

IHEA Notes Additional Measures to Enhance Integrity of International Education System

Independent Higher Education Australia (IHEA) notes the additional measures announced today by the Albanese Government intended to enhance integrity in the international education system and support international students.

IHEA welcomes the announcements as implementing much of our policy agenda in this area. However, we reserve the right to comment on the all-important detail, to ensure there is no collateral damage to legitimate businesses.

IHEA supports moves to bolster the integrity of Australia's international education sector – this nation's fourth largest export industry.

Students who come to Australia to study are entitled to receive the full benefits and support of a world-class education.

Today, the Government announced it will build risk indicators across the international education system to inform a monitoring framework to drive targeted compliance by education regulators, and the increased monitoring of student attendance.

The Government will also amend the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act) to strengthen the existing fit and proper provider test.

This relates to the standards required to gain and hold provider registration and prevent cross-ownership of businesses between education providers and education agents.

In addition, the Government will prohibit agent commissions on student transfers between providers in Australia to remove incentives for unscrupulous agents and providers to 'poach' students.

Education providers will be given greater access to agent performance data such as student completion rates and visa rejection rates. These benchmarks will help providers choose quality education agents as partners.

These measures, released today, follow the changes announced in August to remove a loophole used to move students who had been in the country less than six months to new providers to facilitate work instead of study.

The Government has also indicated further international education and training announcements will be made in the coming days.

We need to ensure that this suite of measures will benefit students and enhance integrity of the sector, and do not unnecessarily hurt Australia's world-class international higher education system.

IHEA welcomes news the Government will engage with the international education sector on these measures. We will continue to work proactively with the Government to ensure processes are as thorough and robust as possible to maintain the integrity of Australia's international education sector.

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