

## ‘Education New Zealand Welcomes Government’s Commitment to International Education’

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‘The International Education Agenda discussion document released by Government today is a sensible and rational statement that recognises the economic and education realities that providers face’ says Robert Stevens, Chief Executive of Education New Zealand. ‘We will certainly be responding to the call for submissions, and actively encouraging providers to do the same’.

‘It is important to understand that Government and Industry goals, whilst complementary, are not always identical’ says Robert Stevens. ‘The Government quite naturally are concerned about the way in which an international education strategy fits in to a broader foreign policy and nation building context. Providers are equally interested in the wider educational, social, cultural and economic benefits that stem from international education, but are also focussed and constrained by economic realities. There is no such thing as a free lunch, and there is no such thing as a free education – someone, whether it is student, parent, provider, sponsor or host, must pay. We believe the draft agenda squarely recognises the financial realities that face institutions, and we will be seeking to ensure that maximum support is available to support institutions at the cutting edge of turning the vision of international education into a reality’.

‘We also note the Governments interest in the maintenance and improvement of quality’ says Robert Stevens. ‘Institutions know better than anyone that the firm discipline of a global education marketplace places an ongoing premium on quality, and that the ongoing real-time feedback from students is the best guide. Regulations and other measures can only achieve so much – and an over reliance on stifling conformity and red tape will not necessarily achieve the desired outcome. When your very financial survival is dependent on mobile students, it sharpens the quality no end! The industry does not need further regulation.’

'We are particularly pleased that the Government has recognised and committed further support to many industry led initiatives that are integral to the development of international education' says Robert Stevens. 'Projects such as generic promotion, the depth market strategy, brand evolution and focussed marketing are all explicitly acknowledged. In turn, we applaud the ongoing commitment to Government initiatives such as Scholarships, the Counsellor network and the Innovation fund. We are pleased that the impact of the likes of Immigration policies and Trade agreements is recognised, and will continue to advocate strongly for a dynamic policy evolution framework that responds to market realities and positions New Zealand providers competitively. Also pleasing is the ongoing commitment to the 'NZ Inc' ideal, and the connectedness across both Government and industry stakeholders'.

'In conclusion, we believe that the Agenda forms the basis of a sound and consistent Government strategy' says Robert Stevens. 'We look forward to working with both industry and Government to develop the priorities identified in the Agenda, and in ensuring that New Zealand's international education industry receives due credit for what has been an impressive period of achievement in a challenging international environment'.

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