

English Australia MEDIA RELEASE



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INAUGURAL INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION ROUNDTABLE SHOWCASES COMMITMENT OF GOVERNMENT AND THE SECTOR

English Australia welcomed the opportunity to participate in the first ever International Education Roundtable, which brought together education and business experts, students and communities to advise Government Ministers on the future of Australia's largest services export.

English Australia's Executive Director, Sue Blundell, said that not only was an impressive group of stakeholders gathered to share their perspectives on the draft National Strategy for International Education, but the attendance of Ministers from key portfolios demonstrated the seriousness of the Government's commitment.

"Given the importance of international education to Australia, it was pleasing to see such a coordinated and collaborative whole-of-government, whole-of-sector approach to developing and finalising a strategy that will be meaningful to all stakeholders," said Ms Blundell.

The Minister for Education and Training, the Hon Christopher Pyne MP, also used the gathering as an opportunity to announce a significant study into international education that will examine its importance to the Australian economy and our communities. The new report, due later this year, will be another key step towards finalising the National Strategy for International Education and ensure there is a sound evidence base to guide the way forward.

The new study will also complement a parallel research project being undertaken by Austrade on market development for onshore and offshore services, including digital education delivery.

"It is exciting to already see some concrete actions in commissioning research that will provide a strong platform for the implementation of the Strategy over the next few years," said Ms Blundell.

For further information:

Sue Blundell | Executive Director

02 9264 4700 | 0402 232 503

English Australia

English Australia is the national peak body for the English language sector of international education, and represents over 120 member colleges throughout Australia that provide quality English language programs to students and professionals from around the world. 88% of the more than 163,000 international students learning English in Australia in 2014 chose to study with an English Australia member college.

As an association, English Australia has a focus on:

- *representing member colleges whose core business is English language teaching;*
- *delivering best practice support and expertise to member colleges; and*
- *providing the English language sector with global visionary leadership.*

Learning English in Australia

There are several reasons why students travel to English speaking countries to learn English. For those students who have an 'end goal' such as to undertake formal study, improving their English may be an important factor in getting them into their chosen course at a school, training provider or university. An increasing number of students also see learning English as key to a successful career, for example in international business; others come to prepare for travel or just to gain the experience of living in a foreign country.

A strong regulatory framework, attractive lifestyle, quality schools and the ability to flexibly combine study, travel and work on the various visa options available to them (tourist, working holiday, student) are primary reasons for Australia's appeal to people overseas considering learning English. Australia is the only country delivering English language training that has national standards specific to English language training that are required for all providers. The sector's quality assurance framework operates within the national Education Services for Overseas Students legislative framework that is the responsibility of the Department of Education and Training. This protects Australia's reputation for delivering quality education services and the interests of overseas students, by setting minimum standards and providing tuition and financial assurance.

The English language sector – the global context

Over 1,557,000 people travelled to an English speaking country to learn English in 2013 – globally the industry is worth over US\$11.7 billion. The top two destinations for international students wishing to learn English are the UK and the USA, followed by Canada and Australia. These top four destinations attract 85% of English language students and deliver 89% of student weeks.