



COMMUNIQUE COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION MEETING 29 November 2023

On 29 November 2023, the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, Senator the Hon Don Farrell, Minister for Trade and Tourism and Special Minister of State and the Hon Andrew Giles MP, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, as Ministerial members of the Council for International Education (Council) met with the Council's Expert Members to reflect on progress made throughout 2023, consider current issues and plan the strategic direction for the international education sector moving forward.

Chaired by Co-Conveners of the Council, Mr Julian Hill MP and the Hon Phil Honeywood, Expert Members reflected on the rapid pace of change and current issues in international education, and announced quality and integrity measures to underpin the sustainability of the sector. Expert Members also considered proposed reforms from the recently released interim report by the Joint Standing Committee on the Inquiry into Australia's tourism and international education sectors (the Inquiry) and the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report (The Accord).

Minister Clare highlighted the breadth of achievements across the international sector, emphasising the strengthened connections and opportunities for Australia arising from delegations to India, Indonesia and Singapore, meetings with ministerial counterparts of those countries and China to expand education engagement, and the importance of continuing to grow Australia's partnerships across the Pacific. He reflected on the importance of this to Australia's geostrategic engagement in the region. Minister Clare confirmed plans for development of an International Education Strategic Framework, to address significant changes within the sector since the Covid-19 pandemic and to continue strengthening quality and integrity.

Minister Farrell discussed with Expert Members the impact of tourism and trade in informing the future of the international education sector, as well as how these three sectors are key pillars to our economy, but also Australia's interaction and geostrategic positioning within the region.

Minister Giles highlighted integrity reforms, noting the upcoming release of the Migration Strategy. He emphasised the significance of international students to Australia's diverse community, and the importance of visa settings in supporting the integrity of the international education sector.

Ministers spoke to the alignment across government in supporting the integrity and sustainability of the international education sector, reiterating the value proposed reforms under consideration from the Rapid Review into the Exploitation of Australia's Visa System (Nixon Review), Migration Review, Employment White Paper, the Southeast Asia Economic Strategy, the Inquiry, and the final report of the Accord.

Ministers and Expert Members reiterated the importance of clear messaging around future reforms as benefiting students and maintaining Australia's high quality reputation, and its importance in ensuring positive public sentiment towards the sector, noting the importance of consistent communications to prospective students and agents offshore and the speed with which misinformation can spread.

In a partnership across government and sector stakeholders, the Council will build upon its 2023 work in continuing collaboration throughout 2024. The next Council meeting is expected in February 2024.