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Department of Education, Skills and Employment
Email: education-ies@dese.gov.au

Murdoch University

Professor Romy Lawson

Office of the Provost

90 South Street, Murdoch
Western Australia 6150

T +61 8 9360 7614

murdoch.edu.au

CRICOS Provider Code 00125J
ABN 61 616 369 313

Dear Department of Education, Skills and Employment,

Murdoch University would like to thank the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) for the opportunity to provide feedback into the development of a new National Strategy for International Education 2021 to 2030.

Murdoch recognises that the changes experienced as a result of the COVID 19 Pandemic have led to a need for us to revisit and refresh what has been a very successful endeavour for Australia. The COVID-19 pandemic has created significant disruption to the education sector broadly and to international education specifically and this has required universities to pivot quickly to online and TNE delivery models. At Murdoch, we are very proud of the fact that we transitioned to online learning within a two-week period when the first lockdown was announced in March 2020, and each time there has been "snap" lockdowns in WA we have ensured rapid transition so that students experience consistency of learning. We are also very proud that during the Pandemic our two successful TNE operations in Singapore and Dubai have experienced the largest intakes of new students in several years.

In our view, the challenges we have faced and dealt with lead us now to an ideal opportunity to pro-actively explore what the next phase of development of our successful international education sector will be. Murdoch believes that we will achieve long term success by building on what we have learnt during the Pandemic and embracing new and innovative models, whilst maintaining the core of what we have done so well for over 30 years. We believe the new paradigms for international education will include blended and virtual modes of delivery, expanded consortium approaches, more and more flexible TNE delivery, virtual learning abroad programs, micro-credentialing, digital innovation and hybrid delivery. We need to be prepared for these and to have the national frameworks in place to support success.

While Murdoch recognises this is a medium-term, 10-year strategy, and is excited to co-create this with DESE and the sector broadly, we also believe that current circumstances relating to the pandemic necessitate a two-phase response. The majority of our feedback relates to the vision for the full ten years of the strategy. A number, however, also relate to the more immediate period of the recovery phase.
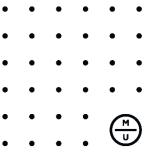
While not exploring this in detail, we also suggest that there may be scope for some "blue sky thinking" in the final document with some thought given to what the longer term may bring and how we can set ourselves up for ongoing and long-term success. Murdoch's core goal is to be a creative force for current and future generations, and we believe that the best and most robust strategies will always contain elements that address current goals, as well as having a clear focus on the longer-term elements of success.

Overall, Murdoch supports the objective of placing students at the heart of the new strategy and welcomes the themes of "creative, connected and caring". We also believe that investment from Government and collaboration will be needed to breathe life into these aspirations.

As a proudly innovative university that champions the concepts of access, equity, diversity and free thinking, Murdoch looks forward to a Strategy that embraces all the opportunities of the next ten years and beyond, while ensuring the continuing success of a sector that has contributed so much to the vibrancy and sustainability of our Australian education system.

Queries on this response can be directed to our Pro Vice Chancellor International, Kelly Smith (IEAA-SF) (Kelly.smith@murdoch.edu.au).

Yours sincerely

Professor Romy Lawson
PROVOST

1 - What do you see as the key priorities for a new Australian strategy for international education?

Murdoch University suggests that the strategy should have two horizons, short-term recovery and long-term strategic development of the sector.

A. Short Term Recovery

The short-term recovery elements should focus on actions and initiatives that can provide the frameworks for the sector to do what it does best; provide high quality education to international students. Whilst Murdoch recognises and supports that protecting the welfare of Australians is the Government's first priority, we argue that the long term wellbeing of the nation is also supported by a robust international education sector and that a consistent nationally coordinated plan to facilitate return of international students to our campuses as soon as possible is needed. Feedback from a recent study by the Mitchell Institute[1] suggests:

"Continued border closures mean the value of Australia's international education sector is to shrink from $40.3 billion in 2019 to $20.5 billion by the end of 2022".

Clearly, the sooner we can restart the sector the better the outcome for providers, related service providers (retail, housing etc) and the Australian economy.

