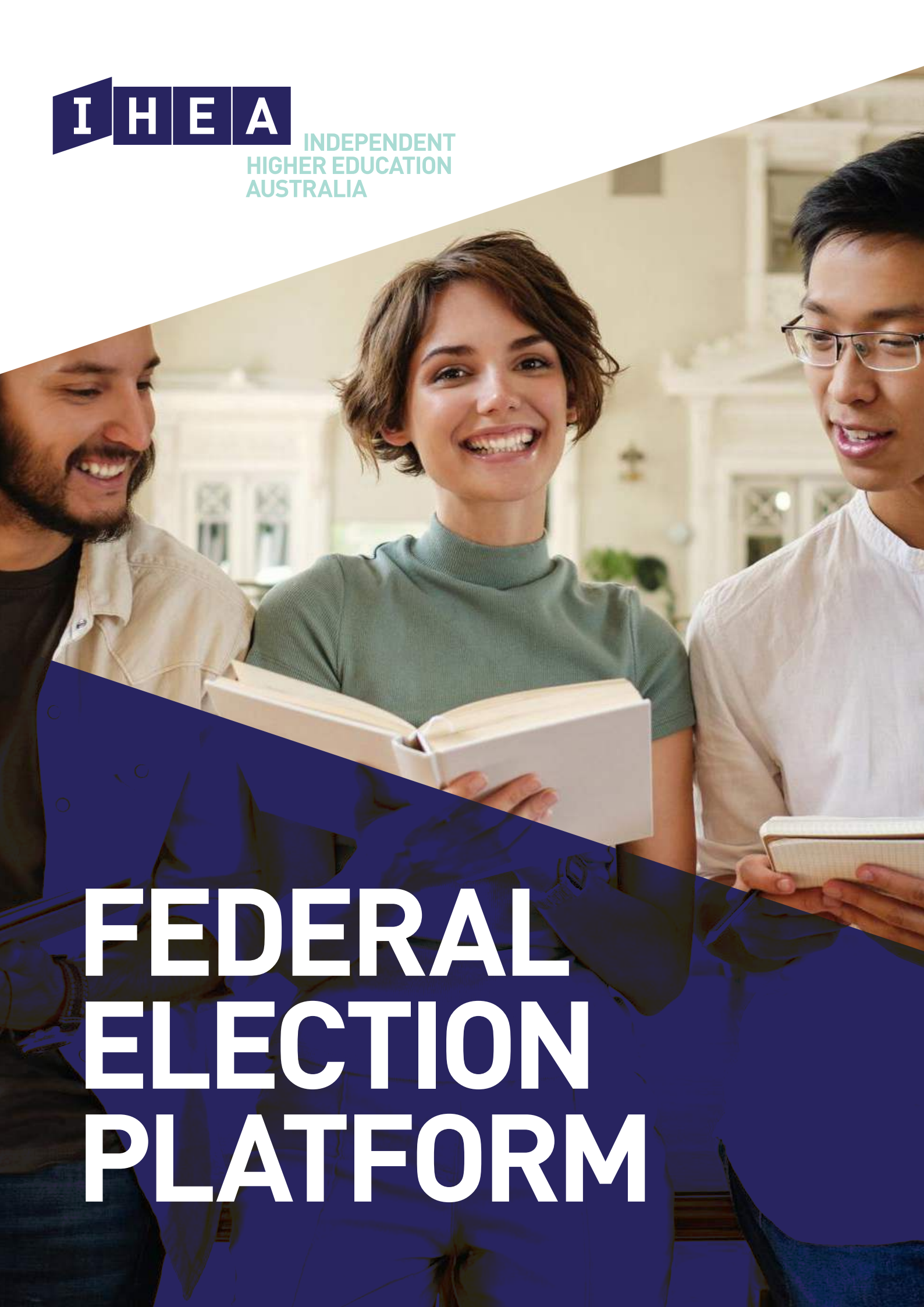




INDEPENDENT
HIGHER EDUCATION
AUSTRALIA



FEDERAL ELECTION PLATFORM

INTRODUCTION

This document is Independent Higher Education Australia's (IHEA) Federal Election Platform, which outlines our policy positions for higher education in the lead up to the 2025 federal election.

A flexible, agile and responsive tertiary education system will be critical for Australia to address its skills needs now and into the future and to underpin a robust and well performing economy. It will also ensure that we have the educated workforce to bring innovative solutions to address the challenges we will need to face as a nation.

