Q20.

Australian Strategy for International Education consultation submission

Privacy Personal information
Your personal information is protected by law, including under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Privacy Act). Personal information is information or an opinion about an identifiable individual. Personal information includes an individual's name and contact details.
Purpose of collecting your information
We will use the information you have provided to handle your enquiry.
We may need to collect further information from you in order to handle your enquiry. If you do not provide this information to the department, it may affect how we handle your enquiry. In some circumstances, it may mean we are not able to handle your enquiry.
Disclosure of your personal information
Your personal information may be disclosed to other parties where it is necessary to handle your enquiry, where you have agreed, or where it is otherwise permitted under the Privacy Act.
Privacy policy
The department's Privacy Policy, including information about how to make a complaint and access to and correction of your personal information, can be found at https://www.dese.gov.au/privacy or by requesting a copy from the department at privacy@dese.gov.au. To contact the department about your personal information email privacy@dese.gov.au.

Q1. Name *

Bronwyn Gilson

Q2. Organisation *

ISANA

Q3. Occupation/role at the organisation (if applicable)

President

Q4. Contact email address *

████████████

Q5. Contact phone number

Q6. 1 - What do you see as the key priorities for a new Australian strategy for international education? [limit to 500 words]

It is important that the new Strategy: · Inserts the welfare of international students into each section of the strategy. Australia should treat international students as they would any other Australian during their time in Australia. Prospective and current students should be reassured that the new Strategy will guarantee access to services, support, safety, and respect under any and all circumstance. · In the short term, enable the safe return of international students with clear timelines and support strategies and develop a plan to keep pathways open to the future. This is crucial to position Australia as a top five key study destination. · Re-establish Australia's reputation as a welcoming and safe destination for international students. Address the many issues highlighted by research on the exploitation of international students in the sector · Maintain Australia's global reputation for quality assured regulated education regardless of mode of delivery (onshore, online, third party provision onshore/offshore). Ensure that quality of education and support underpin and are central to our offerings by providing resources and legislative support to agencies that monitor standards • Review entry requirements for the various levels and providers of education that accurately reflect the standards required for study, e.g., English language requirements • Revise consumer protection mechanisms for international students ensuring coverage of all modes of delivery in all AQF, school and non-award CRICOS registered programs · Ensure that all government policies and legislations are working to complement and strengthen the education sector. - International education is also the collaboration of research across countries. Foreign policy, economic strategies and education policies need to be coordinated across State and Federal jurisdictions. · Encourage diversity by creating a strategy that attracts students and researchers from a range of countries. This means that the IE strategy should continue supporting IE students from developing countries by increasing the number of Australia Awards scholarships and meaningful support. • Include strategies and actions that encourage students and researchers to regional areas by supporting and strengthening education and research capabilities in these areas. • Ensure students and their families are adequately supported in regional areas. It is an unnecessary burden to expect students and their families to travel from regional areas to major cities to comply with government agency requirements, e.g., visa renewal/ variations and medical checks. · Acknowledge that international education moving forward will be different with offshore online learning, trans-national agreements, and onshore blended learning.

Q7. 2 - Students should be at the centre of the new Strategy. How can Australian education providers deliver the best possible student experience both now and in the future? [limit to 500 words]

2020 onwards left International students feeling abandoned, unwelcomed, and locked out of a country that promised much to them. For Australia to continue to have an international education industry, the focus and language must change from one that is political and economic based. It is important that the student experience and all its stakeholders is unpacked to ensure that an end-to-end student experience is supported and enhanced. International students must have an empowered and independent voice at each educational institution, and in local , state, and national governments. A national framework of student representation that encompasses all sectors and all levels. The Council of International Students Australia (CISA) should be invited to lead with a sustainable funding model to ensure their continuity and independence. Students should be seen as partners in determining what they want and how this will be delivered. This needs to be embedded into decision making in a meaningful not tokenistic way. The independent Council of International Students Australia (CISA) should be provided with recurrent funding and Secretarial support. Any international student in Australia should be an automatic member and be able to apply for competitive funds to become involved in CISA activities. Students must be able to act and have avenues to address areas where provider obligations have not been met. including against providers not fulfilling their obligations under the ESOS framework. Regulators have limited resources in enforcing compliance against the regulations. The Study Australia portal should be reviewed by students and information that is missing added. For example, many students are unaware that they have a choice of Overseas Student Health Cover. International students are encouraged to study in Australia by education providers with the possibility of applying for a post study work visa (PSWV). However, once they move from being on a student visa to a PSWV, they no longer have access to support. Temporary visa holders are part of the IE industry yet are only supported at best by community groups. They are vulnerable to exploitation and misinformation. They continue to contribute to the fabric of the Australian community and economy yet have little support from their education providers or government. The current National Code imposes compliance regulations on education providers who teach students on a student visa. Yet the international education sector comprises numerous stakeholders - accommodation providers, OSHC providers, education agents whose activities and service delivery are not regulated. Their failure to provide quality, empathetic and ethical services impacts the student experience. At present the monitoring of these stakeholders and their services is placed on education providers who have limited influence. As such, we hear of student exploitation, safety concerns and unscrupulous business practice with students as the victim. The new strategy should acknowledge the scope of the sector and its stakeholders and bring them into the ambit of the regulatory frameworks.

