



**Choices and Responsibilities:  
Higher Education in the Knowledge Society**

**Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE)**

**Trade Liberalisation, Regional Agreements and Implications for Tertiary Education**

According to the OECD, the value of global annual trade in 1999 in higher education has been estimated at US\$30bn. Australia is a major participant in international education: it is the third-largest international student destination in the English-speaking world behind the US and the UK. In recent times, the Australian government has been very active in establishing free trade agreement with key trading partners.

This paper will discuss developments in bilateral and multilateral agreements and their implications for higher education. In addition this paper will discuss the state of play of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations towards the General Agreement on Trade in Services. The paper will be presented from the perspective of an institution actively involved in overseas student recruitment and offshore delivery of programs/services.

**Paper Outline**

- Background on GATS and educational services
- Overview on bilateral and regional trade agreements in the context of education services; references will be made to the Australian-US Free Trade Agreement, plus developments in trade agreements between other countries which are actively pursuing educational opportunities onshore and offshore
- Australian higher education policy and perspectives in relation to free trade
- Impacts of GATS, bilateral and regional trade agreements on education activities (particularly in relation to funding), and
- Identify emerging issues in international education.