

Q20.

# Australian Strategy for International Education consultation submission

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Q1. Name \*

Paul Browning

Q2. Organisation \*

St Paul's School

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

Headmaster

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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]

The key priorities for a new Australian strategy for international education must begin with a focus on promoting and growing the School sector as a standalone quality educational experience, which also provides direct pathways to world-leading Universities in Australia. The School sector provides incredible value to both the Australian economy as well as to our domestic students and should be valued by government accordingly. This would be assisted by government ensuring international students have the same opportunities and access to learning as domestic students (e.g., short courses, micro-credentials, and certificate courses while in School). There is also room for more consistency between schools and universities. A national approach to curriculum, assessment, entry requirements and pathways for International Students would be welcome. Providers would benefit from greater flexibility being afforded (within the scope of their registration) to allow innovation, and creativity in course delivery, that can be reactive to the needs of the current environment, at any given time. While this is starting to happen now, there is significant room for improvement, such as the implementation of flexible course delivery modes that allow for a better overall student experience. Government messaging and campaigns can assist. A campaign that promoted Australia as a welcoming, safe country would be helpful. This could include a positive focus on our handling of the covid pandemic (covid cases and deaths), to offset the negative views towards us keeping our borders closed (unwelcoming country) and the anti-Asian sentiment that has risen around the world as a result of COVID. In terms of student wellbeing, there must be increased support services for students studying in Australian schools and universities. There is a growing number of students with undiagnosed learning difficulties and there are few local first language services to support families in this situation. This can have an impact on school and tertiary dropouts when students are unable to meet the appropriate benchmarks. More broadly, priority should be given to lowering the number of students who do not complete their university education. Making all universities appealing for families - not just the Sandstone Universities. With this in mind. Government must consider what role Foundation programs have in providing pathways for students into University - failing Foundation limits options for students.

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]

We recommend more flexible course delivery options for High Schools. For example, students could commence part of their studies online prior to departure from their home country, particularly their English language program, which would allow a more seamless transition into Australian life and their general High School experience. International students who enrol into High School Preparation programs in Schools generally arrive in Australia with limited English and must navigate an overwhelming number of unfamiliar scenarios from the minute they land in the country. This includes meeting a new homestay family, navigating public transport, communicating in the general community, and making new friends at School. If Schools were able to provide one term of HSP prior to the student's departure, they can meet their Teachers and classmates, become familiar with the Australian Schooling system, the Australian accent and develop their English to a level where they can communicate a lot more effectively upon their arrival. There must be greater focus on pre-departure orientation. For example, could students be sent standard/consistent 'Welcome to Australia' pre-departure orientation information when their student visas are granted? These could be translated simple FAQ documents, booklets, videos etc that promoted Australia as a study destination and explained all the important things students need to know to feel prepared and confident before leaving their home countries. Schools and institutions would continue to run their own orientation programs to complement the information students have already received. The addition of programs for establishing meaningful integration between domestic and international students would enhance the overall experience for both international and domestic students. Programs such as these could go further than a one-off encounter/opportunity and aims at developing genuine connections and friendships that can be mutually beneficial to both international and domestic students. These would help find ways to encourage international students to be more comfortable and confident in taking these opportunities. A focus on educating domestic students and teachers on the challenges international students face and creating a culture of empathy, understanding and acceptance would also be worthwhile. There must also be an outspoken acknowledgement that international students are 'students'. While acknowledging how proud we are to welcome international students to Australia and our Schools, how can we get to a point where an international student is just 'a student', who happens to be in a subclass 500 visa? Can we effectively move away from identifying international students as a separate group of people and leaving the door open for intolerance? A focus on homestay must also be considered. As part of the national campaign to promote international students in Australia, could we include messages about welcoming a student into your home (homestay). There is a need for higher quality families within homestay programs at Schools and Universities. Could we build a reputation within Australia of having really caring, genuine families who welcome students into their homes?

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

Policy and regulatory flexibility are important in enabling providers to innovate. Discussion must take place on the key question: how can we utilise these settings to pursue opportunities, and in what other ways can we work together to ensure Australia remains globally competitive? More investment in collaboration/ joint projects between Schools and Universities (promoting Australia as an overall study destination – not each School and University operating independently) is recommended, along with clear messages that the entrepreneurial and innovative thinking focus in Australian institutions, does not mean less academic excellence. In line with this, we encourage the promotion of good employability outcomes for international students and support for students entering the workforce post university. We encourage Government to adopt the goal of growing the reputation of Australian Universities to being equal to USA and UK. More broadly, we would like to see an investigation into visa regulations and application requirements and how these compare to our competitors - is this a barrier? Also, what are the immigration pathways (and how easy are they to achieve) post study compared to our competitors? Furthermore, could there be a scheme for students to apply for reduced airfares if coming from countries further away (who would usually choose to study in the UK or USA due to location compared to home country). Especially High School students who would be returning home two times per year. Or incentives for students to stay and complete their education - incentives to stay in school, completion incentives. Investigation is also recommended into the needs of a changing world. What percentage of students who complete university stay in Australia and use their knowledge and skills to benefit Australian society, compared to the percentage that take their skills back to their home country. Skills shortages are different in each country - are we preparing students to make an impact where it is needed. Lastly, we endorse working closely with Educational agents. They play a huge role in guiding parent choice about where their students study. There are different financial incentives offered by different schools in different countries. Agents have closer connections to educational institutions in some countries than others - this impacts where students go. Parents trust agents to give them the right information and suggest suitable options for their children.

