

## **IHEA rejects a flat 35% cap on international students.**

In recent weeks a number of public university vice chancellors, and at least one chancellor, have reacted to the Federal Government's decision to impose a hard cap on the number of international students entering Higher Education from 1 January 2025 by arguing the cap should be in the form of a ceiling of 35 per cent of the total number of students studying at any one provider.

IHEA rejects a flat 35 per cent cap on international students. Indeed, we totally reject the need for legislative caps, Dr Peter Hendy, CEO of IHEA said.

The 35 per cent proposal is a self-serving policy proposal from these public universities which in most cases would have no impact on their recruitment of international students as they have never reached the 35 per cent level.

Dr Hendy expressed deep concern over the potential impact of such a cap on the diversity and quality of higher education in Australia.

Many private education providers solely cater for international students. A 35% cap would destroy their ability to provide high quality tuition to thousands of prospective students.

Public universities are just that: "public." They were created by the taxpayer to primarily teach domestic students. That should be their priority. If they want a cap on public universities that is their concern, but they should leave private providers out of their plans.

The Government is already massively damaging Australia's fourth largest export industry, and largest non-resource export industry, with its severe squeezing of student visa applications.

The latest data from the Government shows that student visa approvals were already down an enormous 44.2 per cent in May 2024 compared to the same time last year. What is even more alarming, it is down 25.6 per cent on the 2019 levels reached prior to the disruptive effects of the Covid Pandemic.

Dr Hendy further highlighted the economic and social contributions of international students to Australia.

"International students inject billions of dollars into the Australian economy, supporting local businesses and creating employment opportunities. Moreover, they foster global connections and cultural exchange, enriching the social fabric of our nation."

Should the Albanese Government insist on taking this path, IHEA argues that any capping policy applying to private providers ensures that as an independent sector they are no worse off than they were in 2019, which should be their baseline allocation. This approach would safeguard the interests of higher education institutions and maintain a fair and equitable framework for international student enrolment.

**Ends**

**Media Contact:** Dr Jerry Nockles, Deputy CEO ([jerry.nockles@ihea.edu.au](mailto:jerry.nockles@ihea.edu.au))