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Australian curbs lifted

IN recent years there has been a marked increase in the number of Hongkong students studying in Australia.

One reason, according to Mr Bill Streat, manager of the Australian Education Centre in Hongkong, is that some parents and students are keen to get away from the pedagogic approach of Hongkong educators to the more broadly based, developmental curricula of Australian schools and tertiary institutes.

Another significant factor is the change in regulations made by the Australian Government in the overseas student programme.

In 1986, it was decided to allow institutions to offer full-fee places to overseas students, provided that the government had approved the courses as suitable for the full-fee programme.

There is now no government subsidy, nor are there quotas, for overseas students. The only limitations on the overseas intake is the capacity of the institutions and the ability of the students.

Mr Streat said that with the increased numbers of places available, competition to attract students also rose.

For the first time, institutions were having to learn both how to market themselves and cater for the needs of overseas students. Queensland, for example, has developed a Masters of Business Administration course which focuses on international business in Asia.

Thirty merit scholarships, all for post-graduate

studies, are available for Hongkong students.

The Australian system is organised on a state basis although qualifications obtained in one state are generally recognised by all the others.

It is possible, for example, for a person awarded a Bachelor degree in a college of advanced education to be accepted for entry to a Masters degree programme by a university.

School children from overseas may enroll in Australian secondary schools.

Most of the states offer some full-fee places in their government schools — the number varies and Victoria

does not offer any. Most non-government schools have full-fee places.

Many Hongkong students enter Grades 11 or 12, but there is an increasing number heading for Grade 10, considering it a better foundation for an Australian tertiary education.

When a restructuring of Australian tertiary education is completed, there will be a new "unified national system" comprising 30 to 35 institutions, mostly universities, but offering the same range of qualifications as before.

The largest of the three tertiary education sectors in Australia is TAFE — Techni-

cal and Further Education sector — which accounts for more than 70 per cent of post-secondary enrolments.

TAFE courses provide training at professional, para-professional, post-trade, trade and operative levels, and are the major source of the skills required by the Australian workforce.

Some TAFE graduates are admitted with advanced standing to degree courses offered by universities and colleges of advanced education.

TAFE colleges also provide a matriculation course that is equivalent to Grade 12 in secondary school.

The academic year in

higher education institutions usually begins in early March and ends in late November or early December. Some institutions offer summer sessions from December to February.

Most tertiary institutions require a minimum score of six on the IELTS examination or of 550 on the TOEFL examination, or equivalent proof of English language ability.

Those students who need to improve their English may choose to attend one of the English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students centres in Australia. There are more than 30 such centres in Australia.