

IHEA releases its platform for the 2025 federal election

Independent Higher Education Australia (IHEA) has today released its Federal Election Platform ahead of the upcoming election.

Releasing the Federal Election Platform, IHEA CEO Dr Peter Hendy said: “IHEA’s Federal Election Platform contains proposed reforms to ensure Australia has the flexible, agile, and responsive tertiary education system to address its skills needs now and into the future.”.

IHEA’s Federal Election Platform comprises 14 pillars under the three themes of Student-Centricity, International Education, and Regulatory Burden, namely:

- **Equity of HELP Loans:** The permanent abolition of the FEE-HELP loan fee
- **Funding Equity:** Access to Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) and programs
- **Diversification:** Diversification of higher education providers to ensure growth
- **Greater Access:** Permanently embed Undergraduate Certificates in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), announced in January 2025
- **Lifelong Learning:** Ensure that appropriate policy settings and incentives are in place to support lifelong learning
- **Sustainability:** Ensure the sustainability of international education
- **Accessibility and Competitiveness:** Reduce fees for student visas for Australia to remain competitive
- **Transparency:** Access to performance data on international education agents
- **Protections:** Allow onshore commissions for international education agents
- **National Benefit:** Greater pathways to permanent residency for graduates in priority disciplines
- **Streamlined:** Lesser, not more, bureaucracy
- **Fairness:** Implement an equitable Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) cost recovery model
- **Duplication:** TEQSA and Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to reduce burden on dual sector providers
- **Modernisation:** Reform copyright legislation to reduce levies on independent education providers

Focusing on the he first pillar of IHEA’s Federal Election Platform, Dr Hendy said: “The 20 per cent FEE HELP loan fee is an inequitable and discriminatory tax on education that disproportionately burdens independent undergraduate students. This fee not only escalates student debt but also stifles economic activity among graduates, creating an unfair disadvantage based solely on their choice of educational provider.”.

“The recent Australian Universities Accord Final Report explicitly acknowledges the need for fair treatment of students accessing FEE HELP, regardless of their provider. It raises concerns about the lack of coherence in FEE HELP arrangements and calls for fair and flexible arrangements for full fee-paying students,” Dr Hendy said.

A copy of the IHEA Federal Election Platform can be found on IHEA’s website at www.ihea.edu.au.

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