COORDINATION AND SOCIAL RESEARCH KEY TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUCCESS

The *International Student Futures in Australia* research paper, released today, calls for coordinated cross-Government policy responses, informed by strong social research to help address the likelihood of a sharp decline of Australia’s international education sector.

The paper, by Professor Andrew Jakubowicz and Dr Devaki Monani, attributes the anticipated decline in international student enrolments to key factors that include the highly publicised incidents of violence against students as well as the associated “fragmented and at times contradictory political response”.

The paper emphasises the need for social planning which is based on rigorous research, and the authors argue that “poorly researched policy, under-theorised analyses, disconnected responses, and uncoordinated strategic perspectives have produced a somewhat chaotic approach”.

The paper was prepared with the support of the Australian Human Rights Commission, Universities Australia, and the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia. While remaining the sole responsibility of its authors, these organisations believe that the paper is a valuable contribution to independent debate around these important issues.

Chairman of the Policy and Advocacy Committee of the Academy of Social Sciences Australia, Dennis Trewin, said, "In order to develop the right policies, there really needs to be a sustained, focussed and properly resourced social science research program that helps us to understand the real life experiences of our diverse international student population."

"We need this understanding so we can identify achievable, concrete measures that would practically improve student safety and well-being while supporting the long term sustainability of our international education market," Mr Trewin said.

Chief Executive of Universities Australia, Dr Glenn Withers welcomed the Australian Government’s continued constructive engagement with international student safety and well-being.

"The International Student Strategy Australia released by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in late 2010 is a significant and important step forward," said Dr Withers. "However as this paper indicates, there is still more work to be done across Governments to address issues such as accommodation for international students, transport and employment, strategy to address racism and very importantly, a targeted social research program to inform policy."

Race Discrimination Commissioner, Graeme Innes expressed his concern that, though many international students were resident in Australia for up to four years, and treated as Australian residents in some official statistics, there was no clear understanding of their entitlements.
“The entitlements of international students residing in Australia, including their right to safety, decent work and non-discrimination, should be clearly understood by all,” Mr Innes said.

*International Student Futures in Australia* is available online at: [www.assa.edu.au](http://www.assa.edu.au)

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