

MEDIA RELEASE

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IHEA: Higher Education Funding Needs To Be a Level Playing Field

As part of its 2025 Federal Election Platform, Independent Higher Education Australia (IHEA) is calling for the end of blatant funding inequity in higher education by extending Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) to all TEQSA registered providers, irrespective of whether they are public or private sector, in areas that are identified as national priorities.

As Australia grapples with crippling skills shortages, IHEA's Federal Election Platform exposes how the current system penalises Australian students who choose independent higher education providers, creating unnecessary roadblocks to solving workforce gaps.

The Hon Dr Peter Hendy, Chief Executive Officer of IHEA is calling for urgent reform to level the playing field.

"Every Australian higher education student deserves the same support, no matter where they study. The refusal to extend Commonwealth Supported Places to independent providers is outdated, unfair, and actively working against Australia's skills future," Dr Hendy said. "Independent providers deliver high quality, innovative education, denying their students CSPs is a direct attack on equity and choice."

IHEA's stance aligns with the 2008 Bradley Review, which recommended CSP access be expanded across the sector following TEQSA's establishment. Yet, the Australian Universities Accord process ignored this critical equity issue.

"The independent sector is perfectly positioned to meet national skills demands with agility, strong industry ties, and student focused training," Dr Hendy stated.

IHEA is also calling for independent provider students through the \$160 million Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships program and Commonwealth Prac Payments, both of which exclude these students despite their crucial role in addressing teacher shortages.

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