



Meeting of Expert Members of the Council for International Education 23 September 2020

On 23 September 2020 Expert Members met to discuss the development of a new *Australian Strategy for International Education and Training* to drive the sector's success over the next decade. Expert Members explored a range of issues that will help a new strategy adapt to economic and workforce needs both in Australia and around the world. These issues included the economic impact of COVID-19 on international education, and strategic opportunities with key markets as well as employability for international students. Members acknowledged the ongoing disruption to the sector of COVID-19 and border arrangements, while also noting that the sector's focus must extend to longer-term issues facing international education.

Expert Members agreed the development and delivery of a new national strategy for international education and training will underpin the sector's recovery and renewal in a 'COVID-normal' landscape and build community connections locally and around the world. It will reinforce changes needed to ensure Australia's international education sector remains globally competitive. Expert Members will produce an interim report on these issues to be presented to the Ministerial Council meeting in December.

The new strategy will explore how Australia can build on its position as a world-leading provider of high-quality international education, research and training that embodies distinctly Australian characteristics and values. The strategy will need to embed agility and strengthen systems, offering both a long-term strategic vision and framework for cooperation to allow the sector and the government to realise emerging opportunities and deal with challenges over the next decade—onshore, offshore and online. Conversations on the strategy will continue over the coming months with public consultations set to begin in early 2021 including a series of strategic seminars.

Expert Members noted encouraging news for the sector, with draft research commissioned by the department finding that despite a significant and prolonged period of disruption the value of Australia's strengths in international education—world-class education systems and institutions, liveable cities, and strong graduate outcomes—remain strong and fundamentally unchanged. New competitive advantages are also emerging from the pandemic, as students look to countries offering affordable and high-quality education, sound health systems, and strong social cohesion.

To enhance international student employability, Members also agreed to establish an online resource with expert guidance and tools for use by education providers; promoting resources through Expert Member networks and existing forums; and engaging directly with accreditation associations on the value of virtual internships. Resources are expected to be available in the coming months.