

Expert Members of the Council for International Education

Growing International Education in Regional Australia

The following advice has been prepared by the Expert Members of the Council for International Education to address strategic action 9.2 of the *National Strategy for International Education 2025*:

Australia will attract more international students to regional communities by promoting internationally the excellence and the advantages of education, training and research in regional Australia.

Expert Members have consulted widely including through 59 submissions to a consultation [paper](#) and eight roundtable meetings with education institutions, state and local governments, business and community groups.

The need to maintain Australia's reputation for high-quality education no matter where it is delivered has been a consistent theme raised in consultations, as was the central importance of maintaining a rich and rewarding student experience.

Expert Members acknowledge there is a range of definitions for regional currently in use by Commonwealth, state and territory governments, including for the purposes of directing funding and for migration and visa purposes. Expert members agree any new Australian Government programs or student visa incentives should draw on existing definitions. Expert Members defer to the Australian Government to determine how best to define "regional" for the purposes of government policies and programs which give effect to the proposals contained in this advice.

Consultations also underlined the diversity encapsulated in the term *regional* and the importance of showcasing the full range of high quality education destinations across Australia, whether this be in a regional city or inner or outer regional center.

Expert Members have identified four key areas for action. Actions one to three could be led by the Australian Government, while action four could be supported by Australian Government, but led by state, territory and local governments in partnership with education institutions, business and community groups within their jurisdictions. Expert Members also noted the need for any policy response adopted by government to be evaluated following a period of implementation to ensure it is meeting its objectives.

1. Structural Incentives

1.1 Introduce an additional year of post-study work visa for students who study in regionally-based institutions, consistent with the minimum requirements of the current student visa framework.

1.2 Consider expanding access to these visas across a broader range of education sectors.

2. Funding Incentives

2.1 Establish a new regional excellence scholarships program by directing a proportion of existing Australian government scholarships to students studying at a regional campus.

3. Destination Marketing and Branding

3.1 Adopt a nationally consistent approach to marketing and promotions through Australia's new nation brand, and use Study in Australia and other digital platforms to promote the unique strengths and attributes of regionally-based institutions through targeted campaigns.

3.2 Engage and support education agents to be promoters and champions of institutions in a broader range of study destinations.

3.3 Encourage co-investment in collaborative marketing in collaboration with state and territory governments.

4. Community Incentives

4.1 Build capacity of study destinations through coordination of state, territory and community support for internships, work experience, accommodation, student services and connection to community through cultural and sporting events.

4.2 Coordinate the provision of services across government to ensure key infrastructure, including transport and ICT, is in place to support international students.

4.3 Promote the value of coordinated approaches to better support international students and to develop the right model for each study destination.

Expert Members commend this advice to Government and look forward to guiding implementation of proposals, in partnership with states and territories, providers and students, and business and community organisations.