arrangements and the Critical Skills List, to reflect the economic climate.

<http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/pdf/faq-english-requirements.pdf>

Changes to student visa legislation

In the context of the recent closure of some colleges three changes have been introduced to Student Visa legislation.

1. *VAC refund provisions* - From 9 November 2009, a Visa Application Charge (VAC) refund has been introduced for Student visa holders who have been affected by the closure of their education provider in 2009 and who need to apply for a further student visa to continue their studies in Australia as a result of the closure.
2. *Nil VAC provisions* - Regulation changes are being proposed to assist students affected by provider closures through the introduction of nil VAC for students who need to apply for a further Student visa to continue their studies as a result of the closure of their education provider. Subject to approval by Parliament and the Governor-General, these changes will come into effect from 1 January 2010.
3. *Financial requirements* - Regulation changes will increase the living cost requirement from \$12,000 per year to \$18,000 per year for student visa applications to more accurately reflect the cost of living in Australia. Subject to approval by Parliament and the Governor-General, these changes will come into effect from 1 January 2010.

DIAC will make an assessment of whether the funds demonstrated by students will be available to them while they are in Australia. DIAC factsheets on the proposed financial requirements and on the new VAC exemptions are available at http://www.immi.gov.au/students/whats_new.htm#

The Minister's media release is available at:

<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2009/ce09101.htm>

Temporary residence visa reforms

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship has announced some proposed changes to sponsorship and employee protection arrangements for users of a number of temporary residence visas with work rights. These changes are proposed for the following temporary residence visas:

- Exchange (subclass 411) visa;
- Foreign Government Agency (subclass 415) visa;
- Special Program (subclass 416) visa (excluding the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme);
- Visiting Academic (subclass 419) visa;
- Entertainment (subclass 420) visa;
- Sport (subclass 421) visa;
- Media and Film Staff (subclass 423) visa;
- Domestic Worker (subclass 427) visa;
- Religious Worker (subclass 428) visa;
- Occupational Trainee (subclass 442) visa;
- Professional Development (subclass 470) visa; and
- Superyacht (subclass 488) visa.

Minister for Immigration Senator Chris Evans released a discussion paper on the reform of the Business (Long Stay) (subclass 457) visa and other temporary residence visas on 30 June 2008. This paper is available at www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2008/ce08058.htm

The Migration Legislation Amendment, *Worker Protection Act (WPA) 2008* commenced in mid September 2009.

The amendments to the Migration Act made by the WPA enhance the framework for the sponsorship of non-citizens seeking entry to Australia. The new sponsorship framework aims to strengthen the integrity of temporary residence visas. It will enable employment and training opportunities for local labour and safeguard the rights of overseas workers through heightened enforcement measures.

The objective of this reform is to ensure that Australia's temporary residence visas:

- are simple for visa holders and their sponsors to understand;
- have streamlined sponsorship and nomination arrangements with reduced red tape;
- do not permit exploitation of workers from overseas;
- include equitable remuneration arrangements; and
- ensure that Australian workers are not disadvantaged.

Broadly, changes to the temporary residence visas are intended to include the following:

- a requirement for all visa applicants to be sponsored irrespective of their intended period of stay. The only exemption would be for those people entering Australia under the terms of a work agreement between Australia and another country;
- an enhanced set of sponsorship obligations similar to those proposed for the subclass 457 visa program but recognising that not all persons who use these visas are in paid employment;
- a formal monitoring regime; and
- an enhanced sanctions regime for non-compliance with sponsorship obligations.

www.immi.gov.au/skilled/pdf/temp-residence-visa-reforms.pdf

ENS and RSMS Processing Times

The NSW Permanent Skilled Entry Section (PSE) of DIAC is now providing migration agents with regular updates for ENS (Employer Nomination Scheme) and RSMS (Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme) processing times.

As of 24 November 2009 NSW PSE was receipting applications received on 16 November 2009 and was allocating to case officers visa applications which were receipted on 1 October 2009 and nomination applications which were receipted on 29 October 2009.

A case officer will be in contact with the agent within two working days of the case being allocated, with either an outcome for decision-ready cases or a request for additional information or documents. Until a case has been allocated to a case officer, NSW PSE is unable to provide processing updates. Agents are requested to advise clients that the published service standards for ENS/RSMS cases is 5 months (ETA or Electronic Travel Authority countries) and 7 months (non-ETA countries). Timeframes for processing application vary from one case to another, depending on the individual circumstances of each applicant. The NSW PSE team are committed to providing a decision on all applications within the published service standards.

Joint Ministerial Statement on people smuggling

Australia and Sri Lanka issued a Joint Ministerial Statement on people smuggling on 9 November 2009. The following are extracts from the joint statement:

We, the Foreign Ministers of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Commonwealth of Australia, reaffirm our continuing commitment to work together to combat people smuggling, the financing of terrorism and related organised criminal activities.

People smuggling remains a high priority transnational issue for source, transit and destination countries in our region. It presents a threat to the integrity of border security processes and procedures and undermines the ability of States to manage migration in a regular and orderly manner including in situations of humanitarian need.

