



SUBMISSION 52

Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
the council of Australia's university presidents
(ACN 008 502 930 - ABN 53 008 502 930)

Our Ref: G-04-024

21 February 2007

Mr Andrew McGowan
Inquiry Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Economics, Finance and Administration
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Andrew.Mcgowan.reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr McGowan

Inquiry into the current and future directions of Australia's service export industries

In response to your previous communication, the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) is pleased to make a submission to the inquiry into the current and future directions of Australia's service export industries.

Having had the opportunity to review the previous departmental and industry submissions to the inquiry, the AVCC endorses the information previously supplied by our university members and the Department of Education, Science and Training.

Further to this, and in response to a point raised in one of the education related submissions, the AVCC would like to caution against an overly strong link or pathway between study and permanent residency. While it is acknowledged that many international students come to study in Australia with the specific objective of obtaining permanent residency on completing their academic qualification, there are a number of reasons why the international education industry does not explicitly link education and migration when marketing Australian education opportunities. These reasons include:

- Institutions from overseas collaborate with Australian universities as a result of the outstanding reputation the university sector has developed for high quality teaching and research. As the Federal Government has recognised, it is important that the university sector's reputation for quality is safeguarded and promoted internationally. Any suggestion that the Australian education system is influenced by the domestic immigration agenda may damage the industry's international positioning and limit the opportunities that Australian universities have to collaborate internationally in teaching and research;
- closely aligning immigration policy with university recruiting initiatives may lead to a comparatively narrow nationality mix of international students. This would be inconsistent with the Australian higher education sector, which strives to operate in a truly global context. Any narrowing of the sector's teaching and research profile would negatively impact on the perception of the Australian education industry's integrity within the international domain. Universities seek greater diversity in their student population than just those professions on the Migration Occupation in Demand List (MODL);

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- concerns have been raised by overseas governments regarding Australia actively targeting their best students for migration. Therefore, it is not appropriate for universities to actively market themselves as conduits for permanent migration; and
- migration is an optional, and personal, outcome for a small percentage of graduating international students and therefore migration, and the process of achieving this, is not an educational policy issue for universities.

If you have any questions regarding this submission, please contact Ms Anne Reynolds, Director International on 02 6285 8210 or a.reynolds@avcc.edu.au

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Rome', written in a cursive style.

David Rome
Chief Executive Officer