



## Meeting of Expert Members of the Council for International Education 17 June 2020

On 17 June 2020, Expert Members met by videoconference to discuss the future of Australia's international education sector. Members noted that, while the effects of COVID-19 persist across the international education sector, Australia's success in suppressing a domestic outbreak has the sector well placed to recover and welcome international students, in a COVIDSafe manner, as circumstances allow. To that end, they welcomed the Prime Minister's signalling on 12 June 2020 his hopes that Australia would be in a position to commence selected pilots for return of students in July 2020, and acknowledged the importance of clearly communicating to students and the sector details relating to the relaxation of border controls. In light of this, Expert Members took the opportunity to take stock of the recent challenging times and refocus on the international education landscape beyond 2020.

Expert Members noted the need to continue working with the community to build support for international education. Well known internationally as a safe and welcoming destination for international students, Australia is the most successful multicultural and migrant society in the world. International students not only bring economic prosperity, but enrich our classrooms and communities. These relationships need to be further enhanced. Heightened community anxiety as a result of COVID-19 means the sector needs to redouble its efforts – from the ground up – to reaffirm community support and understanding of the value of international students.

International education is one of Australia's modern success stories but COVID-19, and the changes already being felt in the sector before the pandemic, mean reshaping its future. Expert Members discussed how they could work with stakeholders to develop a new National Strategy for International Education to guide the sector beyond the major disruptions of 2020. Research around a series of issues, outlined below, will be one part of a short-term roadmap designed to help the sector to immediate recovery. The findings will also underpin a new National Strategy, for likely release in mid-2021, to support the sector succeed in the years ahead.

Expert Members noted the need to further understand the domestic impacts of COVID-19, particularly if global travel and health restrictions endure. Global economic conditions and student sentiment as they relate to the international education landscape long-term are changing quickly and the impact of COVID-19 on other international education destinations needs to be considered when crafting a new National Strategy. How economic recovery will influence employment opportunities – for students, for internships and for graduates – will also require further analysis. From a domestic point of view, Expert Members discussed the need to explore policy, regulatory and system settings to allow the sector to seize new global opportunities (such as online and blended learning), create greater resilience, and better promote the diversity of Australia's offerings. Likewise, consideration of the benefits and opportunities offered by Australia's international alumni network and the critical role of agents in supporting the sector will help shape the future strategic direction.

Demonstrating the fundamental value of international education, including the role of Australia as a good global citizen, and the new horizons open to all Australians through international education needs to be re-examined. Likewise, Australia's pedagogical advantage, ensuring the employability of students and graduates, and supporting student entrepreneurship are topics requiring further consideration.