

MEDIA RELEASE

International student exploitation, the City of Melbourne, Victorian Government and AFIS

12 June 2008

The Australian Federation of International Students (AFIS) responded today to Mr. Tom Arup's article "*Foreign students being exploited*" in today's The Age newspaper.

"Exploitation of international students in the workplace has been a significant issue for a number of years, I am hopeful that this new research will allow the state and federal governments to work with students and industry stakeholders to explore the underlying problems and then work towards resolving them," said Mr. Wai Ken Wong, National Chairperson of AFIS.

"AFIS Victoria has been providing workshops and on-demand advice regarding employment conditions and exploitation for a number of years. AFIS Victoria on June 1st hosted the "M2S2: Money, Migration, Safety, Study" international student information day at the Melbourne Town Hall. The day consisted of a series of free seminars addressing pertinent international student issues presented by government departments, portfolio groups and industry partners. One of the sessions dealt specifically with employment issues. Not surprisingly, complaints were heard on the day, and we have provided the students with the Workplace Ombudsman's contact information for them to pursue the matters further," said Mr. Wong.

"One of the most effective ways to work on international student welfare is to directly interact and engage with international students and the City of Melbourne is exceptional at doing this. The City's 'Welcome to International Students' events of 2006 and 2008 as well as their regular conversations and forums on international student issues allows the City to stay in touch with the international student community. The City has continually been very supportive of AFIS Victoria's initiatives and projects, including Acting Lord Mayor of Melbourne City Council, Cr. Gary Singer who addressed the international students attending the recent M2S2 event." said Mr Wong.

"I hope that the State Government of Victoria through its proposed cross departmental taskforce will become more engaged with the international student community because although international students cannot vote, they are faced with very significant issues such as exploitation in the workplace." said Mr. Wong

For more information please contact AFIS executive officer, Mr. Douglas Tsoi on 0433893228 or via email at douglastsoi@internationalstudents.org.au