Currently each state and territory is developing its own plan for the safe return of international students. The risk in this approach is that it is nationally inconsistent (and therefore risky) and will exacerbate issues with concentrations of students in particular locations.

A staged plan involving opening borders to students from low-risk countries and approval of secure corridors could be considered; this would require a national plan.

Volume 1 of the QS International Student Survey[2] (28,019 respondents) reports:

- 87% percent of those considering studying in Australia believes the country has done well in managing COVID-19;
- 52% believe that Australia is becoming more welcoming toward international students;
- Most international students prefer to wait out COVID rather than study online.

This suggests that students will start to return as soon as there is clarity around a plan.

Murdoch therefore believes that a priority for the Federal Government should be to develop a practical and nationally consistent and coordinated plan for the safe return of international students as a first step in the recovery plan.

In addition, as part of the short-term recovery settings, Murdoch proposes that the Federal Government should ensure that online and offshore study continue to count towards Post Study Work Rights (PSWR). This will ensure that those students who cannot enter Australia due to the border restrictions do not suffer further impediments to their plans due to reasonable decisions the Government is making in respect to when borders open.

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[1] https://www.vu.edu.au/mitchell-institute/tertiary-education/stuck-in-transit-international-student-update
[2] International Student Survey Volume 1 – Destination Australia, QS Australia, April 2020

B. Longer term initiatives

Murdoch University agrees that the pandemic has provided the opportunity for us to reconsider the basis of the Australian education experience and that options and opportunities exist for expansion of online and TNE opportunities under a "study with Australia" umbrella. However, we believe that we should maintain onshore delivery as the priority, while noting that experiences during the pandemic lead us to consider additional options. Online delivery and TNE offer an opportunity for Australia to extend the reach of our quality education by delivering high quality Australian programs at an affordable price point to a wider range of students.

New models of online and TNE delivery would:

- mitigate the consequences of a reduction in student mobility caused by the health and economic crisis;
- make high quality Australian higher education accessible to a larger market;
- help to raise the global profile of Australian international education and support recovery in onshore international education through clear pathway options for students to progress between modes of study;
- allow us to compete more effectively with larger TNE providers such as those from the UK; and,
- extend Australian values and soft power.

Murdoch University is uniquely placed to provide insight into these benefits of TNE, with an international cohort consisting of more students in our offshore locations than in Australia. However, Murdoch believes that if this intention is to be realised, then a number of Policy settings need to be explored, and these will be outlined in Question 3.

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?

Murdoch University believes that the Australian university system provides an exceptional student experience. While there is always room for improvement, results from independent surveys such as the International Student Barometer are evidence of the positive experience of international students. The 2018 survey found an overall satisfaction rate of 89%, with a 98% satisfaction rate with the quality of teaching [3]. The satisfaction with learning rated at 88.5% compared to a rate of 87.5% for other surveyed countries (ibid). However, the broader Australian community may not be aware of the short- and long-term benefits of the sector to the broader community. Murdoch supports the consideration in the Consultation Paper on the need to develop this understanding so that international students are seen as integral to our communities. To this end, Murdoch University supports the efforts of the International Education Association of Australia (IEAA) to proactively develop an understanding in the community of the contribution of the international education sector, and suggests this would be enhanced with appropriate Government engagement and support.

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[3] https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/Pages/Data-and-Research.aspx

Further, funding could be considered to support coordination of support activities for all international students, and to design activities that promote interaction and engagement with the local community alongside domestic students. Examples might include (inter alia) establishing and supporting mixed international/domestic student sports teams, sponsoring competitions with participation of local clubs, and more. Such activities and initiatives would not only provide interest and activity for the students themselves, but also highlight their presence and positive community attitudes, to local community members.

Murdoch also supports a strong focus on the mental health and wellbeing of international students. However, we believe that these outcomes can best be achieved via a review of the full provisions of the various Legislative structures that underpin the sector. For example, the Productivity Commission Mental Health Report[4] has a requirement that:

"Tertiary education institutions (or their representatives) should make arrangements with Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) providers to ensure there is adequate coverage for any required mental health treatment (including the scheduled fees for treatment and potentially some portion of the student's out-of-pocket expenses)."

