



**COMMUNIQUE
MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
3 April 2023**

On 3 April 2023, Mr Julian Hill MP and the Hon Phil Honeywood, Co-Conveners of the Council for International Education (the Council) held the second Council meeting for 2023, in Melbourne. The Minister for Skills and Training, the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, a ministerial member of the Council, and special guest Professor Peter Dawkins AO, Interim Director, Jobs and Skills Australia, joined the meeting to discuss international education's role in meeting Australia's skills needs.

Professor Dawkins briefed Expert Members on Australia's skills needs, and challenges and opportunities specific to international students, including the disparity between high completion rates and lower employment outcomes than domestic students. Professor Dawkins highlighted key barriers to employment of students including, visa status, lack of work experience and not being able to demonstrate strong employability skills to employers.

Minister O'Connor emphasised the Government's commitment to boosting the supply of skills in Australia, noting the role of international students and the importance of the VET sector being fit for purpose. The Minister discussed approaches with Expert Members on what more could be done to lift international student employment outcomes and fill skills gaps. This included discussion around post-study pathways for VET courses, student experience, provider quality, employer hesitancy to take on international students, what competitor countries are doing to attract international students and the need for public TAFEs to enhance their focus on international education.

The Co-Conveners guided discussion on the contribution international education can make to Australian skill shortages in the short, medium and long term. This included consideration of visa settings, including post-study work rights and visa processing times in areas of skills shortage, regulatory settings, including the importance of work hour caps while considering other options to support labour market participation and improving provider quality. Support for stronger collaboration with industry was also discussed, with the need to build employability skills and overcome barriers to work-integrated learning, including apprenticeships. Expert members noted concerns around certain education agent behaviour and foreshadowed discussions to strengthen regulatory oversight.

Upcoming meetings of the Council for 2023 will focus on additional priority areas to support a resilient international education sector in Australia. These include Australia's migration system and visa settings for international students, the role international education plays in delivering on Australia's foreign policy objectives and ways to provide a unique and positive student experience.

The next Expert Members meeting is scheduled for June 2023.