

Minister's foreword



Over the past 50 years, Australia has openly welcomed millions of students from all over the world. We should not underestimate the profound impact this has had on Australia's economy and society, and our capacity to engage with our region and the rest of the world.

International education is a vital part of our national prosperity and critical to the Australian Government's plan to build a more diverse, world-class economy—a five-pillar economy—to unleash Australia's full economic potential. Over the past decades, despite experiencing challenges and difficulties along the way, Australia has expanded international education to become our largest services

export and one of our largest exports overall. It makes a critical contribution to export activity for regional Australia and supports nearly 130,000 jobs nationally.

After several years of decline, the Government has encouraged a return to growth in international education. The number of international students studying in Australia has begun to climb and the value of international education has grown by over a billion dollars in just one year. Rising numbers of globally mobile students provide opportunities to build on this achievement.

Australia's engagement in international education benefits us well beyond being a mainstay of our economy. It generates important people-to-people links that underpin Australia's research, trade, investment and social engagement with the world. It contributes to our communities and scholarly life, building shared understandings and new perspectives. It showcases our achievements to the world, keeping us globally competitive.

We cannot lose sight of intensifying competition from the world's leading economies and emerging competition from universities and education hubs closer to home. Australia needs to meet this competition head on, with a relentless focus on quality in teaching, learning and research, to avoid being left behind. We also need to strengthen our efforts across all aspects of international education, whether this is providing better education services to more international students, building stronger institutional partnerships and research collaborations, or further expanding study abroad initiatives including through the New Colombo Plan. It is only through a broad, national approach that we will be able to realise the full potential of international education as a core element of Australia's economy and society.

Education, training, skills, research, science and innovation are at the centre of the Australian Government's efforts to position Australia for future prosperity in an increasingly globalised world. A new architecture for Australian international education will secure Australia's place as a world leader in what has become a major industry in its own right. It will ensure that international education, coupled with a strong research and innovation system, is a key driver of Australia's future economic productivity and competitiveness.

We must work together to send a clear message to students from around the world that Australia welcomes them and will help them achieve their aspirations. We must make studying in Australia and studying with Australian education institutions the best experience available anywhere in the world.

I encourage everyone with an interest in international education to participate in the development of this important national strategy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Pyne', with a small flourish at the end.

The Hon Christopher Pyne MP
Minister for Education and Training

Consultation on the draft national strategy

The release of this draft strategy marks the beginning of consultation to ensure the final strategy represents a shared national vision and responsibility.

The Australian international education community is encouraged to provide feedback and examples of specific institutional, state and territory, and community-based initiatives that further the proposed goals.

Business leaders and employer groups are encouraged to identify opportunities to build deeper connections with the global marketplace in order to better link students to meaningful work experience.

All stakeholders are invited to address the following questions:

- Does the vision statement in the draft strategy represent Australia's aspirations for international education?
- Are any significant goals for international education not adequately covered?
- Can you identify the strategic actions which best support your goals for international education?
- What are the best measures of success?
- What are the case studies that best illustrate Australia's success? Please provide examples.
- What would you like to see progressed as a priority in the first year?

Please submit your feedback on the draft strategy online at:

www.internationaleducation.gov.au by close of business **29 May 2015**.

Consultation led by Austrade on a long-term market development strategy for the international education sector, ***Australian International Education 2025***, will inform the development of the national strategy.

A vision for Australian international education

Australian international education is a core element of Australia's economic prosperity, social advancement and international standing.

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Richa Singhania, Endeavour Awardee, Biological Sciences

Executive summary

Australia's place in international education

Australia is one of the most popular study destinations in the world for international students. During the past half century, we have welcomed more than 2.5 million students to study in Australia.¹ Many remain actively engaged with Australia through personal friendships and professional connections.

Australia offers an enriching and high-quality learning and living experience in higher education, vocational education and training (VET), school education and English language tuition. Many students follow an extended study pathway through a series of educational institutions. This may involve years of study in Australia, including a combination of intensive English language and school education, VET, higher education and postgraduate research. An Australian international education data snapshot is at **Appendix A**.

Australian education institutions provide a large range of education services overseas through 31 offshore university campuses² and hundreds of partnerships across all areas of education. Australian schools also engage globally through hundreds of sister school and other partnership arrangements.

Australian education also reaches out online. From full degrees to Massive Open Online Courses, our institutions offer a broad mix of quality content and innovative presentation that raises Australia's reputation for education and research excellence.

The value of international education to Australia

International education is vital for the Australian economy. It is our largest services export, contributing \$16.3 billion to the Australian economy in 2013–14.³ It supports nearly 130,000 jobs nationally and plays a significant economic role as a source of skilled migrants, as well as skilled labour for Australian companies operating overseas. International students studying in Australia, together with visiting family and friends, also make a significant contribution to Australia's tourism industry, supporting even more jobs across our services sector.

