

Q20.

Australian Strategy for International Education consultation submission

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Amanda Fritz

Q2. Organisation *

The Anglican Schools Commission and Alexander Language School

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

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

a. Roadmap for Recovery: It is essential that Australia be seen as a legitimate study destination in the future. The response to the COVID-19 Pandemic will mean little to nothing if Australia is not seen as a welcoming and legitimate study destination at some point in the future. Without a roadmap, we risk students seeking other destinations as Australia is seen further out of reach. b. Sector and Destination Specific Marketing International education in Australia has traditionally been focused on a 'top down' approach, with heavy emphasis being on the Higher Education and VET sector. Whilst this is important and will remain to be the two largest sectors, it is apparent that greater focus must be given to recruitment of students into the feeder areas of the market, specifically Schools and ELICOS. There is growing evidence that a student who has engaged and spent some time in the Australian schooling system, is better acclimatised to both the culture of an Australian lifestyle, and also the expectations and nuances of studying within the Australian education system. This therefore enables a greater chance of sustained engagement and success in tertiary studies. The Australian education system focuses on collaborative education, which includes students working with their peers to create and analyse ideas and research. This is a new prospect for many international students and therefore creating pathways which aids their integration and understanding of this style of teaching and learning, prior to university, will benefit students and providers. A strategy which encourages students to enter the system in a pathway course, through both onshore and offshore (remote or online) studies should be considered. c. Offshore Partnerships: With the growing innovation in remote or online education delivery, students can miss the advantages of an Australian campus experience. Additionally, ongoing challenges with technology in some countries, make remote learning difficult. The strategy should therefore seek to include the development of 'offshore study hubs' specifically for students who have limited technology (internet) access from their homes and also for students who prefer to study in a 'campus' environment. d. Terminology: Australia needs to develop consistent terminology when discussing and promoting the delivery of courses to students outside of a traditional classroom based model. There are currently many different connotations of words used to describe this model. The terms, online, remote, distance and virtual are just several. The strategy needs to define these and understand what the different terminology means to different source countries. The term 'online' is largely seen as a 'self-directed' course, which is not highly popular with students from China, for example. The Australian government and education providers should use consistent and centrally (through the strategy) defined terms. For example: □ Online – a self-directed, self-paced course with no face to face teacher interaction □ Distant – a combined self-directed and teacher engaged course with a significant portion of lessons delivered via pre-recorded presentations and a small portion delivered via live face to face video conferencing within a virtual classroom. □ Remote or Virtual – a fully integrated face to face course delivered via a virtual classroom with live lessons daily. □ Support schools by offering Remote classes to students stranded overseas to keep them engaged in their studies till they can return to their respective school.

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]

a. Investment in technology for teaching and learning, as well as pastoral / welfare support systems which cater for remote learners. A key priority needs to focus on not only student recruitment, but also the retention of students in remote learning programs. Education providers therefore need to provide upskilling and professional development opportunities for student support staff to learn how to cater to off-campus learners. b. The Australian government should support providers in accessing offshore study hubs so that students can gain a 'campus' experience as well as in-country support services for IT and other areas c. With the support of government, providers, and the industry as a whole, need to develop or disseminate community education campaigns which break down the miss conceptions that international students take jobs and university placements away from Australians. The public must be made aware of the benefits that international students bring not only to the economy, but also the services and courses that providers are able to deliver and offer as a result of engaging with international students and global markets.

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

- Bonus points for student visas and migration for School and ELICOS students Students who decide to study through the Australian school or ELICOS system, prior to entry into other sectors, should be rewarded with bonus migration points and/or priority with visa applications, for their initiative to undergo early integration into the Australian education system. Investment or reward for this cohort will inevitably lead to a higher quality of student and positive outcomes for VET and Higher Education providers as these students progress through the tertiary system.

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]

- ESOS - National Code Standard 7 review for under 18 students Students under the age of 18 are currently able to change providers without a release after six months in their school course. This causes significant issue for providers who have taken on the responsibility of welfare for these students and often see that a change of provider is not in the best interests of ensuring academic success and welfare stability for the child. Parents are generally offshore and reliant on the advice of their own child to dictate course and provider. It is recommended that Standard 7 of the National Code be amended to require that any students under the age of 18, obtain a release letter before transferring providers. - Immigration policy update to enable student to package more than two courses Students should have the flexibility of being able to package three courses under the one visa application, as opposed to being limited to just two. Following Point C above, students must be encouraged to engage with the Australian education system earlier to provide for greater success and outcomes from both an academic and culturalisation perspective.

