



JOINT COMMUNIQUE BY AUSTRALIA'S EDUCATION PEAK BODIES AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION INDUSTRY

Released on Monday 13 May for the Federal Election 2013

Addressed to the Australian Government and to all political parties and candidates

Policy position

From the mid 1980s, Australian education institutions have been successful in attracting large numbers of international students. In the process a major export industry has been created. Australia's education sector and, more broadly, the Australian social and economic landscape, have been transformed as a consequence. The greatest impacts of this transformation are evident in Australia's increased engagement and collaboration with Asia.

International education is a generator of approximately 127,000 Australian jobs (Deloitte Access Economics Report, 2012). The internationalisation of Australian education and research has broad economic, social, cultural, diplomatic, scientific and technical impacts on Australia's global position and reputation. The important role that international education plays in advancing our way of life and enhancing the prosperity of the nation is now well understood.

The benefits are clear, but the imperatives and challenges facing Australia and the international education industry are less well understood and are consequently not being effectively acted on. This is of particular concern given shifting global power relations and rapidly advancing global competition.

Lack of vision, strategy drift, policy turbulence and uncertainty, regulatory confusion and the fundamental failure to adopt a long-term planned approach to the international education industry undermines confidence and constrains business innovation. Emphatically, there is an urgency to resolve all this if the international education industry is to achieve what it could and should for the Australian community.

The Australian education peak bodies are unanimous in making the following joint statement.

We call on the Commonwealth Government to:

Announce its acceptance of the recommendations of the International Education Advisory Council report, *Australia - Educating Globally* ("the Chaney Report") presented to the Government in February 2013, and to begin immediate implementation of the report's recommendations in collaboration with the education sector.

Specifically, to immediately establish a high level **Ministerial Coordinating Council on International Education (MCCIE)** with "a broad representational structure", as proposed by the Chaney Report (**Recommendation A.1**).

The joint peak bodies are of the view that in addition to Australian Ministerial representation from the relevant portfolios proposed by the Chaney Report, the membership of the MCCIE should include a business leader or leaders of the standing and experience of Michael Chaney AO; a State Premier, preferably from a state where international education ranks within the state top export industries, as well as leading experts from each of the education export sectors.

The first priority for the MCCIE should be to establish appropriately representative expert working groups/advisory boards to inform the MCCIE and its work. The joint peak bodies are of the view that there should be three such groups/boards:

- **A business and community advisory board**
- **An international education and research advisory board**
- **An education visa advisory group**

The second priority of the MCCIE should be to begin the development of a **5-year national strategy for international education and research**, Chaney Report (**Recommendation A.2**). This should include a strategy for deeper international engagement of Australian research. The strategy should be developed and implemented within the next 18 months. The MCCIE should also ensure, through the arms of various governments and their agencies, and in conjunction with the international education sector, that the necessary resources and capabilities are allocated to the strategy's development and implementation.

The peak bodies advocate that the national strategy be developed as a cooperative project between government, industry and other critical stakeholders. We are strongly of the view that it would be unwise and inappropriate for Government and its agencies to attempt to formulate a strategy in isolation from the views and interests of key stakeholders and to fail to take advantage of their substantial knowledge and expertise.

We call on state and territory governments to:

Endorse and work with the Commonwealth Government and all stakeholders to support and develop the industry and the national strategy through the MCCIE and other appropriate mechanisms.

We call on all political parties and candidates to:

Endorse the principles and recommendations of the Chaney Report and actively support, strengthen and foster the development of the Australian international education industry. This will enable the industry to make the optimum contribution to Australia's future economic prosperity, enhance Australia's global competitiveness and contribute to Australia's intellectual, social and cultural wellbeing.

Future action plans:

In order to contribute to the strengthening and the future success of Australia's international education industry, the joint peak bodies and their members are poised to develop detailed action plans, in line with the Chaney principles and recommendations, to articulate specific public policy and program initiatives that will be needed to drive the development and the effective implementation of the national strategy.

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