1 D Davis and B Mackintosh, *Making a difference: Australian international education*, Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2012, p. 92.

2 Universities Australia, *Offshore programs of Australian universities*, 2014, p. 3.

3 Australian Government, *Export income to Australia from international education activity in 2013–14*, 2014.

Australia's international education sector not only generates significant economic benefits but enriches our social, cultural and intellectual life. It plays an important role in internationalising our campuses, classrooms, workplaces and communities. Relationships developed through international education help maintain international trade, investment and goodwill. International education paves the way for Australian students, researchers and professionals to develop their capabilities for an increasingly globalised workplace.

Through signature initiatives such as the New Colombo Plan, more Australian undergraduate students will be supported to engage in our region and build the relationships that underpin future collaborations in research and business. More Australian students are also engaging at school level in an international education, as demonstrated by the steady increase in the number of Australian schools offering the International Baccalaureate since it was introduced in Australia in 1978.

The value to states, territories and regions

Through international education, states and territories extend cultural and economic relationships and drive economic growth in metropolitan areas and regional hubs. They are able to cater to different student needs in teaching and learning and in student experience. They have a strong role to play in ensuring a quality education coupled with a safe, supportive and inclusive environment.

Several states and territories have developed their own strategy or vision to grow international education. For example, Victoria and New South Wales each have prepared a comprehensive approach, including transnational education and a quality student experience. As part of its broader plan to reform the state's education and training sector, Queensland has prioritised Asia's growing middle classes as an education export opportunity. The Northern Territory has announced plans to establish the territory as an international education and training hub with a specific focus on Asia.

International education's contribution to regional Australia is critically important. Onshore and offshore education export activity provides regional Australia the opportunity to leverage its distinctive offerings. These include unique student experience, liveability and employment aspects. They also include local knowledge and expertise in areas as broad as biosecurity, agriculture, marine science and the delivery of health services in remote settings, which are priorities for many of our major education partners. Regional providers also have extensive experience in distance education and have embraced the digital provision of course content.

Some providers across higher education, VET and school education are working together on joint marketing initiatives to promote the quality education and lifestyle opportunities offered by their region. Projects such as Think Geelong bring together education institutions, tourism bodies, local government and business to collaborate on raising awareness of the broader benefits of studying in the region.

The development of Northern Australia is a key priority for the Australian Government and there are many opportunities to contribute to this through increasing international linkages in education and research. A particular area of potential is the concept of the 'tropical economy'. More than 50 per cent of the world's population is forecast to live in the tropics by 2050. Northern Australian institutions can meet the needs of tropical markets by providing expertise and partnering in areas such as mining, agriculture, fisheries management, building design, marine science, disaster management and conservation.

The importance of partnerships

Australian international education is built on a strong foundation of institutional partnerships, supported by a collaborative network of officials and industry representatives within Australia and overseas in our embassies, consulates and representative offices. Such partnerships are vital for building confidence and improving Australia's reputation for high-quality, world-class education and research. They are also important for promoting Australian professional and technical skills internationally—including in VET, which continues to play a key role in Australia's development assistance programme.

Australia's education and research partners are mainly in North America, Europe and Asia, with the United States, United Kingdom and China our top three partners for joint research publications. China and India are the top source countries for international students, with a range of southeast Asian nations also contributing to enrolments across all sectors. These countries will continue to be vitally important partners for many years to come. That said, it is important not to lose sight of the significant benefits of building relationships beyond our region, including in Latin America and the Middle East. Partnerships with our strongest education partners must also continue to evolve with the aspirations of those countries to expand their peoples' skills, research capability and educational attainment.

International competition

Education is a global enterprise. During 2000–2012, the number of tertiary students enrolled outside their country of citizenship more than doubled, from 2.1 million to 4.5 million, with an average annual growth rate of almost seven per cent. This growth is expected to continue. However, competition in all areas of education is intensifying as foreign governments and institutions invest heavily to improve their competitiveness and their student outcomes. While we have been highly successful in promoting the benefits and value of Australian qualifications, we face increasing competition from traditional and emerging international education players.

The United States, already the world's leading destination for globally mobile students, is poised to become a more active recruiter. A forecast from the United States Department of Education that domestic college enrolments will slow through to 2022 is likely to result in more institutions looking to international students to fill the additional places.⁴ After the National Association for College Admission Counselling lifted its ban on the use of education agents, an expected increase in the use of agents by United States institutions is also likely to result in more aggressive student recruitment. At the same time, at a federal level, the United States' international strategy is focused on strengthening the global competencies, including language skills, of United States students and benchmarking their performance.

