



COMMUNIQUE

COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION MEETING

4 AUGUST 2025

On 4 August 2025, the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, the Hon Andrew Giles MP, Minister for Skills and Training and the Hon Julian Hill MP, Assistant Minister for International Education and Assistant Minister for Citizenship, Customs and Multicultural Affairs, met with the Council for International Education (Council) Expert Members to discuss the Australian Government's policy settings for international education for 2026 and beyond.

Minister Clare highlighted the importance of Council as a consultative forum to inform government policy and welcomed newly appointed Expert Member, Frances Coppelillo, CEO of Melbourne Polytechnic. Minister Clare shared that the Australian Government would be announcing a National Planning Level (NPL) for 2026, providing stability and certainty for the international education sector.

Assistant Minister Hill outlined the NPL for 2026 of 295,000 new overseas student commencements (NOSC), which is an increase of 25,000 compared to 2025 but still below the post-COVID peak. No active international education provider will receive a lower allocation in 2026 than they did in 2025. Public universities who seek to grow their international student allocation will need to demonstrate increased engagement with Southeast Asia and provision of student accommodation to ensure safe and secure housing for both domestic and international students. Assistant Minister Hill noted that the announcements demonstrate Government's commitment to sustainable growth.

Assistant Minister Hill confirmed that providers' indicative allocations for 2026, other than those for public universities, would be available on the Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations' websites.

Assistant Minister Hill advised that a Ministerial Direction (MD) would continue to be used to inform prioritisation for visa processing into 2026 across both the higher education and Vocational Education and Training (VET) sectors, and that the exemptions under MD111 for strategically important cohorts will continue, with additional exemptions to the NPL for onshore international students transitioning from schools, recognised pathway providers and closing providers. Assistant Minister Hill confirmed that from 2027, subject to the passage of legislation, the Australian Tertiary Education Commission will oversee international student arrangements at public universities and other higher education providers.

Minister Giles reiterated that TAFE providers will retain continuous unlimited priority visa processing, recognising Government's aim for TAFEs to play a greater role in the international VET sector. Minister Giles noted that large VET providers will receive modest growth of 5% on 2025 allocations, and a 'pool' will be created for smaller VET providers to improve utilisation across the cohort and provide growth as needed. Minister Giles also emphasised Government's continued focus on integrity in the international education sector.

Expert Members noted that the announcements send a positive signal and will provide a more certain and predictable environment for the international education sector, and discussion clarified different aspects of



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the policy settings. Further stakeholder engagements on these 2026 settings are planned with the sector in the coming weeks. Other topics discussed included student visa arrangements and recent government announcements relating to the New Colombo Plan. The next Council meeting is expected to take place in Q3 2025.