This ignores, however, that the provisions of OSHC are determined by the Commonwealth under the OSHC Deed. This stipulates the minimum requirements for OSHC providers.

The Productivity Commission recommendation should not be directed at universities. We cannot control which OSHC provider a student chooses and cannot influence any of the five providers. The Productivity Commission should suggest that the Commonwealth amend the Deed to ensure the requirements as recommended are implemented.

3 - What changes are needed to make Australia more globally competitive over the next decade?

In addition to a full review of the various Legislative frameworks that support the Sector (for example, ESOS, Visa Legislation), Murdoch proposes two principle areas that need regulatory attention to realise the intent of the Strategy as outlined in the Discussion paper.

A. TNE Data, Regulation and New Models of Delivery

The Consultation Paper proposes development of more TNE and online offerings. Further, a recent speech by Minister Tudge suggested:

"Other countries are already moving into this space. Universities UK reported that pre-pandemic, 58 per cent of international student enrolments at UK higher education providers were studying offshore. Our comparable figure is 22 per cent. This reflects a real difference in delivery models, despite some slight differences in calculation."

The UK has been put forward as a model for the scale of their TNE delivery and indeed this is backed up by information from Universities UK. The UK's revised International Education Strategy[5] also does commit the government to helping identify and resolve barriers to TNE provision and providing promotional support for UK TNE.

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[4] https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/mental-health/report
[5] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-education-strategy-2021-update/international-education-strategy-2021-update-supporting-recovery-driving-growth

The Scale of UK Transnational Education data [6]indicates that in 2019-20 the number of international students enrolled and studying in the UK was 556,625 compared to 453,390 studying via TNE (55% in country, 45% TNE). The UK also provides a more detailed and nuanced reporting of TNE data (Aggregated Offshore Record) when compared to Australia. Murdoch proposes that work needs to be done to improve DESE's data reporting for TNE. This enhanced data would allow institutional investment decisions to be made with robust information. A review should also be undertaken of TEQSA's governance frameworks for Higher Education TNE delivery to ensure fit for purpose and appropriate flexibility and alignment to the proposed strategic intent.

Murdoch also proposes that new delivery models are required in order to access opportunities to grow Australia's TNE footprint. Australian higher education has an outstanding global reputation, but the cost of onshore international education is beyond the means of large numbers of students in developing countries, where there is often surplus demand for higher education and insufficient domestic supply. This creates a market opportunity for transnational and online education. However, access to online education in many households in developing countries is limited due to insufficient internet and computing infrastructure, and student preferences may demand more on-campus learning experiences or a hybrid of online and on-campus.

Two innovative models of TNE which should be explored are 'consortium' and 'hybrid learning centres'. Consortia approaches pool the resources of two or more universities to establish a campus in a TNE location. A contemporary example of such an approach is the 'Universities of Canada in Egypt', which is a single university campus in Egypt that hosts a number of Canadian universities. There are several advantages of this approach including:

- shared campus infrastructure lowers operating costs;
- strategic positioning – becomes a one stop centre for Australian higher education; and
- collaboration means that Australian universities are not wasting resources operating competitive campuses.

Establishment of similar 'Australia Campus' locations around the world could serve as bases for a substantial growth in Australia's TNE activity.

The second model is a 'hybrid learning centre' model. These are smaller, low cost campuses that offer high-speed broadband access, study spaces and some learning support. At these campuses, lectures and workshops are delivered online and students are engaged in small group learning at the learning centre. This blended approach could be delivered at a much more affordable price point for students.

Lowering the cost of Australian higher education while maintaining quality is the key to both expansion and diversification in a number of markets.