Other English-speaking competitor countries—the United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand—have released international education strategies in the past two years. These strategies focus on building the value of education as an export industry. Extensive and ongoing consultations have enabled education stakeholders in those countries to take a lead role in their development. The national governments in those countries recognise the central role of international education in long-term economic prosperity and are strongly supporting the implementation of these strategies.

⁴ ICEF Monitor, *United States poised for more active student recruitment*, <http://monitor.icef.com/2014/06/united-states-poised-for-more-active-student-recruitment/>.

There are common themes across each of these plans to seize the opportunities inherent in the worldwide demand for education services. The United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand all recognise the role of institutions in leading education export activity. They recognise the global demographic and economic trends that are helping shape the opportunities for education provision, such as an emerging middle class in Asia and Latin America and increased access to technology. All have prioritised building brand awareness, responding to emerging markets, and expanding transnational education, including by developing technology to support teaching and learning.

At a regional level, the European Commission has said it wants to ensure that Europe remains the most attractive destination for international students and that European graduates gain international skills. It has articulated a broad range of issues that are important for the internationalisation of European higher education, including the mobility of staff and students, international curricula, online learning, language learning and partnerships.

International education is a key enabler of productivity and growth for virtually every part of an economy.⁵ Other countries are recognising this and devoting resources to attracting foreign students. China, Japan and Korea have set ambitious targets while Singapore and Malaysia, as well as countries in the Middle East and in Europe, are expanding the number of courses they provide in English.

The importance of quality

The quality and reputation of Australia's education and research system as measured by international rankings will be an important factor in determining our attractiveness and competitiveness in international education. Our performance in providing world-class education will also be measured by the quality of the graduates and skilled professionals our system creates.

Producing work-ready graduates who are equipped with the tools to engage as global citizens should be a key measure of the quality of Australian education. Today's students often need to combine a qualification with relevant work experience to gain a competitive edge in the employment market. Positioning students to build their Australian qualifications into successful careers through work-integrated learning and work experience will be vital to maintaining Australia's reputation and competitiveness into the future.

Capacity for growth

Australia recognises the importance of maintaining the quality of students' living and learning experiences as increasing numbers of international students choose Australia as their international study destination.

It is also important that we continue to communicate the significant benefits of Australian international education, not simply to prospective students overseas but also to Australian students and the broader Australian community.

In order to sustain Australia's capacity to accommodate further growth, all stakeholders in Australian international education are working to raise awareness of the value that international students contribute both to our economy and to the cultural richness of our communities.

⁵ M Baghai, D Redhill, C Richardson and G Vorster, *Positioning for prosperity? Catching the next wave*, 2014, p. 36.

This awareness includes realising the many valuable business opportunities that international students bring to Australia in areas such as rental accommodation, hospitality and tourism. It also includes recognising a shared responsibility by businesses, education providers and governments to provide international students with good quality returns on their investments, ensuring they gain a high-quality education and an enriching living experience while in our country. By ensuring a proper balance between the opportunities that international students bring and our responsibilities back to them, Australia can continue to welcome growing numbers of international students into the future. Our capacity for sustainable growth is not a fixed quantity, but something to manage responsibly.

A new architecture for Australian international education

The report and recommendations of the International Education Advisory Council chaired by Mr Michael Chaney AO, *Australia—Educating Globally* (known as the Chaney report) highlighted the need for improved coordination and leadership of Australian international education.

Roundtable on international education

In recognition of the need for improved coordination and leadership, the Government will consult with education and business leaders through two roundtables in 2015 to determine a national direction for the sustainable development of international education in Australia.

A national strategy for international education

A national strategy will drive a coordinated approach to sustaining growth in Australian international education. The Australian Government is committed to finalising and implementing a national strategy in close consultation with education and business leaders and the broader international education community in Australia.

This draft strategy takes a broad view of what constitutes international education for Australia. It includes international students studying in Australia and those studying for an Australian qualification overseas, as well as the experiences of Australian students who study abroad. It includes preparing our students to engage globally through languages study in all stages of the education cycle from early childhood through to higher education. It includes the two-way movement of researchers, academics and professionals, research collaborations and institutional partnerships. It also encompasses a large range of engagement activities in all areas of education, including promoting international skills exchange, connecting learners through new technologies, internationalising curriculum and engaging with the world through alumni.

The draft strategy builds on the recommendations of the Chaney report. Australian Government responses to the report's recommendations are outlined at **Appendix C**.

The draft strategy provides a blueprint for Australia to secure our place as a world leader in international education and sets a path for sustainable growth in Australia's largest services export. It recognises the strong alignment of Australia's domestic and international education aspirations for ongoing cultural enrichment and economic growth.

