

# Unskilled students sent packing

The Rudd Government's much publicised crackdown on skilled migration comes into effect on July 1 with the number of eligible occupations slashed from more than 400 to 181.

FEDERAL Immigration Minister Chris Evans predicts 20,000 overseas skilled migration applications will be cancelled and refunded at a cost of \$14 million to taxpayers, but the tough new immigration laws will especially be felt by Australia's large number of international students.

Those studying engineering, medical, education and professional occupations such as accounting and business management will benefit from the new Skilled Occupations List (SOL), while arts students including marketing, public relations and communications majors will be left in limbo.

Those students can apply for a temporary graduate visa that will keep them in the country for at least 18 months, but without a new career or a sponsor employee, the extra timeframe will offer little in achieving permanent residency.

Australian Migration Lawyers' Peter Lee,

says Australia's workforce may benefit from the 'sharper' skills intake, but many students 'were sold' on studying an eligible degree in Australia and applying for skilled migration upon completion.

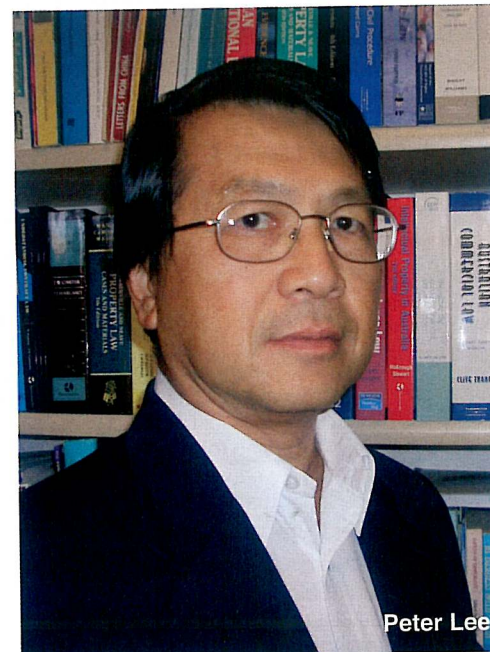
"The real selling point for Australia was our education system, and we've brought all these people across only for them now to be locked out of the system," says Lee.

"Many people have travelled specifically to Australia to complete qualifications that will soon become no longer eligible as skilled migration. The problem is after the 18 months they would have needed to obtain a different qualification or get an employer or the state government to sponsor them to avoid deportation."

Lee, who spent 25 years as an immigration officer in the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, says whether the new laws are positive for Australia 'depends on who you talk to'.

"The migration industry is concerned that the number of skilled immigrants will significantly drop," he says

"(But) the government argues that there are a lot of people coming to Australia to study hairdressing or cookery with the intent to permanently migrate once completed.



Peter Lee

"What they are trying to do is really sharpen the skills coming into the country and keep them very relevant for where the economy is at the moment. Those in the government feel that this is the right move for Australia."

## New court supports 5000 jobs

THE \$600 million new Supreme and District Courts are now around 18 months away from completion, with a second crane working on the site of one of Australia's largest ever capital works projects.

Queensland Attorney-General Cameron Dick says the project is supporting around 5000 jobs and will accommodate 39 courts once it opens in late-2011.

"The new building will deliver a new era of justice in Queensland, with greatly enhanced facilities for victims of crime, witnesses, jurors and members of the public, at the state's flagship courts precinct," he says.

"It will incorporate the latest justice technology, including a state-of-the-art recording suite to take evidence from children and other vulnerable witnesses, digital audio for transcription services and free wireless broadband access for lawyers and other court users.

"There is also structural capacity for future technical innovation to keep pace with new forms of evidence and legal procedure over the life of the building."

At full capacity the buildings, developed by Bovis Lend Lease, will house 45 courts – 13 more than the current facility.

"The existing Supreme and District Court buildings in Brisbane were built in the 1970s and 80s – while they have served Queensland well, it is essential we now provide new, modern



Cameron Dick

facilities to meet the demands of the modern justice system," says Dick.

"The additional courtrooms will significantly increase the number of trials that can be run each year, and the whole building will encourage transparent and open administration of justice."

Architects Brisbane and Guymer Bailey Architects co-designed the building to maximise natural lighting, with a glass facade, a public square, as well as large trees and links to a public pathway between the Roma Street Parklands and the Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA).

## SA firm expands for QLD resources

QUEENSLAND'S booming LNG sector was the major prompt in Adelaide-based Johnson Winter & Slattery Lawyers' (JWS) expansion into Brisbane.

With offices in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth, the move completes the corporate and commercial specialist firm's national network.

Managing partner Peter Slattery, says the level of resources activity in Queensland made the expansion inevitable.

"With expertise in energy, resources, major projects and dispute resolution on the ground in Brisbane, we expect we will be better equipped to broaden our relationship with existing clients operating in Queensland as well as win new opportunities," he says.

"Our projects lawyers have been making forays into Queensland for some time but there is a limit on how far you can take that practice without a local presence."

Longstanding JWS partner Gordon Radford has relocated to the Brisbane office and the firm will now start a strong recruitment campaign.