



## Meeting of Expert Members of the Council for International Education 20 May 2020

On 20 May 2020, Expert Members met by videoconference to discuss issues facing Australia's international education sector. Members noted COVID-19 remains the most significant challenge currently affecting the sector. As restrictions begin to be lifted across the country, the education sector is transitioning from focusing not only on the immediate needs of students and providers, to medium and longer term recovery of the sector so that Australia remains a world leader in the delivery of high quality international education going forward.

Expert Members applauded the work of the sector, communities and governments in working together to ensure Australia remains a safe and welcoming destination for international students, recognising the collective efforts undertaken to support a strong and effective public health response. Members invited further action from across a broad range of industry sectors and regions to highlight the value that our international students and researchers bring to the nation and the deep respect we have for them.

Expert Members confirmed their intention to focus their work for the remainder of 2020 on steps and priorities needed for the sector to recover from the effects of COVID-19, and to develop sustainability into the future. The inclusion of international students as a clear part of Australia's *Framework to a COVIDSafe Australia* is a strong signal of the importance of resuming activities for this critical group once Stage 3 is reached. Members discussed the implementation of the next stages of the Framework, particularly including the key issues to be considered in recommencing travel for international students.

Expert Members discussed the important role the *National Strategy for International Education* (National Strategy) will play in the recovery of the sector. Given the significance of changes to the global and domestic international education landscape over the last few months, Members recommended that instead of the planned refresh of the National Strategy there should be a more in-depth process to develop a new National Strategy. This two-stage process would guide renewal and recovery in a post pandemic world. The first stage will involve understanding the unfolding impacts of COVID-19, supported by research and analysis undertaken during the remainder of 2020 and into early 2021. This will underpin the development of the new National Strategy and formal stakeholder consultations in a second stage.