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[6] https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/International/heglobal/Pages/scale-of-UK-TNE.aspx

B. Post Study Work Rights (PSWR)

Murdoch proposes that offshore study in Australian TNE programs should be recognised as eligible for PSWR. There should be a minimum study period in Australia of at least half of the CRICOS registered duration, but the change would allow, for example, a student to undertake a three-year Bachelor degree with part of that degree undertaken at an offshore campus of an Australian provider and then completion in Australia and eligibility for PSWR. The current TEQSA Higher Education Standards require that delivery of Australian degrees offshore be of the same quality as those delivered in Australia. This suggests that the educational attributes and skill level of graduates of TNE programs will be the same as students who undertake their program fully in Australia. Murdoch further believes that there should always be a requirement for study in Australia to ensure students who access PSWR have had an opportunity to gain an understanding of the cultural context of living and working in Australia before undertaking a period of prospective employment. Whilst in principle it would be possible to extend the same access to PSWR for students who have studied part of their degree online outside Australia, Murdoch suggests that this would be more complex and would require a different assessment of the quantum between time in Australia and out, to ensure exposure to the cultural elements inherent in face to face learning on an Australian campus (either a campus in Australia or a formal TNE location). Further, it would be possible to still maintain the PSWR link with CRICOS registered courses in TNE locations.

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?

Proposals for Policy reforms in respect to regulation of TNE and applicability of PSWR have been outlined in 3 above.

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

Murdoch University believes that a more even distribution of international students across courses and locations will enhance the learning experience for all students. The challenge is that international students have freedom to choose where they wish to study and active intervention through mechanisms such as prescriptive limits on the numbers of students in courses or at institutions might have unintended consequences. The majority of globally mobile international students originate from a relatively limited number of countries; in Australia the two largest cohorts are Indian and Chinese. As we have explained in Section 2, accessing a broader range of markets would require new delivery models to offer quality Australian education at an affordable price point.

The table below is based on Austrade data year to date as at December 2020 and illustrates the distribution of the two largest cohorts across States and Territories.

Table 1: Higher Education market share WA and national: India and China (top 2 national markets)

	India National	China National	National total	India %	China%
NSW	34927	65120	151160	23.11	43.08
Vic	20990	50650	139839	15.01	36.22
Qld	9160	20021	53460	17.13	37.45
SA	6029	8701	25133	23.99	34.62
WA	4460	5031	23754	18.78	21.18
ACT	950	7371	11884	7.99	62.02
Tas	672	2781	6224	10.80	44.68
NT	392	344	2031	19.30	16.94
Total	77580	160019	413485	18.76	38.70

Source: Austrade YTD Dec 2020 compared to YTD Dec 2019
(https://www.austrade.gov.au/australian/education/education-data/mip-orbis/regional-dashboard-trends)

The uneven distribution of students nationally has arguably been exacerbated by the fact that international brand development is represented by a variety of peak bodies and associations. These typically do not work together; international education stakeholders would benefit from an effort to develop one consistent voice. This could be achieved if Australia were to reconsider the division of education services responsibilities between Austrade and Australian Education International and the locality-based study clusters, to develop a single agency responsible for development and promotion of the national education brand, along similar lines to the British Council. Study clusters should continue to exist, as they provide an important mechanism by which the benefits of particular locations are highlighted and services to support international students can be delivered. However, each study cluster currently operates independently of the national effort and in many cases, they are in direct competition with one another. A coordinated and consistent national approach that is strengthened by competitive federalism would create a consistency of messaging internationally. This would serve to reinforce the message that Australia is one destination with a multitude of options, where having a more even distribution of students nationally will benefit all stakeholders, not least of which is the students themselves.

Summary of recommendations for Question 4:

- Develop a nationally consistent education brand, coordinated across local study clusters.
- Create a single national agency similar to the British Council that subsumes the responsibilities of AEI and the education activity of Austrade, is based within a single Ministry and which is responsible for promotion of Australian education globally.
- Facilitate new models of TNE delivery by working with Australian universities to identify regulatory, data and other challenges to extending Australia's TNE footprint.

5 - What are the necessary skills for the future that students should be prepared for?

