

A STRATEGIC VISION FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

FRAMEWORK STATEMENT

Australian education institutions make a substantial contribution to Australia's productivity and prosperity, create jobs and deliver tangible non-economic benefits in social, cultural, scientific and environmental terms.

International challenges to Australia's productivity, prosperity and security are growing. Regional, inter-regional and global relations are becoming increasingly complex and competitive. Australia needs to keep abreast of global trends and link itself strategically to the rest of the world.

Advancing the international engagement of Australian education institutions is crucial to their continuing contribution to Australia's prosperity and social wellbeing and to ensuring Australia's positive standing in the world.

For these reasons, the International Education Association Australia, in consultation with its members and with other organisations, has developed a strategic vision and a set of principles for international education in Australia to support the continuing contribution of Australian education, training and research domestically and globally.

VISION

International education is valued for the benefits it provides to communities and individuals in Australia and overseas. It underpins Australia's national prosperity and social advancement and helps build Australia's international standing and our place in the world.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Defining international education

International education is a broad and complex set of activities. It encompasses international research linkages, engagement with industry around the world in training and other forms of collaboration, offering Australian education and training overseas, contributing to the development of other countries through Australia's long-standing foreign aid program and teaching international students in Australia. It includes providing Australian students with exposure to international experiences, by learning in diverse classrooms involving local and international students, studying an internationally relevant curriculum and by study overseas. It engages the Australian community through local interactions with the many international students who live, study and work among us.

2. Broad industry cooperation for furtherance of the vision

International education peak bodies and representative groups across all education sectors – English language, schools, vocational education and training, higher education – both public and private are committed to cooperate to achieve the strategic vision, ensuring a fair balance of sectoral interests.

3. A commitment to quality and ethics

Continual improvement of the quality of Australian education will be a hallmark of our international education program, as will a commitment to standards and ethics in the promotion, marketing and delivery of Australian education and in enhancing the international student experience.

4. Evidence based policy-making

Ideally, education institutions, government and the business community will collaborate to support a comprehensive research and data collection program to provide a sound evidence base to inform public policy and institutional policy and practice.

5. A supportive policy environment

A stable and supportive public policy environment is essential. While policy development by government is to be expected, frequent and damaging changes should be avoided. Peak bodies and representative groups will work with government to create and maintain a comprehensive, supportive and stable policy environment.

6. Investment

Suitably funded programs will be developed to implement the strategic vision, focused on research and data, quality enhancement, leadership development, infrastructure development, promotion and marketing, community engagement and communication with the Australian public.

Enhanced investment in the industry is needed, with contributions from a range of stakeholders - education institutions, business, government and philanthropic groups. Government investment should ideally be in line with that provided to major export industries.

7. Effective consultation with government

A mechanism for effective consultation between education peak bodies, other representative groups and the Australian Government is vital. Principles of trust, mutual respect, transparency and openness, and a commitment to a shared partnership, will underpin consultations. A whole-of-government approach to international education across federal and state jurisdictions will be developed.

8. Broad political support

Broad political support for the strategic vision is necessary for the long-term health and sustainability of international education. Without multi-party support Australia will not succeed as a major global player in education, training and research and will not reap the benefits from deep international engagement.