



Australian Government

# Communiqué

## Council for International Education meeting

### 23 November 2016, Canberra

At the first meeting of the Council for International Education, held at Parliament House in Canberra on 23 November 2016, Ministers and expert members pledged to work together to ensure Australia's international education sector remains vibrant, competitive and sustainable. The attendance of six Australian Government Ministers and Assistant Ministers underscored the Government's strong commitment to this goal.

Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, Minister for Education and Training and Chair of the Council, stressed his commitment to maintaining Australia's reputation for quality while continuing to sustainably grow our offerings, services and enrolments at home and abroad. The Council discussed the importance of focusing on quality and excellence at every step of the student journey, from the decision to apply for a student visa, to maintaining connections post-study through alumni engagement activities. All members noted the full range of economic, social and cultural benefits that international education provides to Australia.

Council members agreed that excellent living and learning experiences for international students are central to the success of the sector. They noted that in addition to a quality, world-renowned education, international students seek opportunities to contribute meaningfully to Australian education institutions and communities.

The Hon Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, reiterated the Australian Government's commitment to two-way mobility and exchanges for students, researchers and academics. The Council lauded the success of programs such as the New Colombo Plan in

facilitating international mobility experiences for Australian students, including those who would otherwise not be afforded such opportunities.

The Hon Steven Ciobo MP, Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, identified education exports as a fundamental driver of the Australian economy and stressed that capitalising on new market opportunities while growing existing partnerships is imperative. Council members, noting the increasing global demand for quality education, agreed that Australia should strive to remain at the cutting edge of best practice in education delivery methods and continue to innovate across the breadth of education products and services.

The Hon Greg Hunt MP, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, noted that Australia's global reputation for research excellence, supported by our science and technology infrastructure, attracts the world's best researchers and scholars. The Council agreed that international research collaboration helps Australian businesses access global expertise and leverages Australia's strong reputation for research excellence.

The Hon Karen Andrews MP, Assistant Minister for Vocational Education and Skills, highlighted the growing demand for quality vocational education and training in the Indo-Pacific, delivered both in Australia and offshore. The Council undertook to harness the enormous opportunities that exist beyond Australia including through innovative borderless approaches. Council members considered a range of opportunities encompassing all education sectors in both existing and emerging regions.



The Hon Alex Hawke MP, Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, outlined how implementation of Australia's Simplified Student Visa Framework is supporting the sustainable growth of the sector. The Council noted that Australia's complete value proposition for international students, comprising generous part-time work arrangements during studies and the opportunity for eligible graduates to work in Australia, is central to Australia's competitiveness as a global study destination.

Council members stressed the importance of cooperation and collaboration in presenting a united national approach to promote Australia's education, training and research excellence. Council members acknowledged the already strong cooperation that exists between the Australian Government and state and territory governments. The Council agreed that there is great potential to increase the numbers of international students who live and learn in regional Australia and noted that many state and territory governments are committed to this objective.

The importance of providing all graduates of Australian education with the skills and attributes for global career success was also discussed. The Council agreed that the development of intercultural capabilities was crucial to Australia's transition to a globally connected services-based economy. Council members agreed that broader Australian industry support for international students to develop employability skills during and after study is vital to the continued success of the sector. The Council also noted the importance of strong community engagement in providing opportunities to strengthen employability skills. The benefits associated with fostering an entrepreneurial culture and encouraging start-ups to connect with global talent were canvassed.

The meeting discussed priorities for implementation of the *National Strategy for International Education 2025* (National Strategy) and the *Australian International Education 2025* market development roadmap (AIE2025). The Council acknowledged the progress against the National Strategy, AIE2025, the *Australia Global Alumni Engagement Strategy 2016–2020* and the *Global Innovation Strategy*, the key international measure of the *National Innovation and Science Agenda*.

Council members discussed the importance of the following activities, in line with the three pillars of the National Strategy.

The Council noted that in strengthening the fundamentals, it is important to:

- communicate the benefits of international education
- strengthen the evidence base to better inform policy, planning and promotion of international education
- increase opportunities for international students to develop employability skills throughout their studies
- provide support to enhance the student experience
- grow opportunities for more international students to live and learn in regional Australia.

To make transformative partnerships, the Council noted that it will be important to:

- support greater two-way mobility, including through the New Colombo Plan and Australia Awards, including Endeavour Scholarships and Fellowships and Endeavour Mobility Grants
- strengthen alumni engagement through effective implementation of the *Australia Global Alumni Engagement Strategy 2016–2020*
- intensify our international research engagement and collaboration.

To ensure Australia is best placed to compete globally, the Council agreed it will be necessary to:

- collaborate across governments and work with the sector to develop a nationally consistent approach to marketing and promoting Australian international education, including targeting key markets
- identify new opportunities to harness Australia's future education potential
- identify new business models and approaches to respond to globalisation and digital disruption.

The Council also acknowledged the importance of ongoing commitment, leadership and engagement with the sector to ensure the sustained growth of Australian international education.

The Council will begin immediate work to implement the National Strategy and AIE2025. The next official meeting of the Council will be held in March 2017 to review projects for 2017 and identify further emerging opportunities.