



Meeting of Expert Members of the Council for International Education 24 July 2019

On 24 July 2019, Expert Members welcomed Mr Ahmed Ademoglu, the recently-elected President of the Council of International Students Australia (CISA), as the new ex-officio member. Mr Bijay Sapkota, former CISA President, reflected on his tenure as an Expert Member. Mr Sapkota was pleased that many of the issues students are facing, such as workplace exploitation, community engagement and student wellbeing, are established Council priorities. Expert Members also noted the resignation of Ms Tracey Horton from the group and expressed thanks to Ms Horton for her service to the Council since 2016.

With the [National Strategy for International Education 2025](#) (the National Strategy) nearing its halfway point, Expert Members agreed on the need to build on progress in implementing the National Strategy's objectives, and identify actions to ensure Australia remains a world leader in international education. Expert Members committed to develop a forward work plan to be presented to Ministerial members of the Council and the Prime Minister at the end of 2019. Noting recent media coverage regarding English language admission standards, Expert Members agreed to provide the Minister for Education with a position paper advocating for a strong, evidence based narrative on the high quality of Australia's international education sector.

Building on a discussion amongst members of the International Education Stakeholders Forum on 31 May 2019, the Expert Members held a deep dive session on the sustainability of Australia's international education sector. They explored the complexities around three key themes: diversification, student experience and quality and governance arrangements.

Ms Karyn Kent, Chief Executive Officer, StudyAdelaide, facilitated the deep dive and acknowledged this topic was raised by Mr Sapkota as part of the Expert Members meeting in July 2018. Mr Sapkota provided views on the importance of student experience, value-for-money and pathways to employability in ensuring a sustainable sector. Mr Jonathan Chew from Nous Group updated Expert Members on research funded through the Enabling Growth and Innovation (EGI) program about positioning Australia as an attractive study destination for international students. The research is underway and will provide information on the cost of studying in major cities in competitor nations and relative employment outcomes for international students.

Given increased competition in international education and impacts of currency exchange fluctuations, Expert Members noted that a sustainable international education sector will need to maintain competitiveness and the value proposition for students, have curricula that evolves to balance the needs of students and employers, and have steps in place to deal with reputational damage from provider closures and perceived quality issues. These actions align with Expert Members' [four areas of strategic focus in 2018](#), and delivery of the National Strategy.

Expert Members also held a planning session to discuss progress in implementing the National Strategy and to identify future work priorities. Their dialogue was informed by the sustainability deep dive and a gap analysis of activities as measured against the goals in the National Strategy. Expert Members identified key areas of future

work, over the short, medium and long term, as the first step in developing a forward work plan to be conveyed to Ministers. Expert Members and government agencies agreed that steering committees comprised of sector representatives oversee EGI work to build engagement and guide successful delivery. Expert Members also committed to exploring options to improve communication with the sector. The Department of Education will work with Expert Members to develop their recommendations into a forward plan to continue delivery of the National Strategy over the remaining five years.

Expert Members welcomed and endorsed the final reports of the China Working Group and the India Reference Group. Both groups comprised sector experts and the reports were developed through extensive stakeholder consultation. Kent Anderson, co-chair of the China Working Group, presented the report on refreshing our education engagement with China. Phil Honeywood, co-chair of the India Reference Group, reported on how the India Reference Group consulted with the sector, and states and territories to respond to the education recommendations in the India Economic Strategy and strengthen Australia's engagement with India. The reports will be provided to the Minister for Education for approval and then released to the sector.

Expert Members were briefed by an Austrade representative on developments with Australia's Nation Brand and plans for Study In Australia 2.0. This will build on the digital engagement and strategic messaging projects funded under the EGI program. Reflecting the importance of education in the Nation Brand, Austrade will conduct further industry consultation before it is launched later in 2019. A representative from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade briefed Expert Members on the new National Foundation for Australia-China Relations, noting that a recent nation-wide consultation round generated strong interest from the education sector and the Foundation is expected to begin operations in late 2019.

The next meeting of Expert Members is expected to take place in late September/early October 2019.