

# THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WELLBEING STRATEGY

JUNE 2017



# FOREWORD

I am pleased to introduce New Zealand's first International Student Wellbeing Strategy.

More than 125,000 students from all over the world choose to come to New Zealand each year to further their education. We want all of them to have a great time in our country. New Zealand's reputation is dependent on providing both a high quality education and a high quality New Zealand experience.

International students often do not speak English as their first language and are living away from their families, sometimes for the first time. It's important that international students are well supported, welcomed and valued for their contribution to the communities they live and study in, and to New Zealand as a whole.

New Zealand was the first country in the world to introduce pastoral care requirements to ensure providers supported and protected their international students. Last year the Government implemented the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice, which refreshed the requirements and focused on the outcomes education providers and their agents need to deliver for their international students.

Since July 2016, international education agencies have met with students, community groups and education providers to hear about the issues that are important and what solutions work best for them. The result is this International Student Wellbeing Strategy, a broader student-centred strategy supported by the Code.

The International Student Wellbeing Strategy will bring government agencies, providers and students together to identify and implement opportunities for strengthening wellbeing. I have allocated funding from the Export Education

Levy for new national and local activities that will support the outcomes in the Wellbeing Strategy.

At the same time, I am reviewing the Government's strategic goals for international education in response to the growth and change experienced over the past few years. My focus for the new International Education Strategy, currently being developed, is to promote sustainable growth for the sector so that it benefits New Zealand as well as the students themselves.

Export education has grown to become our fourth largest export industry. The International Education Strategy aligns the sector with Trade Agenda 2030 and the Business Growth Agenda. It reflects both the Tertiary Education Strategy and the New Zealand Curriculum's focus on international capabilities.

This International Student Wellbeing Strategy is central to achieving my vision for an international education sector that contributes to a vibrant and prosperous New Zealand, where international students feel welcome, safe and well.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Goldsmith". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Paul Goldsmith**  
Minister for Tertiary Education,  
Skills and Employment



# A SHARED VISION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WELLBEING

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The Wellbeing Strategy provides an outcomes framework for government agencies to coordinate efforts on a shared vision for our international students.

The Wellbeing Strategy is a whole-of-government strategy led by the Ministry of Education.

**International students feel welcome, safe and well, enjoy a high quality education and are valued for their contribution to New Zealand.**



# WHY THE STRATEGY MATTERS

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New Zealand has built a successful international education sector over the past 25 years based on providing international students with a quality education and an experience that meets and exceeds their expectations.

Over 125,000 international students now choose to come to New Zealand to study at our schools and tertiary education organisations.

These students bring an international dimension to our education system, increase our research capability and encourage the development of New Zealanders' understanding of other languages and cultures. Our international graduates become lifelong ambassadors and advocates for New Zealand, supporting closer international linkages and business opportunities.

Student surveys show that about 90% of international students are happy with the experience they have here.

International students are often young, have different cultural backgrounds, and are living away from their families, communities and social networks. They can be vulnerable and there are a number of issues that can have a negative impact on their experience.

New Zealand has a reputation for being a safe and welcoming destination. To safeguard this reputation we need to understand what is important to international students and continue to deliver a high quality, authentic experience that meets their needs.

# WHAT ARE WE BUILDING ON?

New Zealand led the world by introducing national pastoral care requirements for international students in 2002. The requirements that education providers must meet have since been reviewed, with the Government introducing a new Code of Practice for the pastoral care of international students and Dispute Resolution Scheme in July 2016.

Recent growth in the number of international students has highlighted the importance of a quality student experience alongside a quality education. Regulation of education providers alone will not ensure that international students have a positive experience in New Zealand.

Last year agencies agreed that better outcomes could be achieved through an international student-centred wellbeing strategy, to better address gaps and identify opportunities to strengthen student wellbeing. We have consulted with student, ethnic community and education provider groups.

International students have told us that the issues that can have a significant impact on their experience here include meeting costs of living, employment and exploitation, access to health services and counselling, and social connectedness, including making friends while in New Zealand.

The International Student Wellbeing Strategy sets out a shared vision for international students and four aspirational outcome areas which capture the whole international student experience in New Zealand:

- **economic wellbeing**
- **education**
- **health and wellbeing**
- **inclusion**

The outcomes are underpinned by:

- **accurate, reliable and easily accessible information**
- **education providers meeting their Code of Practice obligations.**

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WELLBEING STRATEGY

## Overarching strategy outcome

International students are welcome, safe and well, enjoy a high quality education and are valued for their contribution to New Zealand

### ECONOMIC WELLBEING

#### International students are able to support themselves

- International students have accurate information about the costs of living and studying, including regional variations in costs
- International students understand their rights to work in New Zealand, their rights as employees and do not experience exploitation in the workplace
- International students know their rights relating to accommodation and how to access services to resolve accommodation disputes
- International students understand the pathways to employment and residency that are available to them
- International students can access services that provide financial advice

