



Safety of International Students Research Project – Frequently asked Questions

Why is the Australian Government conducting this study?

The Australian Institute of Criminology is undertaking a research project on the safety of international students in Australia. The project will compare the rate of crime against international students with the rate of crime against the broader Australian population. The research will provide more accurate information on safety issues so that the Australian Government can take a more targeted approach to informing international students about personal safety.

Why is personal information needed on Student visa holders (and former Student visa holders)?

Australian police jurisdictions do not collect statistics on a victim of crime's citizenship or visa status. To enable the Australian Institute of Criminology study to go ahead the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) needs to release data to the police to assist in identifying international students who have been victims of crime.

What information will DIAC provide to police jurisdictions?

DIAC will only provide to police the Student visa holder's name, date of birth as well as their 'Person ID'.

What is a 'Person ID'?

The 'Person ID' is a unique number which is allocated to a Student visa holder by DIAC systems.

How will police jurisdictions use this personal information?

The police will use the DIAC data to cross-match information on their records to obtain lists of incidents where international students were victims of crime. The data which contains personal information will then be destroyed. Where the police have a match against the DIAC data, they will only provide the 'Person ID', not the name of the student, to the Australian Institute of Criminology. Along with the 'Person ID' of the victim they will provide some details of the incident, including the nature of the crime, but not any details that would uniquely identify the victim.

What information will DIAC provide to the Australian Institute of Criminology?

DIAC will provide a list of 'Person ID's' with associated details such as country of citizenship, visa type and length of time in Australia to the Australian Institute of Criminology. The 'Person ID' will then be matched with lists of incidents provided by police jurisdictions.

What safeguards are in place to ensure personal data is protected?

All state and territory police agencies and the Australian Institute of Criminology are subject to Commonwealth privacy law and the relevant state and territory legislation and guidelines on the handling of all personal information in the public sector,

including collection, storage, use, destruction and access to any personal information. No personal information used in the Australian Institute of Criminology's research will be published. All of the data provided by DIAC will be destroyed at the completion of the project.

Why were international students from these countries selected for the study?

From 1 July 2004, the People's Republic of China, India, Republic of Korea, Malaysia; and United States of America were the five largest countries from which international students came to study in Australia. Students from these five countries will provide a large enough data base for the Australian Institute of Criminology to reach useful conclusions about crimes against international students relative to the general population.

What will happen if a student is found to have breached their visa or to have committed a crime?

Police will not return data matches to DIAC, so DIAC would not be able to relate the data held on police systems back to the individual data records held in DIAC systems. Police will not match DIAC data with lists of perpetrators of crime only with lists of victims.

If I do not participate, will this have any affect on my visa status or future applications?

No. Participation is voluntary and greatly appreciated. If you choose not to take part in the research project, your details will be removed from the data and DIAC will not record any information about whether a person participates in the project or not.

I do not want to participate in this study, what do I do?

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship offered a period of 21 days for individuals affected by the release of this data to have their details removed from the project. This 21 day period ended on 30 May 2010 and it is no longer possible for individual records to be removed.