The race to develop and implement autonomous systems and artificial intelligence (AI) has challenged the responsiveness of Governments in many areas and none more so than in the domains of education and labour market policy. The societal and productivity benefits of such technologies have been widely documented (see Tegmark, 2017[7]), but so has the capacity for disruption, task replacement and job destruction (see Frey and Osborne, 2013[8]). Indeed, contemporary commentary tends to be bifurcated between optimistic visions of the impact of fourth industrial revolution (4IR) technologies and dystopian predictions (Tegmark, 2017). Among the concerns raised are the likelihood that the rising tide of technologies are displacing tasks and potentially whole occupations (see Frey & Osborne, 2013), as well as the potential for AI and automation to accentuate existing labour market inequalities (Ernst, Merola and Samaan, 2019[9]; Korinek and Stiglitz, 2017[10]).

The challenge for universities is to continually modernise and refine both curricula and pedagogy that ensures that graduate skills and qualifications remain relevant over the longer term. The fourth industrial revolution is also causing many astute commentators to doubt the value of simply 'front-loading' university education. Traditionally, academically capable school leavers would complete an undergraduate degree before entering the labour market. However, rapid and disruptive change now points to the value of universities partnering with graduates and industry over the longer term to offer more postgraduate and continuous learning opportunities – perhaps in the form of stackable, short courses or micro-credentials.

In addition to the technological change introduced by the fourth industrial revolution there are other significant 'mega-trends' noted below that will shape the next 20 to 30 years which include[11]:

Resource Security: 59% increase in food production needed by 2050.

Rapid Urbanisation: 1.5 million people move to cities each week with 66% of the world's population forecast to live in cities by 2050.

Impactful Technology: 90% of the world's data created in the last 2 years; 1 trillion objects will be connected by 2022; 90% of stock trades are now created by algorithms.

Economic Power Shift: 80% of the global middle class will be in developing regions by 2030; by 2025 50% of the total world economy will be in emerging economies.

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[7] Tegmark M (2017) *Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence.* Knopf: New York.

[8] Frey C and Osborne M (2013) *The Future of Employment: How Susceptible Are Jobs to Computerisation?* Working Paper Oxford Martin School, Oxford University. Available at https://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/academic/future-of-employment.pdf (accessed 3 May 2020).

[9] Ernst E, Merola R, and Samaan D (2019) Economics of Artificial Intelligence: Implications for the Future of Work. *IZA Journal of Labor Policy* 9(1).

[10] Korinek A and Stiglitz JE (2017) *Artificial intelligence and its implications for income distribution and unemployment* (No. w24174). National Bureau of Economic Research. Available at https://www.nber.org/papers/w24174.pdf (accessed 3 May 2020).

[11] Retrieved from https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/six-megatrends-future-business-sandra-peter/) (Peter, S. (2017).

Empowering Individuals: Always on, anywhere, predictive, personalised – 66% of individuals "connected" in 2018; socially responsible investment worth $22 trillion in 2016.

Evolving Communities: World population 10 billion by 2050; Africa and Asia will emerge as growth generation sources; Millennials the largest generation in history; 13% of the world population will be over 65 in 2030.

Collectively, these trends will result in significant job destruction and job creation. Tasks within occupations are also likely to change or be displaced. While these changes will be different for different occupations, a general theme is that automation and artificial intelligence typically removes low skilled or repetitive tasks from occupations but demands higher level digital literacy, judgement and emotional management skills.

The Swinburne Centre for the New Workforce, 2019[12], has suggested that the most important skills for the future of work are:

- Digital.
- Functional.
- Entrepreneurial.
- Emotional.

Finally, The Economist Intelligence Unit in 2015[13] published a business survey suggesting business leaders considered the following changes (inter alia) were needed to enhance the education system to ensure a workforce skilled for the future of work:

- Providing better access to company schemes or internships (36%).
- Broadening the access to technology in schools and universities (31%).
- Providing more opportunities to study abroad (22%).
- Encouraging the creation of student networks (12%).

5.1 - How can Australia improve employability outcomes for international students, ensuring students have the necessary skills to compete in a globally competitive labour market?

