MEDIA RELEASE

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Gillard Government delivers greater protection for overseas students

Overseas students studying in Australia will be better protected after Gillard Government legislation passed through Parliament today.

Minister for Tertiary Education, Senator Chris Evans, today welcomed the passage of the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Bill 2011*, which is designed to protect Australia’s international education sector from possible education provider closures.

“The Gillard Government is committed to providing overseas students with a quality education and a good experience when they study in Australia,” Senator Evans said.

“International education is a major industry for Australia, generating around $19 billion annually and supporting around 125,000 jobs.

“Commencing 1 July 2012, the Gillard Government’s increased protections will ensure that international students continue to view Australia as a great place to study.”

This is the final chapter in the Government’s response to the Hon Bruce Baird AM’s review of the ESOS legislation and will meet his recommendation to establish a Tuition Protection Service (TPS).

“Overseas students affected by the closure of an education service provider will have access to a single point of contact,” Senator Evans said.

“The TPS will support students to find an alternative placement with another provider or, if necessary, will be able to refund the student any unspent tuition fees.

“It will deliver a timely service, more choice and control for students; one set of fees for providers and will ensure greater accountability for Government.

“The TPS will also strengthen requirements for keeping student academic records and contact details up to date, especially for those providers operating in multiple locations.”

To support the TPS, the Bill introduces limits on the amount of upfront fees a provider can collect from the student while protecting tuition fees paid before the student starts their course.

“We have listened carefully to the sector’s concerns about the possible impact of these measures on some businesses and have ensured they are workable without compromising the intent,” Senator Evans said.

“This is good news for education providers and good news for students.”

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