



## UNE-ISA Report for the 19<sup>th</sup> National Liaison Committee Annual Conference 2004

The ongoing internal changes, including constitutional amendments, will see University of New England – International Students' Association (ISA) redefining its objectives as well as its commitment to them. In late 2002, the then ISA committee recommended a review of the constitution on the grounds that some specific sections of the rules were undermining execution of some objectives of the association. Although this recommendation was accepted at the 2002 AGM, the review did not commence until this year. One of the main tasks of the current committee, apart from carrying on with its proposed programs, has been to have the constitution reviewed and amended before the end of July 04. This will allow ISA to affiliate with the University Union and UNESA.

At the time of preparing this report, the Union had just granted ISA a provisional affiliation until the new constitution is ready. UNESA too has signaled its commitment to support the programs and the activities of ISA. It is also worth mentioning that the constitutional amendments have been warranted by the recent changes at the University's International Office (IO). The office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and International) that ISA used to be responsible too, has been changed to Pro-Vice Chancellor (International) (PVICI). Following the announcement of a new structure of the IO (as of May 04), the new PVICI asked the IO and the ISA to provide a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The aim is to 'justify' why the PVICI's office should continue supporting ISA. Though the SLA appears to be a genuine endeavor (part of quality service improvement), the committee will oppose strongly any attempt to demean and/or undermine the functioning of ISA. The committee also maintains that the PVICI's office through the IO should continue its commitment to provide funding to ISA. The following section summarizes issues and activities that the association has been, or is engage with currently.

Since filing of the last NLC report, ISA has carried out its activities with much great success considering the tight financial situations faced. A number of country groups/associations that largely depend on ISA funding could not carry out most of their activities due to lack on funding. This was mostly seen in second semester of 2003 academic year. However, even with these limitations, the feedback we continue to receive from the members is that they benefit greatly from the various support activities being provided by ISA. These activities, as outlined below, were/are all geared toward promotion of students' involvement in university life and linking students to the support services provided by the different bodies within the University. Furthermore, the activities supported by ISA such as discussion forums (all supported by the UNE community) and socio-cultural promotions, helped to increase the overseas students' participation in multi-cultural events. One of events that stood out from the rest was ISA's invitation to an indigenous Australian group to UNE to participate in the annual multi-cultural concert. The other was the open academic forum introduced by the UNE African Students' Association and supported by ISA was the *Club Earth Today's* (CET) discussions, debates and seminars. Some of the issues explored during the CET forums included, Youth Parliament agenda, public debate - on humanity's challenges: All of these activities from different cultures, religions, civilizations ("the clash of civilizations") and the debate around Islamic values were among others. These forums brought together both local and overseas students as well some members of the Armidale community. The following are highlights of the ISA activities all aimed at supporting and furthering the objectives of the association and as articulated in the UNE Cultural Diversity Priority Statement.

### Issues/Campaign and Progress

- October 2003: ISA members joined the Armidale community to voice our opposition to the NSW government's proposal to axe the Countrylink passenger train to Armidale.

**Results:** In December 2003, 'the NSW government announced that all Countrylink passenger trains would continue to run' (The Friends of the Northern Railway Inc).



- Research Scholarships: ISA reps to UNE Postgraduate Assoc (UNEPA) felt that there was unnecessary disparity between two scholarships for research postgraduate students. On consulting with the UNEPA Executive, a letter detailing among others, equity issues, was sent to the PVC Research.

**Results:** After a struggle, the research services reviewed the UNERA scholarship. Both UNERA awards and APA awards will be equal from 1<sup>st</sup> July 04 - thumbs up for our reps and UNEPA.

- National Day of Action (March 31<sup>st</sup>): A number of ISA members joined the combined students' organisations to opposed consideration by universities to increase HECS by 25%.

Following the restructuring of the IO, ISA is currently working on a proposal to be shared with the new Senior Advisor (currently advising PPCI) regarding quality service delivery for (international) students. To ISA, perhaps this will mark a significant step in the voicing of the members' (international students) concerns. Finally, ISA wishes to acknowledge the continuous support from the University, PPCI and IO and the good working relationship with the Armidale International Association.

#### 2004 Social Events and Meetings:

Month	Dates & Activity
February	17~21-- International Students' O-week 25 -- UNE O-week – UNESA Lifesaver Day
March	17 -- Welcome Party for both New & Returning International Students 26 -- ISA Council Meeting (Welcome council members/Year's activities)
April	3 -- Armidale Autumn Festival Parade 12 -- NLC Special meeting – UTS Sydney
May	22 -- NLC - NSW Branch Annual Conference 28~29 -- International Film Night
June	3 -- Open forum discussion run by CET. <b>Speaker:</b> Dr Cathryn McConaghy: <b>Postcolonial Witnessing: what does it mean to be an ethical witness in an age of inequality and trauma?</b> <b>Venue:</b> Wright Village Common Room TBA -- Social Sports 18 -- ISA Special General Meeting/Council Meeting (NLCAC & Coach Trip)
July	3~10 -- The 19 <sup>th</sup> NLCAC, Griffith Uni, QLD 13 ~17 -- Coach Trip 20 ~24 -- O-week (2nd semester) 30 -- ISA Council Meeting (International Week's Preparation)
August	10 ~13 -- International Week 20 -- ISA Council Meeting (International Week's Reports)
September	10 -- UNE Open Day 11 -- Second Semester Open Forum Discussion – TBA
October	10 -- AGM
November	19 -- Exam Breaker Farewell Party

*Kiprono Lang'at (July 04)  
President, UNE-ISA 2003/04*