The IEAA in October 2019 published a report on the Economic Opportunities and Outcomes of PSWR.[14] It noted:

"Almost three-quarters of temporary graduate visa holders (subclass 485) are in full-time (44%) or part-time (30%) employment. But despite being younger and more highly educated than other skilled migrants, a number of temporary graduates are working in low-skilled occupations – or not at all – after their studies."

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[12] https://www.swinburne.edu.au/research/centres-groupsclinics/ centre-for-the-new-workforce/our-research/peak-human-workplace/
[13] https://eiuperspectives.economist.com/talent-education/driving-skills-agenda/blog/skills-agendapreparing-students-future

[14] Chew, J. (2019), 'Economic opportunities and outcomes of post-study work rights in Australia', International Education Association of Australia (IEAA), retrieved from www.ieaa.org.au.

This suggests that nationally we have some way to go to ensure we achieve more effective employment outcomes for international students.

The report itself does not make any specific conclusions on why employment rates may be lower for this cohort, but it does point to the possibility that there is a disconnect in expectations between students and employers (ibid):

"First, it may be the case the temporary graduate visa holders appear to be 'over qualified' in the eyes of Australian employers.

Second, it is possible that temporary graduate visa holders themselves are not aware of the age and experience of the candidates with whom they are competing."

This suggests two key gaps that could be addressed:

- The understanding of Australian employers.
- The expectations of students.

Without suggesting a prescriptive approach, Murdoch would like to offer two innovations that it has introduced as examples of approaches to improving employability outcomes for international students. First Murdoch has introduced a 'Career Learning Spine' across all its undergraduate degrees. The Career Learning Spine is a discrete set of three units which all undergraduate students are required to take. The Spine aims to ensure students will be able to:

- apply the enterprise skills desired by employers in their field/s, demonstrated through one or more real world learning experiences, that enhance their career learning;
- utilise a range of knowledge and skills to manage their career planning and development; and,
- construct a coherent suite of resources to communicate their career capabilities for professional and learning purposes.

Second, Murdoch has established entrepreneurship and employability centres at all campus locations onshore and offshore. In Perth, the centre is called 'The LaunchPad' while in Singapore we have established Murdoch EDGE (Entrepreneurship Development and Graduate Employability) and Murdoch Dubai EDGE at our campus in the UAE. These centres offer a range of employability services and training opportunities – from connecting graduates with industry to coaching and mentoring opportunities through to entrepreneurship training and finance. These centres share resources such as industry speakers and events, and also collaborate to host our international entrepreneurship competition 'Think Big'.

These centres serve to strengthen and differentiate our value proposition to students and could become part of a distinctly Australian element of an enhanced TNE strategy for the sector.

6 - How do we create a uniquely Australian education experience?

Murdoch proposes two areas of focus for this:

- Firstly, we need to ensure (via a robust and fit for purpose regulatory framework) that we have high quality institutions, provide high quality courses, ensure superior educational outcomes (including work experience and employment outcomes post-graduation), support our students' educational journey (including pastoral support) and ensure the communities in which we operate understand the value of international education and the contribution it makes to the well-being of society. This quality should apply to delivery both in Australia and in TNE locations.
- Beyond this, we need to consider how we share the cultures and experiences of Indigenous Australians. This could be achieved through online modules targeted at ensuring international students gain exposure to and understanding of this culture. Murdoch suggests that this should be a foundational underpinning of the entire strategy as there is there is little else that is truly and uniquely Australian.

6.1 - What is our value proposition for both international and domestic students?

The inherent value of international education is the same for all international students, irrespective of whether we are discussing people from overseas studying with Australia, or Australians undertaking study overseas.

The Consultation Paper usefully discusses outbound mobility for Australian students, and the need to focus on this for the development of core skills for Australian students. Murdoch University supports the proposition inherent in the Consultation Paper that "international education" is as much about getting Australian students overseas as it is about getting international students to study with Australia.

The 2020 IEAA report Career Outcomes of Learning Abroad – National Report[15] found that:

"*Learning Abroad supports the development of skills employers are looking for*."

