

## **Food, conversations and the wireless: AFIS reaching its constituency, 2002 onwards.**

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International students studying in Australia bring with them a diversity of cultural views, values and observations. Adapting to a country such as Australia poses as a challenge for international students due to the difference in culture and values. Not only are they faced with the issues of becoming accustomed to a different set of views, values and observations, but they must also integrate their cultural ideals with the wider Australian community. These barriers challenge a student's entry into the wider community.

Several institutions have addressed the difficulties of international students with a range of services, products and programs. However, a lack of awareness and reflection, outdated methods, and the predatory tactics of some commercial institutions present a limit to the effectiveness of this well-intended allocation of resources.

Heightened awareness to the cultural values of international students and a better understanding of the issues they face is imperative to improving the interaction and engagement between international students and the wider community. Hence, independent organisations unbound by political and commercial agendas are perfectly positioned as unbiased intermediaries to serve the international student community.

Hindered engagement and interaction between international students and the wider Australian community often lead to social exclusion and cultural division, which, is often at the core of many fundamental issues faced by the international student community.

Since 2002, AFIS (Australian Federation of International Students), has and continue to reach, inform and assist the international student community and its interlocutors, the Australian community through its initiatives. The following presentation will demonstrate the variety and effectiveness of the means and methods behind these initiatives.

### **Key Words**

Social inclusion

Diversity

Integration

Independent organisations