Q8. 3 - What changes are needed to make Australia more globally competitive over the next decade? [limit to 500 words]

Support new and ongoing research to retain Intellectual Property within Australia. Employ graduates to work on projects and develop them into self-sufficient ongoing enterprises. Change the length of a Student Visa to allow international students to either spread their study load over an additional study period or to take one study period off from study while in Australia to e.g., travel, work, volunteer. Each education sector should be aligned across all States and Territories to present 'one' easily navigated Australian Education Experience in each sector. This will assist prospective students manage study expectations; allow Marketers, Recruiters and Education Agents to sell an 'on message' Australian brand; and allow the development of good practice across education institutions' support and services.

Q22. 3.1 - Policy and regulatory flexibility are important in enabling providers to innovate. How can we utilise these settings to pursue opportunities, and in what other ways can we work together to ensure Australia remains globally competitive? [limit to 500 words]

2020 revealed the lack of national coordination and collaboration across States and Territories to support international students. International students noted and commented on the varying levels of support provided by States and Territories. The sector requires the establishment of an international education portfolio at State and Federal level. There needs to be a body that can advise and have legislative power and resources to influence, change and enable. This body can bring together peak bodies, associations and international education stakeholders to unite as one consistent voice to lobby and advise government and educate the Australian community. The current International Education Council can advise but has no legislative power or resources to influence, change or enable. The multitude of peak bodies and associations have differing agendas. This needs to be improved. All international education stakeholders need to unite as one consistent voice. There is an opportunity to create an international education "gateway" to connect the international education sector to the Australian community and vice versa. Community engagement at an institutional, local, state, and federal government level is needed. This gap has been highlighted during COVID when a significant amount of support was provided by local communities. The National Code requires a minimum standard of service delivery and does not encourage good practice. It is questionable whether all providers meet the minimum standards and Regulators have limited resourcing to monitor and encourage/share good practice. The new IE strategy must demonstrate commitment to quality assurance by strengthening the ESOS Act and National Code and resourcing regulators Policy and regulatory flexibility with funding and taxation support are essential to encourage innovation in education and research. Research schemes should be reviewed to incentivize, recognise and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration both with university and international partners. As mixed mode delivery of teaching, learning and research will continue, it is important that existing legislation and government policy be reviewed and amended to enable education providers and other stakeholders to innovate. For example, extend the Higher Education Standards Framework's scope to cover all TEQSA products with regard to the quality assurance of third-party provision (eg ELICOS and Foundation Studies). Regulatory systems must create online, overseas, or blended learning standards, to ensure consistency across all education sectors. This should include compliance to CRICOS requirements.

Q21.
4 - How can providers, governments and stakeholders work together to achieve diversification opportunities (for example of disciplines, source countries, study destinations and delivery models)? [limit to 500 words]

As aforementioned, the sector would benefit from the establishment of an international education portfolio at State and Federal level that should include the expert advisory role of the Council for International Education. This would ensure collaboration and coordination across government. Importantly, it acknowledges the value of the sector to the Australian economy and society. A coordinated approach will enable: 1. Collaboration by the education sector to collectively market Australian education as a distinct and quality product when compared to other key study destinations. 2. Present a clear authentic value proposition that is meaningful to students, across cultures, models and locations which encompasses all educational sub sectors. This might mean we need to dial up or dial down key attributes by identifying what are they now, and what should they look like in the future. 3. Share insights and partner on market research in a structured and accessible format. 4. Imbed Global work rights into Australian qualifications. 5. Teach courses across institutions to allow for sharing of teaching resources and provide students with an opportunity to be exposed to a greater Australian experience eg. offer a City/Country experience.

