

MEDIA RELEASE

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IRU hopeful for good outcome from review of international student visa program

The IRU is hopeful that the review of visa requirements and processes for international students announced today by Senator Evans and Mr Bowen will lead to a better system by the end of 2011.

“The current arrangements put too many barriers in the way of universities seeking to attract capable international students to Australia. The process has become unnecessarily complex, with the requirements of students too often out of proportion to the potential risk posed”, Professor Sandra Harding, IRU Chair and Vice-Chancellor James Cook University said.

“We need a system that gives universities and prospective students a clear, timely means to establish the applicants’ intent to study, their capability for their course and their capacity to support themselves in Australia.

“With tighter arrangements to ensure that providers are legitimate there is less need to focus as strongly on the students. Universities and other high quality providers can be relied on to attract students legitimately seeking education and training”, Professor Harding said.

“The terms of reference for the review make clear that all issues will be considered. It is particularly important that the review look at the arrangements in comparable countries to ensure that we are not hindering our capacity to offer places on a competitive footing with the rest of the world”, Professor Sandra Harding, said.

The IRU welcomes the reduced risk rating for many countries from April 2011. The reductions for China and India will be important in stabilising the market for students from those countries.

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