



## **AAERI announces action plan to safeguard Indian students opting to study in Australia**

*~ AAERI aims to guide and protect over 8,000 students from Gujarat who are expected to opt for higher education in Australia this year~*

**Ahmedabad, September 30, 2009: Association of Australian Education Representatives in India (AAERI)** today announced the stringent steps it is taking to protect Indian students opting to study in Australia, ensure that only genuine students go to Australia in future and help the authorities to identify education agents indulging in fraudulent activities and misguiding students.

AAERI is a one-of-it's kind self-regulatory body of education agents in the world, which has over 160 members across India. The establishment of AAERI is an initiative of Australian Education International (AEI), the international arm of Australia's education department.

**Mr. Gulshan Kumar Pathania, President, AAERI said,** "Gujarat is one of the most important states from where a very high number of students go to Australia every year. In the last five years, number of students from Gujarat going to Australia for higher education has grown four times. In 2008 itself, an estimated 8000 students went to Australia from Gujarat and AAERI is expecting a 15% growth in this figure. Therefore, Gujarat will be a key focus area for AAERI over the next five years."

Mr. Pathania added, "We urge all prospective students of Gujarat who are planning to study in Australia to go through AAERI members since they abide by a code of ethics which ensures students are treated honestly and fairly. AAERI members also ensure that students get accurate and unbiased information about studying options in Australia. And are not charged more than the fee prescribed by AAERI, which is currently Rs. 10,000/- only. "

In light of the recent attacks on Indian students in Australia, Association of Australian Education Representatives in India (AAERI) has developed the following '**8 point Action Plan**', to ensure a conducive environment for Indian students planning to study in Australia:

- Working closely with Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Australia Education International and Australian High Commissioner on modules which will serve as guiding principles for Indian students planning to study in Australia.
- Encouraging AAERI members to report fraudulent practices of any agents in their region to AAERI executives or their regional members so that DIAC can be kept informed and stringent action can be taken against them.
- Strongly advocating for interviews of students of very low academic and communication skills and having stringent checks for eVisa lodgment.
- Working closely with Indian community in Australia to understand the on ground situation and their concerns.
- Strengthening AAERI's disciplinary committee and working closely with authorities in India and Australia to act on substantiated complaints from students immediately.
- Conducting visa training workshops for AAERI members across India. These workshops will be held in conjunction with DIAC to enable agents to help students during the entire visa processing stage.
- Undertaking regular exhaustive audits of AAERI 'Code of Ethics' followed by all 160 members and keep improving 'Entry Norms' for new members
- Encouraging AAERI members to assume greater responsibility in case of conflict of interest between the student and the education provider.

Australia is the second largest market for Indian students who pursue overseas education, and every year this number has been growing exponentially. To maintain this growth and reinforce Australia's standing as a high quality education destination, AAERI has been strongly lobbying with the government bodies in India & Australia for over a decade.

**About AAERI:**

The Association of Australian Education Representatives in India (AAERI) is an independent organization registered under the Societies Registration Act of India, which was formed in October 1996 to assure the integrity and credibility of agents who are recruiting students on behalf of Australian education and training institutions. All prospective students interested in utilizing the services of an education agent are encouraged to utilize the services of an AAERI member because AAERI members abide by

a code of ethical practices. Also, AAERI members agree to charge only the fee prescribed by AAERI, which is currently no more than Rs 10,000/-

**For further information, please contact:**

Salomi Gupte, [sgupte@perfectrelations.com](mailto:sgupte@perfectrelations.com), 09909914425