Globally and nationally, there are a number of issues that require innovation and advanced skills, which will need to be addressed through higher education. Australia needs to boost its productivity levels from recent poor performances. It needs to ensure fiscal sustainability and managing debt levels; a robust and comprehensive healthcare system, which includes addressing mental health issues, homelessness and post traumatic stress disorders as well as supporting First Nations People and the elderly to have the best quality of life; health and research infrastructure that can weather future health crises; defence requirements and cybersecurity, which are supported by cutting edge technology and strong trade and global partnerships; sustainable energy provision; and advances in technology and artificial intelligence that will constructively and effectively disrupt traditional industries and job markets.

While predictions can be made that skills in some broad areas will experience greater demand in the future, specific skills needs can be hard to predict. Many occupations that will be created and/or evolve in coming decades may be hard to envisage and also rely on technologies that have not yet been developed.



A flexible, agile and responsive tertiary education system will be critical for Australia to address its skills needs now and into the future and to underpin a robust and well performing economy.



A higher education sector that supports Australians in gaining and maintain currency of their qualifications, skills and knowledge over the course of their working lives has to be the main priority. With cost of living pressures currently at the forefront of people’s minds and pursuing paid work rather than tertiary education it’s important that pathways to higher education are well supported to ensure that we have the capability to address the issues our nation is facing now and will face in the future.

The independent sector is a vital part of Australia’s higher education landscape. It delivers high quality education outcomes for both domestic and international students alike. This is reflected in the excellent performance and consistently topping the rankings in the student experience surveys of the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) for teaching quality; learner engagement; skills development; and overall quality.

The student centred approach of independent providers is reflected in their business and operating models and course offerings that address student and industry demand. Independent providers have strong connections to industry to keep pace with and provide leadership around rapidly evolving industry skills and knowledge demands. The education experience provided by independent providers contributes to students’ employability and long term career success. Their unwavering focus on practical knowledge based skills development prepares graduates for the workforce. Through its approach, the independent higher education sector is well positioned to create safe and respectful environments that translate to more socially responsible and respectful graduates and workplaces.

Independent providers remain focussed and resilient to deliver quality education to their students. They rebounded from the COVID-19 pandemic and are withstanding the impacts of plateauing domestic student numbers, as well as significant reductions in international students being driven by government as the primary vehicle to reduce migration. International education is important to not only independent providers but to the whole higher education sector, plus the workplaces these students undertake part time jobs in whilst studying, such as hospitality, retail and parts of the gig economy.

However, the approach of independent providers needs to be reflected systemically and underpinned and fostered by a supportive and agile tertiary education system. Australia’s tertiary education sector needs to support all eligible individuals to have access to education, remove barriers and not impose affordability and cost impediments.

There are a number of short term and specific reforms that can be progressed immediately. These reforms will ensure that the appropriate infrastructure is being put in place for a responsive, agile and innovative tertiary sector that will be at the forefront of meeting Australia’s workforce challenges and delivering a strong economy for future generations.



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14 Proposed Pillars of Reform for A Better Higher Education Sector



PROPOSED STUDENT CENTRED REFORMS

- 1 **Equity of HELP Loans**
The permanent abolition of the FEE-HELP loan fee
- 2 **Funding Equity**
Access to Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) and programs
- 3 **Diversification**
Diversification of higher education providers to ensure growth
- 4 **Greater Access**
Permanently embed Undergraduate Certificates in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF, announced in January 2025)
- 5 **Lifelong learning**
Ensure that appropriate policy settings and incentives are in place to support lifelong learning

PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION REFORMS

- 6 **Sustainability**
Ensure the sustainability of international education
- 7 **Accessibility and Competitiveness**
Reduce fees for student visas for Australia to remain competitive
- 8 **Transparency**
Access to performance data on international education agents
- 9 **Protections**
Allow onshore commissions for international education agents
- 10 **National Benefit**
Greater pathways to permanent residency for graduates in priority disciplines

PROPOSED REGULATORY BURDEN REFORMS

- 11 **Streamlined**
Lesser, not more, bureaucracy
- 12 **Fairness**
Implement an equitable Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) cost recovery model
- 13 **Duplication**
TEQSA and Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to reduce burden on dual sector providers
- 14 **Modernisation**
Reform copyright legislation to reduce levies on independent education providers

ABOUT IHEA

Independent Higher Education Australia Ltd. (IHEA) is a peak body established in 2001 to represent Australian independent (private sector) higher education providers. Our membership spans independent universities, university colleges and other institutes of higher education, all of which are registered higher education providers accredited by the national higher education regulator, TEQSA or associate members seeking registration.