### EDUCATION

#### International students achieve educational outcomes that support their future pathways and choices

- International students know that the providers and courses they enrol in are high quality
- International students have appropriate English language skills to undertake their planned study
- International students achieve good educational outcomes and can access services to support pathways to further study
- International students experience culturally responsive services from education providers

### HEALTH AND WELLBEING

#### International students are safe and well

- International students are aware of and can access effective healthcare that is culturally appropriate
- International students know how to keep safe in New Zealand
- International students understand New Zealand laws relating to crime and violence, their legal rights, rights to services and how to report crime
- International students can access safe and reliable transport

### INCLUSION

#### International students are welcome, valued and socially connected

- International students feel welcomed in New Zealand and know that their contribution is valued
- International student voices are heard and considered when relevant government policies and strategies are developed
- International students have access to information about social, cultural and religious services available to them
- International students feel integrated into their communities and their diversity is celebrated

## All outcomes are underpinned by the following:

Government provides trusted information for international students that underpins the delivery of services to support the outcomes of the strategy

Government ensures education providers meet their Code of Practice obligations for the pastoral care of international students to support the outcomes of the strategy



# WHAT PROGRESS HAVE WE MADE?

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The Auckland Agency Group was established in 2016 to lead engagement with international education stakeholders in Auckland and to coordinate initiatives to strengthen international student wellbeing.

Almost two thirds of international students are based in Auckland, meaning the Auckland Agency Group has a critical role in enhancing the student experience.

Achievements already include:

- **improved lighting and increased safety patrols near inner city campuses**
- **an expanded Police International Student Ambassador Programme**
- **safety videos targeted at international students**
- **a health centre with a focus on Asian student health care.**

Education New Zealand has established a new national position, Director Student Experience, to implement a work programme focused on strengthening international student wellbeing.

## CASE STUDY

### Safety in the City videos

A series of online videos called 'Safety in the City' will improve international students' understanding of New Zealand laws and how to stay safe. The videos cover a broad range of issues, including tips for personal safety, advice on workplace rights and how to report a crime. The videos also outline the various support services available to international students in Auckland. These are available with Chinese subtitles.

Study Auckland, with support from New Zealand Police, created the videos to enhance the student experience for international students and their families. Safety in the City is accessible to international students and education providers via [YouTube](#) or via [Study Auckland's online toolkit](#).

## CASE STUDY

### An Asian migrant and student focused health clinic

Alliance Health Plus has launched a new primary healthcare service, Caring Clinic Doctors, on Queen Street in the Auckland CBD to increase international student access to health services. The clinic has a focus on Asian migrant and student health and has bilingual staff.

The clinic is open for business hours from Monday to Friday.

After-hours and on weekends, patients with health concerns can access telehealth Skype consultations and e-prescriptions. If patients wish to see an after-hours GP, they can make a booking using an online appointment system.

The GPs are supportive of raising awareness of health issues, including mental health and sexual health, to Asian international students using promotional and information channels such as ethnic associations, settlement agencies and ethnic media.

# HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THE OUTCOMES OF THE STRATEGY?

Funding from the Export Education Levy will be used to fund new local and national activities to support the outcomes of the International Student Wellbeing Strategy.

This funding has already contributed to:

- the design of the Auckland Student Experience Programme
- understanding international students needs and scoping options to establish a student experience programme beyond Auckland
- research on New Zealanders' perceptions of international education and its broader value
- a plan for streamlining information for international students.

In 2017/18, Government will:

- **identify and allocate funding for new activities to strengthen international student wellbeing**
- **continue to implement the Auckland Agency Group work programme**
- **tell the international education story in New Zealand so that New Zealanders understand and embrace the benefits of international education and international students feel valued**
- **streamline the information government agencies make available to international students and make sure it is accurate, reliable and in appropriate language**
- **provide information targeted at international students about exploitation in the workplace**
- **review education and immigration regulations that can be used to incentivise quality international education.**

The Ministry of Education will monitor the impact of the International Student Wellbeing Strategy using baseline data across the four outcome areas. This will help to focus efforts where they are needed and have the biggest impact on our international students.

## CASE STUDY

### **In progress: Auckland student experience programme**

Study Auckland, with Education New Zealand support, is designing an international student experience programme tailored to the needs of international students in Auckland. The purpose of the programme is to strengthen outcomes around health and wellbeing, personal safety, employability, access to community events and social inclusion.

The design team has consulted international and local students, education providers, support service providers and employers to help identify where the main challenges lie and to scope options around the best way to deliver the programme for maximum impact. The first phase of the programme will be delivered in 2017.

## CASE STUDY

### **In progress: Streamlining information for international students**

In 2016 Education New Zealand reviewed the information resources available to international students. From this review, Education New Zealand concluded that the international student experience could be strengthened by streamlining existing government information portals and making the information more consistent and accessible.

This aligns with feedback from international students themselves. Students have told us how important it is to have accurate and reliable information so they can make informed decisions about coming to study and live in New Zealand, and during their time here. A plan has been completed for providing international students with a single source of trusted information which will be delivered in 2017.

New Zealand Government



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