

## Media Release 9 October 2013

## Time for urgent action on international education

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) has called on the Government to extend Streamlined Visa Processing arrangements to the non-university sector as a matter of urgency. ACPET CEO Claire Field made the call for swift action to progress this critical policy issue in response to today's announcement by Education Minister the Hon Christopher Pyne, that the Government is seeking to expedite the extension of Streamlined Visa Processing arrangements to the sector.

"It is essential that the Government moves quickly to announce extended Streamlined Visa Processing arrangements and to respond to the other recommendations of the *Australia – Educating Globally* report as soon as possible, recognising that the key to the success of any policy or strategy lies in its implementation," said Ms Field.

"Australia has been a global leader in international education for several decades, providing a vital economic contribution and consistently being one of Australia's largest export earners, peaking at an estimated \$17.9 billion in 2009-10. Unfortunately a number of domestic issues, most particularly the changes to student visa requirements, have caused a significant decline in the number of international students coming to Australia and resulting in related export earnings falling to an estimated \$15.3 billion."

"The last two years have seen attempts to rectify this situation. While welcome in some parts of the international education industry, changes to date have been less than optimal. The result has been that the non-university higher education sector is operating well below its potential with the VET sector's international education provision at only 40 per cent capacity.

"International education in Australia is at a critical turning point. Other nations have all capitalised in recent years on Australia's fragmented, unhurried approach to managing a crucial transition in international education. As a result one of Australia's leading industries is shrinking, resulting in fewer jobs for Australians, reduced economic activity in a predominately flat Australian economy and diminished opportunity to build relations with our neighbours throughout Asia.

"In order to ensure the future success of Australia's international education industry, ACPET calls on the Government to urgently implement a national strategy, including the extension of SVP through a risk based and transparent framework.

"The sector has worked tirelessly to overcome quality issues that caused damage to Australia's international education standing over recent years. ACPET welcomes Minister Pyne's commitment to work closely with the sector as outlined today at the AIEC conference. We look forward to timely implementation of the Minister's commitments."