Q9.
5 - What are the necessary skills for the future that students should be prepared for? [limit to 500 words]

Students will require project management skills as many employment opportunities will be contract based. Resilience will be essential as they may need to move multiple times during a year within their work role, teams, tasks or across locations. Connectivity to both employers and colleagues may be fractured.

Q10.
5.1 - How can Australia improve employability outcomes for international students, ensuring students have the necessary the skills to compete in a globally competitive labour market? [limit to 500 words]

Encourage the development of the following skills through curriculum and partnership with industry: · Agility · Cross-cultural competence and working with people from diverse backgrounds · Communication Skills (online and face to face) · Emotional and social Intelligence · Resilience · Creative and innovative mindset · Creative and complex problem solving · Analytical thinking · Digital literacy and technology use · Paid internships or work integrated learning to be compulsory requirement of the course. It is also important to review the work rights of international students against the demands of work integrated learning, volunteerism, and part-time work. Conflicts and restrictions have led to exploitation of students. Develop a 'Ready for Work' module all students can undertake. This could include resume writing; interview skills; accepting an offer; first day/week/month expectations; working independently and in teams. The module can be developed for the Australian and key returning home markets.

Q11.
6 - How do we create a uniquely Australian education experience? [limit to 500 words]

Students remember the people they interact with during their time studying. Ensure all support and academic staff and support services are well trained including in cultural sensitivities. Ensure Australian indigenous cultural teachings and experiences are available to all international students.

Q12.

6.1 - What is our value proposition for both international and domestic students? [limit to 500 words]

Australian education at all levels is known for their quality. It is also important to acknowledge that Australia have: · Global professional networks that commence in the classrooms · Australia's resourcefulness as an island nation, stems from embracing diversity and the talents of migrants · Entrepreneurship as an outcome of Australian education · Different learning structures that can be applied to many contexts. · Great quality of life, employability, and safety · Easy access to high quality internationally recognized degrees and qualifications with a good study to lifestyle mix and great study environments with a diverse group of students.

Q13.

6.2 - How do we offer an Australian education experience while complementing the value of Australian offshore and online education? [limit to 500 words]

· Encourage using and creating new good practice examples. · Include knowledge of Australian culture, Indigenous and Anglo-Saxon with equal weight of both components. · Include best examples of Australian multiculturalism in the society in the curriculum · Provide incentives for all prospective and past exchange students to take on a mentor or buddy role with an international student. · Encourage community participation in educational institution's events and activities. · Organise Alumni events outside of Australia and invite key Australian residents in that country to attend and speak with students.

Q14.

7 - What else should the Council for International Education and the Australian Government consider in developing a new strategy? [limit to 500 words]

It is critical that the new strategy include a coordinated message on the benefits of international education and international students to the community. Misinformation, racism and xenophobia need to be addressed at the highest level of government. Provide ongoing opportunities for Peak Bodies and organisations to contribute to the shaping of the strategy. Ensure the CIE provides regular and comprehensive feedback and advise to the international education sector.

Q15.

8 - Do you have any additional comments or feedback to share?

Australia's reputation has been seriously damaged in the eyes of international students and education agents. Political considerations have been allowed to outweigh constructive plans to invite international students back into Australia. Community education needs to be undertaken on the value of international students even if this has to come down to details such as empty rental apartments and closing of businesses. A re-education plan on how to live with future COVID (or other pandemic) outbreaks needs to be undertaken now. Australians have been conditioned that the only safe measure is to close a border. This has led to Australia falling behind in both student numbers and student sentiment as a travel destination, and Australians do not yet understand that vaccination and living alongside viruses is the new norm.

Q19.

If you wish to upload a documentto support your submission, including a document answering the discussionquestions, please upload it here.

Q16.

Do you give the Department of Education, Skills and Employment permission to publish your submission on its website? *

- ⦿ Yes – publish my submission with my name
- ◯ Yes – but keep my name anonymous
- ◯ No – don't publish my submission