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Reforms to strengthen the integrity of international education must promote quality providers & a secure well-paid education workforce

The IEU welcomes consultation with education stakeholders by the Federal Education Minister and Minister for Home Affairs about [significant reforms to international education](#).

It's vital the government collaborates with the teaching profession and their unions, as well as education providers, to ensure that quality education providers in the sector are not adversely impacted by new regulatory responses intended to deal with [unscrupulous operators](#).

Most importantly, our union will work with the government and education stakeholders to ensure the job security and pay and conditions of our members are enhanced, rather than compromised.

The private VET sector and [ELICOS industry](#) have suffered major upheaval due to international events. Such uncertainty, combined with opportunistic business practices and mismanagement by some providers, has in-turn undermined working conditions and job security in the sector.

The government will now impose caps on international students to restore and improve "the integrity and quality of international education". However, universities and colleges only have until 2025 to plan for reduced foreign student enrolments while also safeguarding staff employment and job security.

Our union will consult with our members and other stakeholders to ascertain if the planned reform timeframes are adequate or if they unintentionally impact reputable providers.

Strengthening the integrity and quality of international education is one of eight actions in the government's [Migration Strategy for Australia \(2023\)](#), reflecting the sector's economic, social and diplomatic importance. Its measures include higher English language requirements for international students and graduates. This will be of assistance to IEU members whose workloads have been exacerbated by teaching international students who lack sufficient English language proficiency.

The sector is already experiencing a dramatically increased number of Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) sanctions on non-compliant providers. In May, in an unprecedented use of legislative powers, the Department of Home Affairs issued [34 education providers with warning letters](#) for non-genuine or exploitative recruitment practices. Providers have six months to significantly improve their behaviour, or risk suspension certificates banning them from recruiting more international students, with breaches punishable by up to two years imprisonment.

The IEU fully supports upholding the integrity and quality of the international education sector and the reputation of good operators who meet appropriate education standards.

International education is Australia's largest service export and the nation's fourth largest export overall. It's essential that we ensure the long-term viability of the sector free from student exploitation while providing secure and well-paid jobs for all education workers.