Sri Lanka and Australia commit jointly to:

- enhance cooperation against the criminal organisers of the people smuggling trade, including through increased operational assistance, information sharing and identifying measures to prosecute people smuggling organisers successfully
- take a leading role to promote cooperation among regional countries to act against transnational people smuggling networks, including under the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crimes, recognising that this is a shared problem for all Governments in the region
- undertake a public information campaign to alert Sri Lankan citizens to the dangers of maritime people smuggling.

Hon Stephen Smith MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Australia

Hon Rohitha Bogollagama MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Sri Lanka

http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2009/fa-s091109_js.html

Blitz on working holiday visa scam

A specialist integrity unit has been formed inside the Department of Immigration to deal with widespread fraud in the working holiday visa program, on which industries such as fruit growing depend.

More than 200 internet advertisements have been found offering to buy or sell documents allowing backpackers to claim they had worked in rural jobs without them leaving Sydney, and thus extend their working holiday visas. The standard fee is \$400.

So far, 64 visas have been cancelled over the fraud and at least 19 more are being reviewed. One man, an Irish national, has been convicted of fraud. "There's been more than 100 fraudulent claims identified this financial year," a spokeswoman for the department said.

The working holiday visa (subclass 417) allows people to extend their stay in Australia by a year if they can prove they have worked in a rural area for three months. Applications are lodged online but have been abused by people selling Australian business numbers linked to farms so backpackers can falsely claim they worked on farms.

"Second year visas for sale," one ad read. "Will email completed 1263 form and add your details to my books so you can gain second year visa with ease."

This fraud is used mainly by European visitors.

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/blitz-on-working-holiday-visa-scam-20091127-jwwk.html>

Overseas students as good as gold

Education helped to prop up the NSW economy by generating \$6.4 billion for the state. The sector generated a record \$16.6 billion for Australia in the past financial year.

Education grew by 22.6 per cent according to figures for international trade from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Higher education earnings from international students increased by \$1.3 billion to \$9.5 billion for the year. Vocational training earned \$4.3 billion.

It is predicted that Federal Government targeting of shonky vocational education operators and further tightening of student visa practices will affect the number of students from the Indian subcontinent, but demand from other countries will remain high.

"For families in many countries, overseas study is a long-term investment. For these families, funding their children's education is not a discretionary item to be cut at a time of economic uncertainty," said Stephen Connolly, president of the International Education Association of Australia.

The Federal Government has tried to limit damage to the sector by focusing on private colleges that provided dubious diplomas and visa abuses in the sector.

The chief executive of Universities Australia, Glenn Withers, said international students needed accurate information, orientation, English-language enhancement, integration into campuses and regions and support to find accommodation, employment and live in safety.

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/overseas-students-are-as-good-as-gold-20091129-jyve.html>

Visa cancellation appealed

The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, last month directed his department to appeal a decision by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) to overturn the visa cancellation of a New Zealand national. A person who has had their visa cancelled by the Department under section 501 is entitled to make an application for review by the AAT.

<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2009/ce09103.htm>

Minimum salary increase for skilled workers

The minimum salary level (MSL) for occupations that are eligible for the Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS) will increase by 3.8 per cent from August 1. The MSL increase for the ENS follows the recent announcement by the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, of a similar increase to the MSL for the subclass 457 visa program. The standard MSL will increase to \$43 440, while the MSL for ICT professionals will increase to \$59 477.

http://www.newsroom.immi.gov.au/media_releases/107?page=12&

Arrest for people smuggling

A third Indonesian man has been charged with people smuggling offences after the alleged attempt to facilitate the arrival of 52 people to Australia. The charging of this Indonesian man brings the total number of people charged by the AFP with people smuggling offences since September 2008 to 65.

http://www.afp.gov.au/media_releases/national/2009/third_man_charged_with_people_smuggling.html

Legislative Changes

Access to Justice passes Senate

Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, welcomed the passage through the Senate of the *Access to Justice (Civil Litigation Reforms) Amendment Bill 2009*.

The Bill introduces reforms to the Federal Court of Australia Act 1976, the Family Law Act 1975, and the Federal Magistrates Act 1999 to ensure effective operation of the federal courts.

"The Bill introduces important reforms to the case management powers of the Federal Court aimed at reducing unnecessary delay and time spent in court," Mr McClelland said.

The Bill also provides for:

- more streamlined appeals pathways to reduce confusion for litigants and assist the Federal Court in the best management of its resources, and
- greater clarity of the powers and responsibilities of the heads of the federal courts to enhance public confidence in the administration of justice in Australia.

"The Government is committed to achieving an effective and affordable civil justice system which will improve access to justice for all Australians," Mr McClelland said. More than ever before, it is imperative we have a well-functioning justice system better equipped to assist people when they most need assistance, advice and guidance. Australia cannot afford a legal system where the cure of litigation is worse than the affliction of the dispute."

www.alp.org.au/media/1109/msag192.php

Human Rights

Sydney Peace Prize awarded to John Pilger

Award winning journalist and documentary film maker John Pilger is the 2009 Sydney Peace Prize winner. He was selected for his "courage as a war correspondent" and his films documenting human rights abuses around the world.