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]

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]

This can be achieved by allowing international student programs/opportunities to be offered in partnership between Universities and Schools. We also would like to see greater financial support from the Government for Schools to create new online, onshore or in country programs that could be delivered in new and emerging markets. This could also lead to more collaboration between schools so that students may be able to study subjects in another school, if their area of interest is not offered in their home school. More broadly, we would like to see more opportunities for hybrid studies - more Vet pathways for International students at school. Overall, there must be a mindset shift from a focus primarily on knowledge to a skill - hard and soft approach that young people need to survive and thrive in a changing world. That is cultural and very difficult to change. But Australia needs to sell an innovative and unique approach to education - one which prepares students for a very different future and also meets the academic expectations of parents.

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

It goes without saying that we have entered a period of change like none other human history has seen before. We have entered a new period of revolution: work is being transformed by artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics. The tasks and jobs that AI and robotics cannot replace, and the new jobs that will emerge, are the ones that require high levels of creative thinking and emotional intelligence. It is even likely that people will have to create their own employment futures; that is, to be entrepreneurs. Schools are particularly good at killing creativity. Every person is born with the ability to think creatively but our industrial model of school education conditions creativity out of all but the few. People become entrepreneurs in spite of their education, not because of it. If Australians, and the people we educate in Australian schools and institutions, are to successfully compete in a globally competitive labour market we need to transform how education is delivered, shifting systems away from the things we can easily measure (and standardise) and focus on the things that will be of real value: creativity and emotional intelligence. Rather than trying to be like other countries and replicate their education systems, we should cast a compelling vision for an education system that will be the envy of the world, a system that truly prepares young people for a future that bears little resemblance to today. Young people need to be equipped with the ability to think creatively, to think like innovators, to become, if they choose to do so, entrepreneurs. They need the heart and desire to tackle the global issues we are facing and seek to make a positive difference to the communities in which they will live and work.

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]

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

We must create an education system that properly prepares young people to compete in a global competitive labour market then we will have a unique value proposition for all who study in Australia, both the domestic as well as the international students. Crisis creates the necessity for innovation. As a result of the pandemic educational institutions have capitalised on the opportunity to create new products. St Paul's School in Brisbane has 30+ full time international students studying online in addition to the 100 international students on site. We are currently creating new online products to supplement our income stream. However, we do not see the online opportunities as a long-term replacement for what we currently offer. In our experience parents send their children abroad to study for several reasons, primary for the opportunity to learn English in an English-speaking culture (immersion); and, the opportunity to study at a good university. Long-term, parents see an international education as an opportunity for a better life beyond the borders of their own country. While online study is necessary at this point in time, unless borders will never be as porous as they were pre-COVID, online learning cannot replace the opportunity to study in another country. It is also important to remember that international education not only provides a benefit for those international students, and an economic benefit to Australia, it also provides a benefit to our domestic students. Global peace and the solutions to our global issues will only be found when individuals realise that they are global citizens. One of the best ways to develop tolerance and understanding (the bedrock of global citizenship) is to create diversity. International students in our schools and universities provide an invaluable opportunity for our young people to meet, get to know, understand and appreciate cultural difference and become friends with people from other nations. Relationships are the key. Online learning cannot replicate the immense value of face-to-face.

Q12.  
6.1 - What is our value proposition for both international and domestic students? [limit to 500 words]

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]

Q14.  
7 - What else should the Council for International Education and the Australian Government consider in developing a new strategy? [limit to 500 words]

While Australia is a multicultural nation, sadly racism is still endemic. We fear what we don't understand. We worry that immigration will dilute our Australian values and way of life. As the saying goes, there are two things that are certain in life, death and taxes. However, there is a third certainty: change. The world is changing, at an accelerating rate. Our way of life will change. We cannot hang onto the past, we must embrace opportunities and confidently create our future. The problems we are facing are global issues (e.g. climate change, pandemics, supply chains) and require a global response. If Australia is to be competitive on a global stage it needs to embrace the notion of global citizenship: we should become more multicultural. If our international education programs are to be successful Australian citizens need to understand the benefits for, not only our economy, but also the development of our domestic students. Australian parents want their children to have a bright future filled with hope. They don't want their children to live in fear that a foreign national will take their job, or our standard of living will be diminished because we cannot compete on the global stage. If parents can see the opportunities international students will provide their own children they will be more likely to embrace the sector's goals.

Q15.  
8 - Do you have any additional comments or feedback to share?

Q19.

If you wish to upload a document to support your submission, including a document answering the discussion questions, 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