



## MEETING OF THE EXPERT MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

9 September 2021

Expert Members held their fifth meeting of the year on 9 September 2021. Expert Members welcomed the Chair of the Council for International Education, The Hon Alan Tudge MP, Minister for Education and Youth, who provided an update on the development of the draft *Australian Strategy for International Education 2021-2030*. Minister Tudge thanked the Expert Members for their work throughout consultations and for their advice on the Strategy. He noted the importance of addressing short term challenges in accordance with the *National Plan to Transition Australia's National COVID-19 Response*, while also setting a robust agenda for the medium term through the Strategy.

The Minister and Expert Members discussed several issues as central priorities for the Strategy and emphasised the need for government and sector to work together to advance these priorities. These included diversification of student cohorts, opportunities for expansion offshore and online, Australia's international education brand, and supporting student pathways.

Representatives from Deloitte presented results of a research project commissioned by the Australian Government on the impacts of COVID-19 on the international education sector. While acknowledging the complex challenges facing the sector, the presentation pointed to several causes for optimism in the data trends, both among existing students with Australian providers, and in established and emerging overseas source countries for international students. Expert Members considered potential opportunities for sector recovery arising from the analysis provided.

Recognising the importance of an evidence base to underpin the sector's recovery and growth, Expert Members invited the Department of Education, Skills and Employment to provide an update on the most recent international student data.

At the previous meeting in June 2021, Expert Members agreed to incorporate social licence for international education as an ongoing item of work. At this meeting, Professor Michael Wesley led a discussion on potential work to better understand community sentiment and connections. The key link between social licence and social cohesion was also noted. Expert Members will continue to explore opportunities for increasing social licence as an ongoing priority.

Expert Members thanked Ms Belle Lim for her contribution to the Council throughout her time as President of the Council for International Students Australia (CISA), commending her committed advocacy for international students. The Council looks forward to welcoming the incoming President of CISA in due course.

The next Expert Members meeting is scheduled for early November 2021.