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]

A. Communications and messaging to offshore markets Australia needs to work together to deliver consistent messaging across all sectors and harness the "safe haven" that has been created during COVID, to position ourselves as the global destination of choice. As mentioned above, a clear and specific strategy to build the pipeline from the pathway providers (ELICOS and schools) upwards. Not only will this aid to 'future-proof' Higher Education and VET, it will also aid to ensure that the delivery of quality students who have experience and understanding of the Australian curriculum, teaching and learning strategies and culture, is achieved. Furthermore, effective government leadership must occur to ensure that accurate and appropriate messaging is being delivered to offshore markets. Australia is at significant risk of being seen as an unwelcoming society and this will undermine any efforts for recovery as other competitor destinations are creating opportunities for international students to be welcomed back. B. Sector specific collaboration In the school sector, Australia (like Canada, US and the UK) has capitalised on the growth of offshore K-12 international schools. However, different states are working separately with overseas partners to support the formation and branding of their own Year 12 programs and accreditation. There needs to be a more coherent and cohesive approach at the national level to build a distinctly Australian brand for high school education and qualification, in order to support the schools sector as a valued pathway to higher education in Australia. In addition, the schools sector and the Australian government can collaborate on ways to engage the parents and stakeholders of offshore K-12 Australian schools so that they will continue to focus on Australia as their study destination. To support diversification strategies, government agencies such as Austrade can play a leading role to help collate, analyse and provide local data and feedback intelligence for education sectors, and help evaluate and identify key growth markets for 2021-2030. With travel restrictions firmly in place, Australian education providers are more reliant than ever on these market updates and intelligence from government channels who are monitoring local media, consumer sentiment and agent feedback.

Q9.

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

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]

Students must be provided with opportunity and advantages to engage with the Australian education system earlier. Students who engage with an Australian provider for a School, Foundation or ELICOS program, are more likely to positively integrate, gain beneficial experiences, and acquire the soft skills necessary to develop into globalised citizens and/or global leaders.

Q11.

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

Q12.

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

The benefits to the creation of 'Globalised Citizens' that international programs in Australia can bring for both international and domestic students, should not be underestimated. As more and more of the world's business and economic prosperity relies on global mobility and globalisation, the development of our students into citizens of the world who are truly able to understand and appreciate the academic, religious and cultural differences in their peers, has never been more important. Today's students are tomorrow leaders and education must commence as early as possible to enable them to successfully immerse themselves into the global economy.

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]

A. Offshore Study Hubs An investment in offshore study hubs that enable students to collaborate and integrate with other students. These study hubs should be well branded and distinguishable as an Australian education hub so that students are able to gain a taste of the Australian experience whilst still in their home country. Such an initiative will then also facilitate preparedness for the student prior to entering Australia. B. Online Interactive Orientation Platform An online, highly engaging (age and culturally appropriate) orientation platform which provides students with easy to understand information pertaining to: • The Australian education system • Australian employment prospects • Australian culture • Australian lifestyle • Safety and Security • ESOS and legal framework Education providers are required to deliver this information as part of their ESOS obligations, however, the different approach that each provider takes means information is often inconsistent and not always presented in a manner which is engaging for the student. If the federal government could develop and deliver a platform, which provided the necessary information that all providers and students were required to disseminate, it would ensure clearer messaging and consistency across the nation. This could be presented in a manner which is highly engaging for students and enables providers to then insert their own customised information pieces applicable to their campus, operations and services. Such a platform would also provide a greater awareness of Australia as a source destination and create the opportunity for utilisation as a marketing tool for future 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]

The Australian Government and the CIE must take a leadership position with messaging to the market. The current messaging, portrayed in the media, is being translated in some markets to resemble borders not opening, even after vaccination rollout. This is creating fear and angst amongst all potential and current enrolments, especially those students studying online. The investment being put into online or remote learning is worthless if the right messaging is not being disseminated into the market. Students ultimately want to come to Australia, to have an 'Australian study experience.' If the message that we are closing ourselves off to the rest of the world, for at least another year is being perceived, students will most definitely seek an alternative plan, if they have not already done so. Public opinion in Australia can be led by media and government can be influenced by public opinion. The fear mongering in the media has, and will continue to, damage Australia's reputation in any industry that relies on global mobility. International education being only one of those. Our handling of the pandemic, in six months' time, will mean very little, if anything at all, as the rest of the world opens and revives their businesses reliant on global mobility. Australia is at significant risk of being left behind and forgotten from the global market.

Q15.

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

Social License and Community Education Campaigns An Education campaign is required for the wider Australian Community to understand the financial and social benefits of international education. Education campaigns on the value of globalising our citizens, must commence in the community. Students, from primary school, through to tertiary, gain significant advantages of being exposed to other cultures, religions, traditions etc. It is essential that government education campaigns across schools, universities, state and local governments occur in order educate the population on the value of intercultural understanding and cooperation. Curriculum - Development of a national EAL/D curriculum for Years 7-10 For younger students, ACARA has not developed a national curriculum for EAL students. This is particularly an issue in years 7-10, where schools, both locally and overseas, have students who need this course. These students are then often placed in a mainstream English course. As they are unable to access the whole curriculum, they are generally reported as a D or an E grade, which does not reflect their ability to acquire the language and is disheartening for the students. Schools who do have enough students to warrant a specialised EAL class have no real guidelines on what to teach. This leads to inconsistent standards across schools. Given that ACARA is currently reviewing the K-10 curriculum, this should be given priority, as it will create a course more appropriate for the learner's needs and will allow them to achieve marks that are reflective of their ability. Rather than having to "adapt and adopt" the national English curriculum, these students deserve their own EAL curriculum.

Q19.

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

Q16.

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- Yes – but keep my name anonymous
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