



Australian Government  
Department of Home Affairs

## MEETING BRIEF

MINISTER: David Coleman

ADVISER: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

CEO & Deputy CEO of Universities Australia

4<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 11.30am-12.00pm - Commonwealth Parliamentary Offices, 1 Bligh Street, Sydney

### Person/ Organisation

Ms Catriona Jackson, Chief Executive, Universities Australia

Ms Anne-Marie Lansdown, Deputy Chief Executive, Universities Australia

### Has the Minister met with this person/organisation in the past?

No.

### Purpose of Meeting

What is the person/organisation seeking?

- Universities Australia will set out their concerns and pressing issues relating to Immigration which they would like to see progressed over the term of the next Government.

What are the Government's objectives?

- To reaffirm support for Australia's international education sector.
- Assure attendees that the Government is listening to concerns raised by key stakeholders; is committed to maintaining internationally competitive Student visa settings, while maintaining border integrity.

### Key Messages

- According to the Department of Education, Australia's international education sector is our largest services export industry, generating \$35 billion in export income and supporting over 247,000 jobs in 2018.
  - Australia's success in international education is built on a foundation of high quality education institutions, internationally recognised qualifications and an attractive and safe environment.
- Government and the international education sector have a shared interest in a competitive visa system that facilitates the entry of genuine students and university staff, while also managing the integrity of Australia's border.
  - Australia's student visa program has never been bigger.
  - Australia provides generous work rights for students and also post study work opportunities.
  - With rapid growth in the Student visa program, it is important to manage the integrity and quality of the sector to achieve sustainable growth.

### Background

- In 2018-19 to 30 April, there were 329,090 student visas granted, which was 10 per cent higher than the same period in 2017-18 and 18 per cent higher than 2016-17 (see Attachment B).
  - As at 30 April 2019, there were 618,855 student visa holders and 83,768 temporary graduate visa holders in Australia.

- The Department engages frequently with Universities Australia (key contact is Dr John Wellard, Policy Director International). They are a member of the Education Visa Consultative Committee (EVCC) and also the Industry Advisory Group for the Global Talent Scheme. (See [Attachment C](#)).
- Key issues which may be raised by Universities Australia are:

Visa processing times for Post-graduate research students

- Universities express concern about delays in processing student visa applications for some students (mostly Chinese nationals) intending to study in the postgraduate and research sector.

s. 33(a)(i)

s. 47C(1)

Visas for overseas academics and university staff

- Since the Government's April 2017 announcement of the abolition of the 457 visa program, Universities Australia have consistently raised concerns about accessing overseas staff through the visa system.
- The concerns relate largely to the availability of key occupations on the skilled occupation list.
- Universities Australia have supported both the Global Talent Scheme and expansions of the occupations list, which went some way towards addressing their concerns.

s. 47C(1)

Education Quality and English language requirements

s. 47C(1)

Extension of Post study work for international students studying in regional areas

- Universities Australia have welcomed the March 2019 announcement to provide an additional year of post-study work on a second Temporary Graduate visa for former international students who studies and lived regionally.

s. 47C(1)

**List of Attendees**

- Ms Catriona Jackson, Chief Executive, Universities Australia
- Ms Anne-Marie Lansdown, Deputy Chief Executive, Universities Australia

**Consultation**

- Student and Graduate Visa Section, Skills and Innovation Policy Section, Visa Security and Special Case Assessment Section.

