

IHEA Opposed to Coalition's Student Caps

Independent Higher Education Australia (IHEA) has criticised the Coalition's policy to cap international student numbers, per reporting in today's *The Sunday Telegraph*.

IHEA has long been opposed to capping international students as a blunt instrument that is unlikely to have the desired economic impacts; instead choking one of Australia's most prosperous export sectors.

"We are very disappointed the Opposition has opted for Labor flawed student capping regime," said IHEA CEO the Hon Dr Peter Hendy.

"As has been shown time and again, there is simply no need for caps on international students. The Senate understood this and voted with its feet late last year on Labor's aborted attempt at capping international students," Dr Hendy said.

IHEA is also concerned the Coalition has adopted a policy of increasing the already world-high student visa fee.

"We are frustrated by the fee hike. Only on Thursday did IHEA reiterate its call to lower the student visa fee – which is already the highest in the world before the Coalition's call to lift it," Dr Hendy said.

"International education remains Australia's largest services export. And global economic factors mean the time is right for Australia to capitalise on its competitive advantage in international advantage," Dr Hendy said.

"The US's tariff and migration policies are seeing it become a much less desirable international education destination, while Canada and the UK are actively shrinking their sectors. The time is now for Australia to increase its share of the lucrative global education market and deliver a much-needed shot in the arm for Australia's economic prosperity," Dr Hendy said.

IHEA notes the Coalition's policy is scant on information and details are limited to what appears in *The Sunday Telegraph*.

"IHEA calls on the Opposition to provide an urgent briefing to the higher education sector, so we can fully understand the consequences of this capping call," said Dr Hendy.

"There is at least cold comfort that it appears the Coalition's policy will leave the independent higher education sector no worse off than Labor's failed plan from late last year of a cap of 30,000 international students," Dr Hendy said.

"In the unfortunate scenario that this capping regime is implemented, we are calling for the independent higher education sector to not be lumped in with the VET sector. Instead we should have a separate cap of at least 40,000 international students set per annum, as we argued with respect to the Government's capping regime." Dr Hendy said.

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