Export income to Australia from international education activity in 2014

This snapshot highlights the latest data on international education exports released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in its International Trade in Services series.(b)

Size of exports

International education activity(b) arising from international students studying and living in Australia contributed $17.0 billion to the economy in 2014. This is a 7.4% increase from the earnings recorded in financial year 2013-14 ($15.9 billion(c)); up 13.5% on calendar year 2013 ($15.0 billion) and up 17.3% on calendar year 2012 ($14.5 billion).

The total export income generated by all international education activity was $17.6 billion. This comprised spending by onshore students (the ABS uses the term ‘education-related personal travel’ for this item), as well as offshore earnings from other educational services and royalties which generated an additional $589 million, as outlined in the table below.

Education-related personal travel is Australia’s 4th largest export after iron ore ($66.0 billion), coal ($38.0 billion) and natural gas ($17.8 billion). It is the largest services export (28% of total services exports), ahead of other personal travel services ($14.2 billion); and professional and management consulting services ($4.8 billion).

Education sector(b)

In 2014, the higher education sector generated $11.7 billion in export income (68.5% of total on-shore earnings). VET was the second largest, generating $2.7 billion in earnings (15.8%). Export income from ELICOS was $955 million (5.6%); schools, $636 million (3.7%); and non-award, $698 million (4.1%).

(a) Sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ publication International Trade in Services, by Country, by State and by Detailed Services Category, Calendar Year, 2014 (ABS Catalogue no. 5368.0.55.004) published on 22 June 2015. (b) Includes international students studying onshore on student visas only. (c) ABS revised estimate, up from $15.7 billion published in November 2014. (d) International students from New Zealand and those on Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade/Defence scholarships contributed an additional $144 m and $235 m respectively. (e) Export income does not include income generated by the operations of offshore campuses of Australian institutions.

For further information about this Research Snapshot or the Research Snapshot Series contact: International Research and Analysis Unit by email at IERsearch@education.gov.au. The Research Snapshot Series can be accessed from https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/research-snapshots/pages/default.aspx.