

UNACCEPTABLE SKILLED MIGRATION DELAYS

Recent changes to Australia's General Skilled Migration (GSM) program treat existing applicants unfairly and have resulted in many unintended consequences.

The Migration Institute of Australia has written to the Minister for Immigration expressing concerns about the priority processing of General Skilled Migration (GSM) applications. It is an issue of grave concern for 180,000 individuals and their families (on and offshore) who have paid for and lodged applications with DIAC and now find themselves languishing in a bureaucratic limbo.

The current priority processing regime creates numerous serious problems, including:

- Damage to Australia's reputation - Thousands of people, who in good faith paid visa application charges

with the quite reasonable expectation that the applications would be finalised within published service standard times, will be waiting indefinite lengths of time for a decision to be made about their GSM visa applications.

- Unreasonable additional costs – Tests and checks to support visa applications can cost up to \$1300 and need to be repeated to ensure validity at the time of processing.
- Difficulty of Employment on Bridging Visas – applicants consigned to waiting years pending visa decisions may find it difficult to work professionally as employers prefer a potential employee to hold permanent residence.

Some GSM applicants were only weeks away from having visas approved after being in the system 18 months al-

ready. The Institute believes it is particularly important to give priority processing exemptions to those applications which were about to be finalised and for which further health and police checks had been requested.

The MIA suggests that it is reasonable for the Department to refund fees for applicants who suddenly face up to three years before their application will be processed and now wish to withdraw their application. When speaking to The National Interest (Radio National 13/11/09), Senator Evans dismissed the prospect of refunds and said the Government would continue taking applications even though the system was under review.

We hope the Minister will agree to meet with representatives from the Institute to discuss options to redress the current impasse.

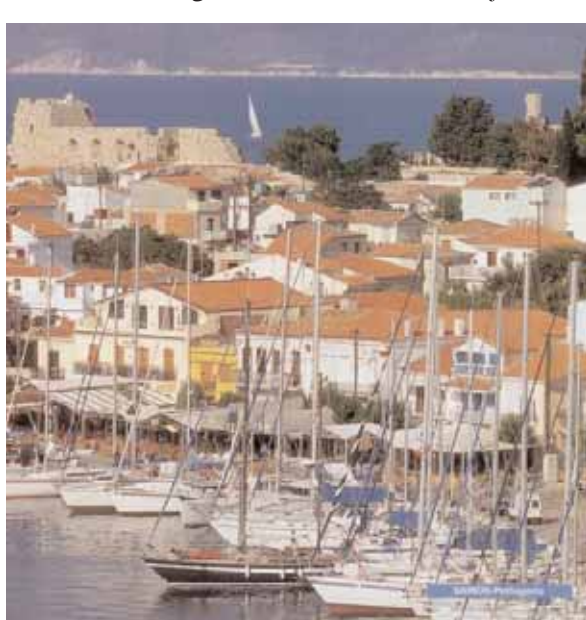
Second-hand smoke in Athens equals 'two a day habit', experts claim

Even non-smokers in Athens should be considered to smoke the equivalent of two to three cigarettes a day in the form of second-hand smoke produced by others, doctors of Greece's Pneumological Society asserted on Monday. Noting that smoking was the main culprit for chronic obstructive lung disease, they supported a total ban of smoking in public if this should be adopted by the health ministry, pointing out that smokers could currently be found in all places throughout the city.

MEASURING EXCELLENCE ON SAMOS ISLAND

The World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) – based in Montreal, Canada - announced on November 11, the signing of an agreement with the Samos Prefecture, to implement its System of Measures for Excellence in Destinations (SMED). Samos will be the first SMED destination in the Mediterranean.

The agreement aims to establish a tourist profile of the Greek island and assist it in gauging itself to face international competition, while facilitating the attainment of its objectives in sustainable development.



It was officially confirmed by Brigitta Papatavrou, ELA-GRO CEO (Greek Sustainable Tourism Organization), Emmanuel Karlas, Samos Prefect and the CED president Andri Vallerand, in the presence of Taleb Rifai, secretary general of the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

Awards for our top students

NSW students who have shown great promise as future leaders will be recognised with youth community service awards at Government House this week.

The Order of Australia Association was asked to pick 20 recipients from a field of hundreds but the nominations were so impressive that the judges ended up awarding 22.

One student did a 114 hour internship at the UN High Commission for Refugees, assisting asylum-seekers, another selected as Australia's representative at the children's space summit at Hokkaido and one founded an anti-genocide group after visiting a former concentration camp in Poland.

On the 22 Year 11 and 12 students to receive the medallion, 19 are female.

The winners came from Sydney, Griffith, Gosford, Katoomba, Lennox Head, Moruya, Port Macquarie, Thirroul, Wellington and Young.

NSW Governor Marie Bashir will present the Youth Community awards 2009 at a ceremony today Friday.

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS



Robert Hannah holds a personal Chair in Classics at the University of Otago (New Zealand). Robert's most recent publications include the books *Greek and Roman Calendars: Constructions of Time in the Classical World* (Duckworth: London 2005), and *Time in Antiquity* (Routledge: London 2009) which both explore the workings and the significance of the Antikythera Mechanism.



Allan Bromley and Frank Percival's model of the Antikythera Mechanism (pictured) is currently on display at the Nicholson Museum.

International Year of Astronomy

The sky's the limit: Astronomy in Antiquity

Nicholson Museum Invitation

The Antikythera Mechanism: 'as above, so below'

Professor Robert Hannah

Thursday 26 November 2009

6 for 6.30 pm



The Antikythera Mechanism is the most sophisticated scientific instrument to have survived from antiquity. Discovered over a century ago off the coast of the Greek island of Antikythera, the Antikythera Mechanism continues to puzzle us. It has been subjected to powerful radiation and computer-based technologies to reveal numerous geared plates and Greek inscriptions. A number of real and virtual models have been built. All of these help us to unravel some of the mysteries of this extraordinary and fascinating device.

In the Nicholson Museum
Main Quadrangle, University of Sydney

\$30 (\$20 Friends of the Nicholson Museum and Members of the Kytherean Association of Australia)

price includes our champagne and our famous pies
booking essential 9351 2812 or m.turner@usyd.edu.au