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under the Freedom of Information Act 1982

**Clearance**

<p><b>Clearance officer:</b></p> <p>Michael Willard, Assistant Secretary, Global Mobility Branch</p> <p><b>Phone:</b> s. 22(1)(a)(ii)</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 3 June 2019</p>	<p><b>Contact officer:</b></p> <p>s. 22(1)(a)(ii), Director, International Education Policy Section</p> <p><b>Division:</b> Immigration, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Policy</p> <p><b>Branch:</b> Global Mobility Branch</p> <p><b>Mobile Phone:</b> s. 22(1)(a)(ii)</p>
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**Attachments:**

**A: Biography**

**B: Student visa statistics**

**C: The Education Visa Consultative Committee (EVCC)**

**D: Supporting information**

- **D.1: The Student and Temporary Graduate visa programs**
- **D.2: Visa processing delays for certain post-graduate research students**
- **D.3: Education quality and English language requirements**
- **D.4: Extension of Post study work for international students studying in regional areas**

**Attachment A: Biography**



**Name:** Ms Catriona Jackson  
**Title:** Chief Executive  
**Organisation:** Universities Australia

**Brief work history:**

Catriona Jackson was appointed as the CEO of Universities Australia, the peak body representing Australia's university sector nationally and internationally, in May 2018.

Ms Jackson is a highly experienced advocate for higher education and has deep experience of the policy making process. Prior to her appointment as CEO, she served as Universities Australia's Deputy Chief Executive Officer and gave evidence to Parliamentary inquiries, briefed key decision makers and played a key role in lobbying the government on behalf of the sector.

Prior to joining Universities Australia, Ms Jackson was the Chief Executive Officer of peak lobby group Science and Technology Australia, and has also served as Director of Communication and External Liaison in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor at ANU, and as a senior journalist and Ministerial advisor.

Ms Jackson is the Chair of the Advisory Board for the ARC Centre of Excellence for Nanoscale Biophotonics, a founding member of the peak body for not-for-profit science groups, the Science Sector Group (SSG), and co-founded the National Research Alliance within the Australian Academy of Science.

**Attachment A: Biography**



**Name:** Ms Anne-Marie Lansdown  
**Title:** Deputy Chief Executive  
**Organisation:** Universities Australia

**Brief work history:**

Anne-Marie Lansdown was appointed Deputy Chief Executive of Universities Australia in June 2018.

Prior to her appointment, Ms Lansdown was the Chief of Staff to Australia's Chief Scientist, Dr Alan Finkel. Prior to that she was Universities Australia's Policy Director, Research and Innovation, and was promoted to Deputy Chief Executive and leader of policy in 2014.

Ms Lansdown worked for 15 years as a senior executive in the Department of Industry and was one of the original architects of the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) — Australia's national network of world-class research infrastructure projects.

She has been involved in policy and planning for the Education Investment Fund, the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council (PMSEIC), and Australia's first National Broadband Strategy.

Ms Lansdown also has considerable experience in the international arena, including with the United Nations and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

**Attachment B: Student Visa Statistics**

The number of Student visa holders has almost doubled over the last 10 years.

- As of 30 April 2019, there were 618,855 Student visa holders in Australia, an increase of 10.9 per cent when compared to 30 April 2018 (558,186).
- This is more than two per cent of Australia's population and one of the highest rates of any member of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

Reflecting global patterns of student mobility, more than half of these visa holders were from the top five source countries.

- China 27.5 per cent; India, 14.6 per cent; Nepal, 8.6 per cent; Vietnam, 3.5 per cent; Brazil, 3.5 per cent.

As at 30 June 2018, 59.2 per cent of Student visa holders in Australia were in the Higher Education Sector, 25.3 per cent in the Vocational Education and Training Sector and 5.0 per cent in the Postgraduate Research Sector.

