Victoria’s International Education Strategy welcome, but more detail required on transport concessions

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) has today welcomed the release of the International Education Strategy for Victoria. The announcement, which was made in China by Premier Dr Denis Napthine, recognises the valuable contribution made by international students to Victoria, however we eagerly await the release of further detail in regards to transport concessions for international students.

“ACPET members in Victoria welcome this important announcement,” said Mr Ben Vivekanandan, Acting Chief Executive Officer.

“International education is a significant contributor to the Victorian economy and importantly adds to Victoria’s social and cultural diversity. The release of the long awaited International Education Strategy is welcome given the downturn in the industry in recent years.”

“Many of Victorias’ high quality international education providers continue to struggle against the combined impact of global economic downturn, Australia’s inefficient student visa system and a high Australian dollar, which are all keeping international student numbers down and placing institutions under sustained pressure. The goals that the Victorian Government has outlined in the strategy will provide the impetus to both reinvigorate international education in Victoria and also support Victorian education and training providers to take advantage of offshore and transnational opportunities.” said Mr Vivekanandan.

While we welcome the release of the strategy we are concerned about the lack of detail surrounding transport concessions for international students.

“ACPET has long argued that travel discounts should be extended to international students in Victoria, with a survey that ACPET conducted in 2012 showing that students were reconsidering Victoria as study destinations due to the lack of travel concessions.” said Mr Vivekanandan

“The strategy is light on detail on transport concessions, with a trial not scheduled to start until 2015. This is disappointing given Victorian education providers have been waiting a long time for the release of the strategy.”

“It is important that the implementation and administration of the transport concession scheme will be as smooth and straightforward as possible for the students involved and their education providers. The strategy refers to an opt-in scheme for providers, it is hoped that this does not create confusion and another layer of administrative burden for students and education providers.”

“While we do wait for further detail surrounding transport concessions we welcome the release of the strategy, which will potentially have a positive impact on hundreds of education providers and the Victorian economy as a whole. ACPET looks forward to working with the Victorian Government on the implementation of the International Education Strategy.” concluded Mr Vivekanandan.

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