

English Australia MEDIA RELEASE



27 February 2013

ACTION NEEDED ON INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION: ENGLISH AUSTRALIA

English Australia welcomes the long awaited release of the Chaney report, *Australia - Educating Globally*, and urges the government to act immediately on the report's most urgent recommendations.

The report reflects an effective consultation process across all sectors and provides a comprehensive outline of practical measures that will develop a sustainable international education industry.

The Executive Director of English Australia, Sue Blundell, said today, "As a sector that has struggled to combat a 30% decline in student numbers over the last three years, we look forward to seeing the recommendations of this report being implemented. While there are encouraging signs of action to extend streamlined visa processing, the government has remained silent on the overhaul of the Genuine Temporary Entrant (GTE) test.

"This is a major issue for English language colleges. Genuine students, particularly those applying to study English in Australia, are being rejected by immigration officials. This is hampering the much-needed recovery in enrolments for English language training which is an essential pre-requisite for many international students particularly those from Asian countries. The report notes that there is a new generation of students for whom a global career and mobility opportunities are major driving factors in their choice of study destination. English language skills are key to being able to access these opportunities, a fact that immigration officials do not seem to recognise."

Ms Blundell said the International Education Advisory Council chaired by Mr Michael Chaney is to be congratulated for producing a report which focuses on issues requiring immediate attention as well as longer term considerations.

"The Genuine Temporary Entrant (GTE) recommendation is the first in the section on student visas. It specifically calls for:

Conduct of a review of the first year of operation of the GTE criterion, identifying and addressing any unintended consequences that affect the sector including the extent to which it may be acting as a deterrent to genuine students.

Ms Blundell said this means that the review should already be underway as the GTE was implemented in November 2011.

"Apart from the need for action on immediate issues, the government has acted in the interests of international education as a whole in appointing the International Education Advisory Council to provide strategic advice. Previous reviews have only looked at aspects in isolation such as the legislative framework and student visas. English Australia looks forward to working with the new Ministerial Coordinating Council on International Education to implement the Advisory Council's other recommendations" Ms Blundell said.

For further information:

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English Australia is the national peak body for the English language sector of international education in Australia, and represents over 100 member colleges throughout Australia that provide quality English language programs to students and professionals from around the world. Over 80% of the more than 130,000 international students learning English in Australia in 2011 chose to study with an English Australia member college.

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