**Student visa grants**

Sector	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19 to 30 April 2019
Foreign Affairs / Defence Sector	6,600	5,383	6,367	6,248	4,335
Higher Education Sector	151,713	158,161	175,955	199,116	178,509
Independent ELICOS Sector	33,215	34,337	40,096	38,556	33,766
Non-Award Sector	19,203	20,709	20,539	20,867	12,914
Postgraduate Research Sector	11,108	10,164	10,507	10,971	9,275
Schools Sector	12,011	11,924	12,981	11,845	7,863
VET Sector	65,690	70,167	76,590	90,689	82,428
Grand Total	299,540	310,845	343,035	378,292	329,090

**Processing times for April 2019**

Student visa by sector	75% of visas processed	90% of visas processed
Foreign Affairs or Defence Sector	15 days	36 days
Postgraduate Research Sector	63 days	5 months
Independent ELICOS Sector	25 days	42 days
Schools Sector	42 days	77 days
VET Sector	44 days	76 days
Higher Education Sector	41 days	51 days
Non-Award Sector	5 days	11 days

Australia is also attractive to international students due to our post-study work opportunities. The Temporary Graduate Visa (TGV) allows international students to live, study and work in Australia temporarily after they have finished their studies. The visa is not employer sponsored and does not target skill shortages or provide a pathway to skilled migration.

- On 30 April 2019, there were 83,768 post-study work Temporary Graduate visa holders in Australia, an 11 per cent increase when compared to 30 April 2018 (75,449).

**Attachment C: Education Visa Consultative Committee (EVCC)**

The Education Visa Consultative Committee (EVCC) provides a forum for the Australian Government to engage with key stakeholders to share information and discuss policy matters regarding visa options that support the international education sector. The EVCC is chaired and managed by the Department of Home Affairs.

The EVCC provides a forum for members to provide input and feedback on policy matters involving visa options that support the international education sector; discuss emerging trends and issues in the international education sector that may impact on visa options; and share information on visa operational initiatives that may impact on the sector.

The last meeting was held on 31 May 2019 and Universities Australia was in attendance.

***Membership***

The EVCC is chaired by Home Affairs and includes key Australian Government agencies with an interest in student visas, peak bodies representing the international education sector, states and territories and representatives of business and the unions. The members are:

- Department of Home Affairs (Chair)
- Department of Education and Training (DET)
- Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade)
- Australian Council of Private Education and Training (ACPET)
- Australian Government Schools International (AGSI)
- Council of International Students Australia (CISA)
- Council of Private Higher Education Inc. (COPHE)
- English Australia (EA)
- International Education Association of Australia (IEAA)
- Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA)
- TAFE Directors Australia (TDA)
- Universities Australia (UA)
- National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU)
- State and Territory Governments

**Attachment D: Supporting information****D.1: The Student and Temporary Graduate visa programs**

There is no cap to the number of Student visas that can be granted in any year. Applicants must meet requirements relating to their intention to remain in Australia temporarily, English language proficiency, education qualifications, and financial capacity, character and health requirements.

The Simplified Student Visa Framework (SSVF) was introduced in July 2016. This was a significant reform that simplified the regulatory requirements for a Student visa. Key changes included:

- Reducing student visas from seven to one, while also retaining a Student Guardian visa
- Rolling out online visa lodgments globally for all international students
- Introducing a new single simplified evidentiary framework.

In consultation with the international education sector, the Department completed an appraisal of the SSVF in 2018. The appraisal found that the framework broadly supported the sector and made a number of recommendations, primarily to fine-tune the framework around immigration risk outcomes of international students. The Department is in the process of implementing these recommendations.

The Temporary Graduate Visa (TGV) allows international students to live, study and work in Australia temporarily after they have finished their studies. The visa is not employer sponsored and does not target skill shortages or provide a pathway to skilled migration. It provides graduates from the higher education and Vocational Education and Training (VET) sectors with an opportunity to gain work experience in Australia following their studies. Post-study work is a component of Australia's attractiveness as a study destination.

TGV holders are granted between 18 months to four years, depending on their level of qualification. This visa is not capped. Growth is likely to continue as more Student visa holders become eligible.

**D.2: Visa processing delays for post-graduate research students**

s. 33(a)(i)

- Grant rate for Chinese Student visa applicants in 2018-19 (as of 30 April) was 94.8 per cent, slightly lower than 2017-18 (96.3 per cent). Grant rate for Chinese Student visa applicants in the Postgraduate Research Sector in 2018-19 was 98.2 per cent (as at 30 April), also slightly lower than in 2017-18 (99.5 per cent).

