MEDIA ALERT
Monday, November 22nd, 2010

International Education Taskforce Convened in Canberra

Australia's education, business and tourism peak bodies will meet in Canberra today (Monday) to urge the Federal Government to do more to stabilise the nation’s international education sector.

The extraordinary meeting will see leaders from across Australian industry¹ come together to push for Government action they regard as essential to restoring the nation’s reputation as an international education leader, and rebuilding the market in our third largest export industry.

Ministers Bowen and Emerson will both attend the day-long forum, along with Shadow Minister Mason.

Australia’s international education sector has experienced significant disruption and downturn over the past 18 months, with offshore student visa grants declining 31% in 2009/10 and projections for economic losses to 2012 of $3.8BN.

While international student numbers continue to grow both globally and within our region, particularly out of the new high growth economies including India, China and Indonesia, students are now simply opting to study elsewhere in the world rather than taking up Australian education.

“While some government intervention has been welcome and has delivered quality improvements and the industry itself has improved processes to better serve international students, successive and frequent changes to Australia’s student visa and migration policy have now gone too far and are devastating the international education sector, with disastrous flow on implications for the Australian economy.” said Claire Field, A/g CEO of the Australian Council for Private Education and Training, which is part of the taskforce.

“Poorly planned policy changes are hurting our economy, with businesses failing and Australians losing their jobs right now, but it doesn’t have to continue this way.”

“This International Education Taskforce is proposing unanimously to the Australian Government a low risk and achievable course of action to rebuild Australia’s international education reputation and to help stabilise and grow the sector.”

“We are coming together to do our part. We look forward to the Government doing its part as well.”

Interviews and further information available on request.
Media Contact: Ben Eade 0406 641 881

Spokespeople Available:
• Claire Field, A/g CEO, Australian Council for Private Education and Training
• Sue Blundell, Executive Director, English Australia
• Peter Holden, Director, International Engagement and Business Development, TAFE Directors Australia
• Dennis Murray, Executive Director, International Education Association of Australia Inc.
• Brett Hogan, Communications Director, Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry
• Dipen Rughani, President, Australia India Business Council NSW

¹ Sector representatives include: Australian Council for Private Education and Training; International Education Association of Australia; English Australia; TAFE Directors Australia and the Independent Schools Council of Australia.

Additional representatives and supporters include: Business Council of Australia; Australian Industry Group; Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; National Tertiary Education Union; Australian Tourism Export Council; IDP Education; Tourism and Transport Forum.