



Joint media statement by Australia's education peak bodies "International education needs a champion"

Australia's education peak bodies will this week urge the Federal Government, Opposition and all political parties to get behind measures to restore global competitiveness and innovation in Australia's international education sector.

In their second joint statement this year, the influential associations will warn that Australia is losing ground to international competitors whose governments place a higher value on international education than Australia does.

Expensive and inflexible student visas, a complex and stifling regulatory system and a reluctance by governments to aggressively promote Australian education abroad are combining to turn potential students away from Australia and into the welcoming arms of Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA.

"International education returns \$15 billion a year to our economy, directly employs more than 100,000 Australians and delivers enormous cultural and diplomatic benefits to the nation," said Phil Honeywood, Executive Director of the International Education Association of Australia.

"It therefore beggars belief that we lack a strong government champion or the focused support afforded to other important industries like manufacturing, mining and tourism."

"We have one of the most expensive, slow and inflexible student visa systems in the world, a regulatory regime that shackles our best performing institutions while failing to target support and intervention at those that need it, and a lacklustre approach to promoting our industry overseas," Mr Honeywood said.

"International education is at a crucial turning point in Australia, and governments have two choices. They can persist with a fragmented, unhurried approach to managing global shifts in international education and watch as students vote with their feet by choosing to study elsewhere."

"Or governments can take strong, decisive, action to restore our status as a destination of choice for international students," Mr Honeywood said.

"Australia's education peak bodies call upon the Prime Minister, Opposition Leader and other party leaders to make restoring Australia's competitiveness in international education a priority of the forthcoming Federal Election campaign."

"By working with industry, governments can ensure that international education fulfills its potential of being our greatest asset in meeting the challenges of this Asian century."

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