



AFIS condemns unethical seizure of its name

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The Australian Federation of International Students (AFIS) condemns the arbitrary seizure of its name outside Victoria and the attempt to circumvent and prohibit its interstate activities.

The AFIS National Office based in Victoria received notification last Friday of the successful incorporation of an organisation bearing the name 'Australian Federation of International Students Inc.' in New South Wales.

National Liaison Committee Ltd. Public Officer Master Shang informed AFIS that he had supported the establishment of the new NSW organisation and warned of legal action should AFIS continue activities in NSW.

The NSW division of the Federation of Indian Students Australia (FISA) were also attacked in a similar fashion.

AFIS believes this to be an attempt to circumvent operations of the two prominent international student associations – both nationally-active with reputable standing in the international education sector. AFIS and FISA were established since 2002.

AFIS National Chair Wai Ken Wong argues that Mr Shang's claims¹ that AFIS, with its National Office in Victoria, lacked the local knowledge of issues in NSW are misguided.

"AFIS may be based in Victoria, but our State divisions are represented by enthusiastic community-minded individuals from these States. They are well-aware of their issues at hand, being international students themselves or having worked with international students. This position has been supported by our Constitution since federation.

"AFIS' State divisions have organised very successful local events and projects like the M2S2 information seminars and workshops, and are continually establishing dialogues with politicians and industry stakeholders with international students in mind.

"Our national position on issues and policy is informed through consultation with these representatives. In other words, we are literally working locally but thinking nationally. We have a sound policy implementation strategy – I daresay AFIS' policy and governance processes are modelled after organisations like the Australian Medical Association," said Mr Wong.

Douglas Tsoi, AFIS National Executive Officer, describes the action by Mr Shang as "disheartening".

"Decision-makers, stakeholders and the public must not be misled by any claim that the new organisation registered under our name has anything to do with the operations of AFIS," he advised.

¹ The Australian reports in its Higher Education Supplement today, available on <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25646323-12149,00.html>

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About the Australian Federation of International Students

AFIS has been working actively with the international student community, student groups and the wider community to allow international students to have the best possible experience during their study in Australia.