Minister Gail Gago
Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills

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Shandong visitors learn from South Australian educational expertise

The Chairman of the Shandong Province People’s Congress and senior educators from some of Shandong’s major universities will return to China later this week with increased understanding of how South Australia can support their province’s rapidly increasing education needs.

Employment, Higher Education and Skills Minister Gail Gago said 12 representatives of Shandong universities and vocational education and training (VET) institutions and the Shandong Provincial Education Department were touring university and TAFE campuses to explore how our State could support Shandong’s growth.

Ms Gago said educators will visit the new $120 million Flinders at Tonsley building, TAFE SA’s Tonsley and Regency campuses, the University of Adelaide and University of South Australia (UniSA) to see first-hand the facilities and the globally regarded programs offered to international students.

In 2014, 11,785 Chinese students – 38.3 per cent of the total number of international students in the state - chose to enrol in South Australian educational institutions.

“Our universities and VET providers offer international students opportunities to gain prestigious qualifications that will help them contribute to the development of businesses and communities at home,” Ms Gago said.

“We want students from China – including from our sister-state Shandong – to choose South Australia as a destination where they will learn and enjoy themselves within a safe, secure and immensely liveable environment.”

Ms Gago said South Australia and Shandong had enjoyed close relationships for nearly 30 years.

She said the development of the relationship between South Australia and Shandong was a key focus of the South Australia-China Engagement Strategy, which was released in 2012 to identify and pursue opportunities for South Australia to support China’s economic growth.

“The strategy highlights those sectors in which South Australia has highly regarded assets and expertise,” Ms Gago said.

“Education was identified as one of the sectors in which South Australia’s expertise could be of tremendous value to China’s rapidly growing and increasingly urbanised and industrialised population.

“South Australia’s education and training sector offers many opportunities for increased engagement and partnerships with China.

“We want to build strong relationships with Chinese education providers and showcase our world-class capabilities in higher and vocational education.”

Ms Gago said the Flinders at Tonsley building demonstrated South Australia’s skills at shaping innovative environments to encourage learning in areas critical to economic growth.
“Flinders University has built a new campus at Tonsley, where research, education and training institutions are collaborating with industries such as minerals and energy, clean technology and medical devices to create business and jobs in sectors crucial to our state’s future,” Ms Gago said.

“Flinders at Tonsley provides education for people to gain science, technology, engineering and mathematics skills essential to developments in these sectors and to lucrative relationships with partners such as Shandong.

“These sectors are nominated in our 10 Economic Priorities as vital to the development of long-term business and employment opportunities.”