

24 March 2022

First Meeting of IHEA Vice-Chancellors Dialogue

The IHEA Vice-Chancellors Dialogue was launched in Melbourne on 23 March 2022 when IHEA representatives joined with the Vice Chancellors of Australia’s four independent universities (Bond, Torrens, Divinity, Avondale) to commence a new collaborative forum.

The IHEA Vice-Chancellors Dialogue brings together the leaders of Australia’s four independent universities to advance the shared interests of the independent university sector.

The IHEA Vice-Chancellors Dialogue was convened by IHEA Chair, Mr Alan Finch, and attended by Professor Tim Brailsford (Bond University Vice-Chancellor), Professor Alwyn Louw (Torrens University Vice-Chancellor), Professor Peter Sherlock (University of Divinity Vice-Chancellor) Professor Kevin Petrie (Avondale University Vice-Chancellor) and IHEA CEO, Mr Simon Finn.

This inaugural meeting of the Dialogue launches an important collaboration of independent universities to share information on common interests and enable the development of a single representative voice for the independent sector on key sector issues.

Discussion in the first meeting of the Dialogue included the role of independent higher education in Australia and internationally, the quality of student experience offered by independent universities, impacts of COVID-19, workforce and skills demands and the range of current government policy priorities. A key focus of discussion was the future vision for the Australian tertiary sector and working with the next Australian government to shape and implement policy priorities.

“Establishment of the IHEA Vice-Chancellors Dialogue is an important chapter in representation and collaboration across the independent higher education sector,” said IHEA CEO, Simon Finn.

“With all of Australia’s independent universities holding IHEA membership, the Dialogue provides an opportunity for IHEA university leaders to discuss their shared interests, collaborate on current challenges and support IHEA’s unified advocacy for the independent university sector.”

“The Dialogue enhances IHEA’s ability to provide a single voice to governments on behalf of independent universities and better informs IHEA’s representative advocacy efforts across Australia’s diverse range of higher education providers.”

“Australia’s higher education sector is represented through a range of university groupings. The IHEA Vice-Chancellors Dialogue meeting under the umbrella of IHEA brings a unique perspective to the advancement of independent higher education.”

Following the inaugural meeting, IHEA Vice-Chancellors, University College Leaders and Directors met with Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Shadow Minister for Education, to discuss Labor’s tertiary education priorities and advance IHEA’s independent sector priorities for the next term of government.

Independent higher education is an important component of Australia’s higher education sector. Recently released enrolment data indicates that Australia’s independent higher education sector enrolled 170,000 domestic and international students in 2020.

The IHEA Vice-Chancellors Dialogue will convene again in April/May and further on an annual and as-needed basis.

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