Another big year in international education draws to a close, and the implications of the outcomes of the Michael Knight review continue to be digested by all of us. The tea leaves hint that compliance will be no easy task, and much remains to be understood about how the changes will impact the industry as a whole as well as individual institutions. Already post-study work rights have been extended to bachelor or higher degree graduates of non-university higher education providers. While institutions begin the engagement process with government to work out compliance and reporting regimes and strategies, governments of various persuasions are putting together advisory committees to guide strategy development for states and the country. The federal and Queensland committees are well balanced, the NSW version less so, somewhat overweight with private interests. The Australian HES unfortunately reflected only the negative comments made by the Association about this committee, without balancing their article with the positive comments we did make, i.e. that the establishment of such a committee is a positive thing. We want to engage, not throw stones.

Work has begun on shaping the 2012 Australian International Education Conference, to be held in Melbourne - entitled International Education in the Asian Century. It already looks exciting.

Phil Honeywood has taken up his position as Executive Director, and writes in this VISTA edition for the first time. Dennis Murray writes about his new role as well, and leaves a legacy as Executive Director of IEAA for seven years that is truly remarkable.

And the final word on student mobility (thanks to Alan Olsen for the analysis).

The Australian Universities International Directors Forum has completed its 2011 benchmarking study of student mobility (2010 data), and IIE has published the latest US mobility data in the recent edition of Open Doors.

Previously we had understood that, in terms of the participation rate of US students studying abroad, a number equivalent to 9.5% of all US undergraduates studied abroad in 2009/10, compared to the Australian figure of 12.0%. But Open Doors has released a new figure, that 14.0% of US undergraduates undertaking bachelor degrees studied abroad in 2009/10. We assume that this excludes community college graduates with low access to study abroad.

It would seem appropriate to compare our 12.0% with both the 9.5% and the 14.0% and say that Australia is comparable, rather than having overtaken the Americans, as I had thought during the conference in Adelaide.

But the growth trend in outbound mobility for Australian universities is strong.

Enjoy the festive season and see you in 2012.

Stephen Connelly