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s. 47C(1)

- Average processing times for 75 per cent the student visas lodged outside Australia were 14 days for the June 2018 quarter.

### D.3: Education Quality and English language requirements

All Student visa applicants must meet English language requirements to be granted a Student visa. The SSVF uses the combined immigration risk outcomes of the student's education provider and the student's country of citizenship to indicate whether the student needs to provide evidence of financial capacity and English language proficiency with their visa application.

Student visa applicants with a 'regular' evidentiary pathway meet English language requirements by providing evidence of an English language test score with their visa application. Student visa applicants in the 'streamlined' evidentiary pathway must provide evidence that their registered Australian education provider has enrolled them and the Department accepts enrolment as proof of English language proficiency.

A report by Professor Bob Birrell concluded that overseas students have fuelled housing congestion and some universities have lowered standards to compete for full fee paying international students.

There are already stringent regulations govern the international education sector. The National Code of Practice for Providers for Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code) sets standards for education providers in the provision of information and support for international students. Higher education providers must meet the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework (the Standards) with regard to admission requirements. This includes admitting students who have academic and English proficiency to participate in their intended studies.

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) monitors and regulates Australia's higher education providers and can take action against providers that do not meet the standards in place. s. 47C(1)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

s. 47C(1)

### D.4 - Extension of Post study work for international students studying in regional areas

A new initiative will provide an extra year of post-study work rights for international students who graduate with a higher education or postgraduate qualification in a regional area, and can demonstrate ongoing residence in a regional area while holding a Temporary Graduate (subclass 485) visa. The second visa will require ongoing residence in a regional area.

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This will help boost diversity and prosperity in regional Australia, while easing infrastructure pressures in our metropolitan areas. The second Temporary Graduate visa will be available from late 2021. Existing Temporary Graduate visa holders may be eligible, provided they can meet the above requirements.

The definition of regional Australia for this purpose is everywhere except

- Sydney in New South Wales
- Brisbane and the Gold Coast in Queensland
- Perth in Western Australia
- Melbourne in Victoria.



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## MEETING BRIEF

MINISTER: David Coleman

ADVISER: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Vicki Thomson, CEO of Group of Eight Australia

4<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 9.00am-9.30am – Commonwealth Parliamentary Offices, 1 Bligh Street, Sydney

### Person/ Organisation

Ms Vicki Thomson, CEO, Group of Eight Australia (Go8).

### Has the Minister met with this person/organisation in the past?

No.

### Purpose of Meeting

What is the person/organisation seeking?

- Go8 will set out their concerns and pressing issues relating to immigration which they would like to see progressed over the term of the next Government.

What are the Government's objectives?

- To reaffirm support for Australia's international education sector.
- Assure attendees that the Government is listening to concerns raised by key stakeholders; is committed to maintaining internationally competitive Student visa settings, while maintaining border integrity.

### Key Messages

- According to the Department of Education, Australia's international education sector is our largest services export industry, generating \$35 billion in export income and supporting over 247,000 jobs in 2018.
  - Australia's success in international education is built on a foundation of high quality education institutions, internationally recognised qualifications and an attractive and safe environment.
- Government and the international education sector have a shared interest in a competitive visa system that facilitates the entry of genuine students and university staff, while also managing the integrity of Australia's border.
  - Australia's student visa program has never been bigger.
  - Australia provides generous work rights for students and also post study work opportunities.
  - With rapid growth in the Student visa program, it is important to manage the integrity and quality of the sector to achieve sustainable growth.

