



## JOINT OPEN STATEMENT TO AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

Signatories to this open statement call on Australia's political parties to urgently recognise and support the significant contribution of Australia's international student sector in terms of employment, educational, cultural and diplomatic benefits, contribution to inbound tourism, and export value.

International education is responsible for generating 122,000 full-time jobs including 33,000 directly employed in teaching institutions<sup>1</sup>. These are new jobs, generated through the innovative development of international education as an export by Australia's education sector over the last 25 years.

As well as creating jobs for Australians, international students greatly enhance the educational, social and cultural fabric of the education institution at which they study and the communities in which they live. International students contribute greatly to Australia's reputation and to productive relationships in our region. The benefits fall into two categories: creating a positive image for Australia and opening doors and exerting influence. The impact of former international students on Australia's ability to effectively engage in both an economic and non-economic sense in our region is profound.

Australia is one of the world's most services-oriented economies. Services are about 80 per cent of Australia's economy and education is Australia's largest services export.

Higher education, as well as intensive language and vocational education and training, has become Australia's fourth largest export earner amounting to \$18.6B in 2009<sup>2</sup>. The sector now generates more income for Australians than the Petroleum, Natural gas and Aluminium sectors and is exceeded only by Coal, Iron Ore and Gold export incomes.

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<sup>1</sup> All jobs figures derived from Access Economics, 'The Australian education sector and the economic contribution of international students', April 2009

<sup>2</sup> ABS statistics cited in Allen Consulting Group July 2010, Projections on the Economic Impact of International Education



Specifically, international students in NSW, Victoria and QLD respectively contribute \$6.8BN, \$5.8BN and \$2.7BN to the national economy with significant employment in those states of 47,500, 39,500 and 16,800 jobs in the 2007/08 period. WA and SA also respectively generate \$1.3BN and \$1BN and 8000 and 6000 jobs.

During the election campaign, the significance of this sector's contribution to Australia has received very little attention from Australia's major political parties and requires urgent recognition and support. The current and projected downturn in international student numbers is placing our economy, our education industry, and Australian jobs at risk.

We call on all political parties to urgently state their support for Australia's international education industry sector, acknowledging the significant educational, cultural, social, economic and employment contribution the sector makes both now and in the future.

The sector looks forward to working closely with the government after the 2010 election to ensure international student education in Australia remains stable and prosperous.

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