Our Vision is that: students, domestic and international, have open and equitable access to world class independent higher education in Australia, built on the foundations of equity, choice, and diversity.

Our Mission is to represent independent higher education and promote recognition and respect of independent providers as they contribute to Australian education, the Australian economy, and to society in general. We achieve this by promoting continuous improvement of academic and quality standards within member providers, by advocating equity for their staff and students, and by delivering services that further strengthen independent providers' reputations as innovative, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of industry and other relevant stakeholders in both higher education and vocational education and training. IHEA's commitment is to excellence, productivity and growth in independent higher education being delivered through a trusted Australian education system underpinned by equity, choice, and diversity.

IHEA members have different missions, scales, and course offerings across the full AQF range (Diplomas to Doctorates). IHEA has 86 members, comprised as follows:

- Five private universities (Australian University of Theology, Avondale University, Bond University, Torrens University, and the University of Divinity,).
- Six University Colleges (ACAP University College, Alphacrucis University College, Excelsia College, Moore Theological College, SAE University College and Sydney College of Divinity).
- Six self accrediting institutes (ACAP University College, Excelsia College, Griffith College, Kaplan Business School, Marcus Oldham College, and The College of Law).
- Seventy one not-for-profit and for-profit institutions of higher education; and related corporate entities.

IHEA members teach approximately 74 percent of the students in the independent sector (i.e., more than 130,000 students) and educate students in a range of disciplines, including law, agricultural science, architecture, business, accounting, tourism and hospitality, education, health sciences, theology, creative arts, information technology, and social sciences.

IHEA holds a unique position in higher education as a representative peak body of higher education providers. Membership in IHEA is only open to providers registered, or seeking registration, with the Australian regulator – TEQSA. However, some IHEA members are dual and multi sector providers who also deliver VET and/or English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) courses.

A list of IHEA member providers is on the following page.

IHEA Member Institutions

Universities

Australian University of Theology
 Avondale University
 Bond University
 Torrens University
 University of Divinity

University Colleges

ACAP University College
 Alphacrucis University College
 Excelsia University College
 Moore Theological College
 SAE University College
 Sydney College of Divinity

Institutes of Higher Education

Academies Australia Polytechnic
 Academy of Interactive Technology
 Acknowledge Education
 Adelaide Central School of Art
 AIBI Higher Education
 Australasian Academy of Higher Education
 Australasian College of Health and Wellness
 Australian College of Christian Studies
 Australian College of Nursing
 Australian College of Physical Education
 Australian College of the Arts (COLLARTS)
 Australian Institute of Business
 Australian Institute of Business and Management
 Australian Institute of Management Business School
 Australian Institute of Music
 Champion College Australia
 Christian Heritage College
 Eastern College Australia
 Education Centre of Australia
 Asia Pacific International College
 ECA College of Health Sciences
 Higher Education Leadership Institute
 Endeavour College of Natural Health
 EQUALS International
 Governance Institute of Australia
 Holmes Institute
 ICHM
 Ikon Institute of Australia

Institute of Health and Management
 International College of Management, Sydney
 Kaplan Business School
 Laurus Higher Education
 LCI Melbourne
 Le Cordon Bleu Australia
 Leaders Institute
 Lyons College
 Marcus Oldham College
 Melbourne Institute of Technology
 Morling College
 National Academy of Professional Studies - NAPS
 National Institute of Organisation Dynamics Australia
 Navitas
 College of Business and Technology
 Edith Cowan College
 Educational Enterprises Australia
 Melbourne Institute of Business and Technology
 Navitas Bundoora
 Queensland Institute of Business and Technology
 Perth Institute of Business and Technology
 South Australian Institute of Business and Technology
 Sydney Institute of Business and Technology
 Western Sydney University International College
 Ozford Institute of Higher Education
 Photography Studies College
 Polytechnic Institute Australia
 Sheridan Institute of Higher Education
 Skyline Higher Education Australia
 SP Jain School of Global Management
 Sydney Institute of Higher Education
 Sydney International School of Technology and Commerce
 Sydney Metropolitan Institute of Technology
 Tabor College Australia
 The Australian Data and Cyber Institute
 The College of Law
 The Institute of Creative Arts and Technology
 The MIECAT Institute
 The Tax Institute Higher Education HEPCO
 Torrens Global Education Services
 Think: Colleges
 Universal Business School Sydney
 Universal Higher Education
 UoW College
 Wentworth Institute of Higher Education



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