### Background

- In 2018-19 to 30 April, there were 329,090 student visas granted, which was 10 per cent higher than the same period in 2017-18 and 18 per cent higher than 2016-17 (see [Attachment B](#)).
  - As at 30 April 2019, there were 618,855 student visa holders and 83,768 temporary graduate visa holders in Australia.
- The Department engages frequently with Go8 (Key contact is Dr Sally Nimon, Director, Strategic Planning and Industry Policy). They are a member of the Industry Advisory Group for the Global Talent Scheme.
- Key issues which may be raised by Go8 are:

s. 33(a)(iii)

#### Visa processing times for Post-graduate research students

- Universities express concern about delays in processing student visa applications for some students (mostly Chinese nationals) intending to study in the postgraduate and research sector.

s. 33(a)(i)

s. 47C(1)

#### Education Quality and English language requirements

s. 47C(1)

#### Visas for overseas academics and university staff

- Since the Government's April 2017 announcement of the abolition of the 457 visa program, Universities Australia have consistently raised concerns about accessing overseas staff through the visa system.
- The concerns relate largely to the availability of key occupations on the skilled occupation list.
- Universities Australia have supported both the Global Talent Scheme and expansions of the occupations list, which went some way towards addressing their concerns.

s. 47C(1)

#### Extension of Post study work for international students studying in regional areas

- Go8 noted the March 2019 announcement to provide an additional year of post-study work on a second Temporary Graduate visa for former international students who studies and lived regionally.

#### **List of Attendees**

- Ms Vicki Thomson, CEO of the Group of Eight Australia (see Attachment A – Biography).

#### **Consultation**

- Student and Graduate Visa Section, Skills and Innovation Policy Section, Visa Security and Special Case Assessment Section.

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**Clearance**

<p><b>Clearance officer:</b></p> <p>Michael Willard, Assistant Secretary,, Global Mobility Branch</p> <p><b>Phone:</b> s. 22(1)(a)(ii)</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 3 June 2019</p>	<p><b>Contact officer:</b></p> <p>s. 22(1)(a)(ii), International Education Policy Section</p> <p><b>Division:</b> Immigration, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Policy</p> <p><b>Branch:</b> Global Mobility</p> <p><b>Mobile Phone:</b> s. 22(1)(a)(ii)</p>
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**Attachments:**

**A: Biography**

**B: Student Visa Statistics**

**C: Supporting information**

- **C.1: The Student and Temporary Graduate visa programs**
- **C.2: Visa processing delays for certain post-graduate research students**
- **C.3: US Bill to prohibit certain visa applicants**
- **C.4: Education quality and English language requirements**

**Attachment A: Biography**



**Name:** Ms Vicki Thomson  
**Title:** Chief Executive  
**Organisation:** The Group of Eight Australia (Go8)

**Brief work history:**

Ms Thomson was appointed Chief Executive of the Group of Eight (Go8) in January 2015.

Prior to this, she was Executive Director of the Australian Technology Network of Universities.

Ms Thomson's background covers print and electronic journalism, politics, issues management and the higher education sector. She has an extensive media, political and policy background and was Chief of Staff to a South Australian Premier.

Ms Thomson is a Board member of the European Australian Business Council, a member of the Australian Government's New Colombo Reference Group and a member of MS Research Australia's Leadership Council. Ms Thomson is a former Board member of the Australia-China Council.

**Attachment B: Student Visa Statistics**

The number of Student visa holders has almost doubled over the last 10 years.

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Australia is also attractive to international students due to our post-study work opportunities. The Temporary Graduate Visa (TGV) allows international students to live, study and work in Australia temporarily after they have finished their studies. The visa is not employer sponsored and does not target skill shortages or provide a pathway to skilled migration.

- On 30 April 2019, there were 83,768 post-study work Temporary Graduate visa holders in Australia, an 11 per cent increase when compared to 30 April 2018 (75,449).

**Attachment C: Supporting Information****C.1 - The Student and Temporary Graduate visa programs**

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**C.2 - Visa processing delays for some post-graduate research students**

s. 33(a)(i)

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s. 47C(1)

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s. 33(a)(iii)

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