Sydney Peace Foundation Director Professor Stuart Rees commented: "His work inspires all those who value peace with justice."

<http://www.usyd.edu.au/news/84.html?newsstoryid=3685>

Internally displaced people need more help

More action is needed to assist and protect people displaced within their own countries by armed conflict, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported. In a special report on internally displaced people (IDPs), the ICRC drew attention to the fact that most displaced people do not end up in camps but are taken in by host communities and families.

Internal displacement is one of the most serious humanitarian consequences of armed conflict and other violence worldwide. Many of the estimated 26 million internally displaced people endured extreme hardship including ill-treatment and the loss of their property or livelihood.

"When people think of internally displaced people they automatically think of tents and camps," said ICRC President Jakob Kellenberger. "The focus on camps means that what happens to the majority of displaced people – those who seek refuge with host communities – is often ignored." The report argues that these people are often the most vulnerable as they rely on the support of host communities that may already be extremely poor. The challenge, therefore, is to help not only the displaced but also the people who take them in.

The report "Internal Displacement in Armed Conflict" can be found at:

<http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/p1014>

Australian Human Rights Commission 2008-09 Annual Report tabled

The Australian Human Rights Commission's 2008-09 Annual Report has been tabled in federal Parliament. The report outlines the diverse range of activities undertaken by the Commission in pursuit of its statutory responsibilities and its vision of an Australian society where human rights are enjoyed by everyone, everywhere, everyday.

One of the Commission's roles is the investigation and conciliation of complaints of alleged discrimination in the areas of sex, race, age and disability, as well as breaches of human rights. In summary, during 2008-09 the Commission received:

- 20 188 enquiries, an 8 per cent increase in comparison with the number of enquiries received in the last reporting period. There has been a 103 per cent increase in number of enquiries received over the past five years.
- 2 253 complaints – an 8 per cent increase in complaints received in 2007-08. There has been an 81 per cent increase in complaints received over the past five years.
- 48 per cent of finalised complaints were resolved through conciliation. Case studies that illustrate the types of matters resolved through conciliation are detailed in the Annual Report and cover issues that are often raised in complaints, such as alleged pregnancy discrimination, discrimination against students with disabilities, race discrimination in accommodation, racial hatred in the workplace and discrimination against older workers.

The annual report also details:

- a range of major projects, reports and inquiries
- the Commission's contribution to policy development and legislative review
- human rights promotional and education activities
- regional and international activities.

http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media_releases/2009/104_09.html

United Nations

UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen

The United Nations Climate Change Conference took place in Copenhagen, Denmark, between December 7 and December 18, 2009. Negotiators, ministers and world leaders assembled in the Danish capital to address the common, global threat of climate change.

Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) said an agreement (the Copenhagen Accord) has been reached that has significant elements, but that is not legally binding. The key points of the accord include the objective to keep the maximum temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius; the commitment to list developed country emission reduction targets and mitigation action by developing countries for 2020; USD 30 billion short-term funding for immediate action till 2012 and USD 100 billion annually by 2020 in long-term financing, as well as mechanisms to support technology transfer and forestry.

The challenge now is to turn what is agreed into something that is legally binding in Mexico, where the next annual UN Climate Change Conference will take place towards the end of 2010.

<http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

Cultural diversity essential for Australia's future

Race Discrimination Commissioner, Graeme Innes, urged the Australian Government to note the recommendations about cultural diversity contained in UNESCO's World Report entitled Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue, recently launched in Paris.

"Because Australia is increasingly culturally diverse and we are increasingly technologically, economically and culturally integrated with the rest of the world, we need policies that seek to preserve and promote cultural diversity – because, as this report says, such policies contribute to social cohesion and guarantee of human rights to us all," Commissioner Innes said.

UNESCO's latest World Report is a comprehensive analysis of challenges that all nations face in managing cultural diversity and reflects the most up to date understanding of the connections between culture, sustainability and human rights.

http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media_releases/2009/99_09.html

Speeches

"Breaking the Australian Silence"

2009 Sydney Peace Prize Acceptance speech delivered by John Pilger on 5 November 2009

<http://australiansforpalestine.com/pilger-2009-sydney-peace-prize-acceptance-speech>

Message on the International Day for Tolerance

Message from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the International Day for Tolerance, 16 November 2009

http://www.unityunaa.info/united_nations_26_agencies.html

Parish Patience Holiday Schedule

Our offices will be open for business everyday during the holiday season except for the following days:

Friday, 25 December – Christmas Day
 Monday, 28 December – Boxing Day Holiday
 Friday, 1 January – New Year's Day

The Partners and staff wish you a safe and happy holiday season.

David Bitel in India in February

David Bitel, Managing Partner, will give a paper at an IBA conference in New Delhi, India on 18 February 2010, and will then travel for a week to Gujarat to give a seminar on Australian immigration law and will give personalised client interviews there. For more information, contact David Bitel.

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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