

1 July 2024

Dear members of the Senate Education and Employment Committee,

**Re: Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Quality and Integrity) Bill 2024**

The Committee for Sydney welcomes the opportunity to provide comment and feedback on the Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Quality and Integrity) Bill 2024.

The Committee for Sydney is an urban policy think tank. We are advocates for the whole of Sydney, focused on developing solutions to the most important problems we face. We are proud to have over 160 members that represent key business, academic and civic organisations across Sydney.

We are concerned that recent announcements limiting international education will have significant, negative effects on Australia's economy and global standing. We call on you to delay the introduction of this legislation to enable appropriate consultation with the Education sector and the wider community.

**International Education delivers critical economic benefit to Australia.**

International education represents a significant economic driver for our nation, being Australia's most valuable export industry outside of mining. While studying here, international students contribute to two-thirds of international tourism spend (\$40bn of \$59bn).

Only 45% of international student export income goes to universities, with the rest going to spending on goods and services outside universities – with significant benefits for local small businesses. For example, a Mitchell Institute study in 2020 estimated that international students in Kingsford, around the University of NSW, spent \$335 million on food, accommodation and other services per year.

International Education is currently also providing significant subsidy to University research. The research being undertaken in Australia's world-leading universities will be critical for the future of Australia's economy – and intrinsically tied to the goals set out in the Australian Government's Made in Australia policy, alongside programs such as the National Reconstruction Fund.

**Delaying the bill to get the balance right.**

This legislation as drafted is blunt. To pass it before proper consultation is undertaken will have the significant risk of unintended consequences occurring.

International students commencing in the 2025 academic year are already in the pipeline and receiving offers. It will be politically and diplomatically difficult to influence the 2025 academic year intake even if legislation is passed in the upcoming parliamentary session. Delaying the bill until later in 2024 or early 2025 will ensure the government has time to properly consult with the sector and still be in a position to deliver managed growth for international student numbers by 2026.



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The Government should prioritise getting the right outcome, rather than rushing the process and risk getting things wrong. The process of the Universities Accord has built goodwill in the sector that should not now be squandered by rushing legislation through.

There are more opportunities outside Australia than inside it. We need to bring the talent of the world to our shores to engage in education, trade, commerce and cultural understanding.

It is also important to remember that International Education provides more than direct investment into Australia. The soft power benefits of our education programs are immense. Those who go back to their countries of origin will be better ambassadors for us from what they learnt here.

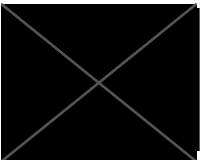
This legislation sends prospective international students the message that they are not welcome to study in Australia. It took a long time to rebuild Australia's reputation following border closures due to COVID-19.

Therefore, we call on Government to undertake further consultation with the sector to enable a more balanced outcome that manages economic growth.

We are a better and fairer country together. Our organisations are here and ready to engage – to work on the formula that has worked for this country in the past for a fair go for all comers. Let's not change the formula now.

Should you have any questions, or would like to discuss further, please contact Jeremy Gill, Head of Policy at the Committee for Sydney, on [jeremy@sydney.org.au](mailto:jeremy@sydney.org.au)

Sincerely,



Jeremy Gill  
Head of Policy  
The Committee for Sydney