

Briefs...

Literacy failings

Literacy ability at a tertiary level is being questioned as it was recently discovered that a local university is teaching basic grammar and punctuation to high ENTER scoring first year students.

A recent Saturday Age front page report revealed that Monash has been required to educate "back to basics English" to some first year candidates.

This revelation comes in light as the Education Minister, Julia Gillard, is currently drafting a new English curriculum.

However, the Opposition Leader, Christopher Pyne, is concerned that the standard of literacy is falling, and is particularly worried for the literate future of students.

New Creswick student centre

A newly-refurbished student recreation facility has opened

at the University of Melbourne's Creswick campus.

The project is the first stage of a \$1.71 million project funded from the Federal Government's Voluntary Student Unionism Transition Fund enabling universities to provide new or improved services for students and their local communities. The new facility includes a games room, lounge and kitchen.

Online property scam

An online scam offering cheap accommodation was exposed last month for exploiting international students unfamiliar with the best way to find a place to live in Melbourne during a rental property drought.

The Tenants Union of Victoria said it had received more than 10 reports of students losing about \$1000 each.

Overseas students not being soft marked

"Universities are attracting talented international students achieving successful outcomes"

A recent study has quashed the often held belief that international students have it easy.

A common misconception is that funding desperate universities mark full fee paying students easier.

Hong Kong based consultant Alan Olsen measured the academic performance last year of nearly two hundred thousand international and Australian students attending leading local universities.

He found that Australian students passed 92 per cent of their attempted studies, comparable to international students passing 91.6 per cent of their studies.

He presented his research findings at a recent Australian International Conference in Brisbane.

The study was commissioned by conference sponsor IDP Education, a global student placement and English-language testing company.

The students in his study attended the eight leading Australian universities known as the Go8.

The Go8 consists of ANU, Monash, University of Adelaide, University of Melbourne, University of New South Wales, University of Queensland, University of Sydney and University of Western Australia.

Olsen's findings are consistent with a study undertaken in 2003 involving 22 Australian universities, in which international students passed 88.8 per cent of attempted studies compared to Australian students who passed 89.4 per cent.

The research findings also found that international students do as well as local students in areas such

as management and commerce, society and culture, health and engineering, and do slightly better in science.

"Go8 universities are attracting talented international students to Australia, are setting entry standards at about the right levels and are achieving successful outcomes in educating these international students", Olsen said.

"In terms of student progress rates international students on campus in Australia did as well as Australian students and did better than international students offshore."

In further findings, female students outperformed male students passing 93.3 per cent compared with male students who passed 89.9 per cent. These findings are consistent with the 2003 study where females passed 91.6 per cent compared with males at 86.5 per cent.

Sarah Elfman

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