The draft strategy is structured around three broad pillars: getting the fundamentals right; reaching out to the world; and staying competitive.

Getting the fundamentals right

A strong, high-quality education and research system is fundamental to maintaining Australia's international reputation as a leading provider of education services to international students. To be globally competitive, Australia will continue to work to create an education system that stands out as the best in the world, with some of our institutions among the very best.

To support this goal, the Australian Government will put in place education policies that encourage autonomy, competition and quality improvement and will make strategic investments in research and research infrastructure. Australian schools and vocational and higher education institutions, along with English language providers, will determine their own strategic directions and use a range of performance data and other mechanisms to drive continuous improvement and achieve excellence.

By achieving system-wide quality improvement, Australia will be in a stronger position to compete for the world's top students and researchers.

Reaching out to the world

We will build on our strong and emerging education and research partnerships to broaden international engagement and raise Australia's profile and reputation. An enhanced international profile will position Australian institutions and students to take advantage of new research collaborations and opportunities for student, researcher, academic and professional mobility.

To support this goal, the Government will take a strategic and coordinated approach to building confidence in the quality of Australian education and research. This will include using bilateral and multilateral frameworks, along with our representatives in Australian embassies, consulates and representative offices abroad, and our global network of eminent scientists and researchers.

We will also foster an international outlook among Australian students to better prepare them to engage internationally. At the same time we will build on our significant investment in attracting top students from across the globe to study, research and train in Australia.

We will reduce barriers to mobility by enhancing understanding of Australian qualifications and the Australian Qualifications Framework. We will also build lasting relationships with alumni to strengthen international partnerships.

Through these actions, we will deepen and extend the global reach of Australian education and research institutions. We will also create a more diverse range of partnerships and ensure that Australia continues to be a desirable option for more students and research collaboration partners, from more countries.

Staying competitive

We will continue to improve the quality of the educational and living experience for international students and embrace new ways to meet rising demand internationally for high-quality education services.

To support this goal, the Government will maintain competitive visa settings and strong consumer protections. Institutions and governments will work with employers to create opportunities for relevant work experience. Institutions will foster English language proficiency to ensure international students gain a higher return on their investment. Institutions will pursue innovative course development and provision, including online education services, to students outside Australia. Australia will combine efforts across the community to ensure a quality living and cultural experience for international students through access to and information on appropriate accommodation and services, and improved student and community engagement. Australian policy makers will also improve their capacity to understand trends and the new opportunities for growth.

Through actions to stay competitive in international education, we will strengthen Australia's reputation for providing a premium education experience for international students, guard against future shocks and build capacity to respond innovatively to new opportunities.



Igede Suparwata, Endeavour Awardee, Hospitality Management

Measures of success

Through the actions of this strategy, Australia will:

- maintain our place as one of the top five international study destinations
- create an education system that stands out as the best in the world, as demonstrated by:
 - improved education and research performance against credible international benchmarks
 - strong levels of investment in research and research infrastructure
 - more collaboration between private firms and universities in research and development
 - greater and more informed student choice
 - reduced red tape, which benefits education and training institutions by allowing them to do what they do best—teach students and conduct research
- raise our profile as a world leader in international education and improve the global connectedness of Australians, as demonstrated by:
 - more high-quality joint research relationships and publications
 - more partnerships in emerging regions and markets, such as Latin America, the Middle East and Africa
 - increased support for student and researcher mobility
 - more Australian students studying abroad
 - more Australian students studying a language in addition to English
 - more of the world’s students and researchers undertaking study and research in Australia
 - more of the world’s students and researchers applying for Australian scholarships
 - active alumni networks are established that create diplomatic, trade, business, research and social connections between Australia and our global partners
 - alumni are engaged in meaningful activity that establishes enduring connections with Australia and each other
- improve the experience of students in Australia, as demonstrated by:
 - higher levels of satisfaction with education experiences and outcomes
 - more instances of eligible international students getting employment experiences after graduation
 - higher levels of satisfaction with the cost of a range of services
 - an increased percentage of purpose-built accommodation for students relative to non-purpose-built accommodation
 - higher levels of satisfaction in the English language competency of international student graduates reported by employers
 - higher levels of satisfaction among international students in relation to the opportunities to interact with Australian students and communities
- expand the provision of Australian education and training overseas, as demonstrated by:
 - increased numbers of international students enrolling with Australian providers overseas
 - greater take-up of Australian qualifications provided through distance education and online
 - more country technical vocational education and training quality frameworks in the Asia-Pacific region using Australia’s VET quality frameworks as a reference point.

Draft strategy overview

Vision statement: Australian international education is a core element of Australia's economic prosperity, social advancement and international standing.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

