

**ACPET-Deloitte Access Economics report confirms continuing decline in international education sector**

A Deloitte Access Economics report commissioned by the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) has highlighted the immense and ongoing cost of delays in implementing international student visa reforms to the Australian economy.

ACPET CEO Claire Field said that the figures in the Deloitte Access Economics report *Economic contribution of international students*, which was released today, are of serious concern to the whole sector.

“The report confirms the difficult experience of providers across the private sector and quantifies the decline in the value of international education as a key Australian export”, said Ms Field.

Deloitte Access Economics’ analysis reflects a continuing decline in the international education sector’s export income of almost \$2 billion per annum, with financial year activity reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics at \$14.7 billion in 2011-2012, compared to the peak of \$18.1 billion in 2009-2010.

Ms Field said that the government’s delay in implementing important recommendations of the 2011 Knight Review have contributed to the decline.

“A key recommendation of the review is that streamlined visa processing measures be introduced beyond the university sector. This delay is compounding uncertainty for providers and prospective students, with negative effects for the sector and the economy”.

“Minister Bowen, the new minister for Tertiary Education and Skills, is already well-briefed on the issues. He must act quickly to restore confidence in Australia as a destination for international students”, urged Ms Field.

She added that “Australians can be proud of our reputation for international education which is now touted as the foundation of Australia’s social, cultural and economic place in the Asian Century. ACPET is keen to see the industry once again reach its potential in terms of economic contribution to the Australian economy”.

The economic contribution (total expenditure minus imports) of international student-related activity grew slightly from \$13.5 billion in 2007-08 to \$13.9 billion in 2011 since the first report Deloitte Access Economics (then Access Economics) prepared for ACPET. In addition, the industry contributed just over 130,000 full-time equivalent workers in 2011, up from 126,000 in 2007-08. These slight increases are largely due to the steady increase in university enrolments, against a decline of around one third in the vocational education and training (VET) and English language sectors since 2009.

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**Claire Field is available for comment: 0411 240 671**