



***Have you ever contacted the Australian consulate with a request to borrow a laptop or pay a hotel bill you couldn't afford?***

According to Foreign Affairs Minister Julie Bishop there are a number of Australians that have

“Consular officers cannot get you out of jail or issue you with a passport so you can evade justice. Consular assistance is a last-resort service.” Quoted **Foreign Affairs Minister Julie Bishop**

According to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, officers assist some 1,300 Australian in a single day.

Among the strangest queries received by the department include will my cruise have food?; can you feed my dog while I'm away; and what is the best hotel in Phuket?

As a result the new 'Consular Strategy' aims to inform these travellers of consular services, the importance of travel insurance and registering with Smartraveller.

**“I want to send a very clear message: consular assistance should not be seen as a right, it is a privilege.”** Quoted **Foreign Affairs Minister Julie Bishop**

The 'strategy was welcomed by the Australian Federation of Travel Agents today, with chief executive Jason Westbury stressing the importance for Australian travellers to understand the services available to them.

“In the past decade we have seen the number of Australian's travelling overseas more than double and Consular services is vital to the travel industry and an important resource for the travel agent.”

Quality Travel Insurance is an essential item to take, well researched and with 24 x 7 Australian or English speaking based staff supported by a Travel Agent who knows where you are and can contact relevant parties fast and efficiently.