In particular, interpersonal skills, oral communication and teamwork are enhanced by the experience. These are three of the top four skills that employers are looking for according to the *Australian Association of Graduate Employers (AAGE) Employer Survey of 2019*[16]**.**

However, Murdoch questions how this will be supported for Australian students given the recent dismantling of the Endeavour scheme. From a WA perspective, Murdoch also suggest that New Colombo Plan (NCP) funding should be provided to the Indian Ocean rim countries beyond those already in the scheme. Currently key Indian Ocean countries in the Middle East and Africa are excluded but would benefit from inclusion to achieve the goals of the NCP across the full spectrum of our closest neighbours, given the scheme is ostensibly focussed on the Indo-Pacific and not just the Asia-Pacific.

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[15] https://www.ieaa.org.au/research/career-outcomes-of-learning-abroad-2

[16] https://aage.com.au/employer-survey

6.2 - How do we offer an Australian education experience while complementing the value of Australian offshore and online education?

The Australian education value proposition is already clearly compelling for international students but could be enhanced through innovation. For example, COVID-19 has exposed the rigidities across the sector in permitting students moving between on-campus in Australia, to online and TNE modes of delivery. It would enhance the sector's appeal if international students could seamlessly move between TNE, online and onshore modes of enrolment. This flexibility would not only accommodate the current challenges of closed borders, but also help to enhance the value proposition of online, and TNE. This 'Australian education as you choose' is underpinned by oft-quoted perceptions of Australia as being welcoming, easy-going and flexible. The Australian government could assist with such an approach by removing regulatory barriers and extending post-study work rights in the manner we have previously described.

7 - Community support for the international education sector is important for the sector's social licence. How can the benefits this sector provides to Australia be better understood by wider community?

Whilst there is little actual evidence to suggest that international education is not widely supported or understood by the community, the apparent lack of public support for plans to facilitate the return of international students suggests a lack of understanding of the benefits of the sector.

As described in our response to question 2, Murdoch University supports the efforts of the IEAA to proactively develop an understanding in the community of the contribution of the Sector via a public relations campaign and suggests this would be enhanced with appropriate Government engagement and support. This support should clearly outline the value to Australia of international education across the full spectrum of activities, including:

- the original Colombo plan and the impact it has had on our region and the soft power achieved through graduates going onto to significant leadership roles in their home countries such as the previous Vice President of Indonesia, Professor Dr Boediono;
- the current Australia Award program that benefits regional cooperation and development;
- student mobility for Australian students, which in many cases is facilitated by the networks and connections developed through broader international engagement activities;
- the advantages Australia's export sector can gain through employment of well-educated and culturally attuned international student alumni who can 'bridge the gaps' and assist our industries to be highly successful in competitive export markets;
- the benefits to the Australian community from the enhanced sustainability of our education institutions through the financial contributions international students make; and,
- the intangible benefits to multiculturalism in our societies and classrooms.

This last point is critical if, as is stated in the Consultation paper, we aim to maintain our status as: *"…the most successful multicultural society in the world…"*

In addition, some work needs to be done on "myth busting", including dispelling myths about international students displacing Australians from university places. The fact that the majority return home should also be highlighted given some of the negative sentiment has been founded in the incorrect belief that international education is no more than a way to purchase entrance to Australian Permanent Residency.

Murdoch believes that this messaging would be most effective as a joint campaign between the international education sector and the government, to pro-actively communicate the benefits to the community and ensure that it is clear that the goals of international education positively contribute to national goals.

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

Murdoch University would like to add the following for consideration:

- The Government's strategy needs to be cognizant of global trends and market forces.
- It is important that the strategy aligns with other recent government policies and legislation, specifically the Foreign Interference and Foreign Relations Bills. The strategy cannot be at odds with other government directions.
- The Consultation Paper is relatively silent on research. Murdoch supports the concept of Comprehensive Internationalisation as defined by Professor John Hudzik[17]. This suggests that all international activities (inbound international students, outbound domestic students, institutional partnerships and research collaborations) must be aligned. It suggests that a strategy that ignores any one element (in this case research) risks irrelevance or failure as it is applied.

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[17] https://www.iau-aiu.net/Definition-of-Comprehensive-Internationalisation