



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

**Dr Michael Spence AC**

Vice-Chancellor and Principal

19 April 2018

Councillor Clover Moore  
Lord Mayor  
City of Sydney  
GPO Box 1591  
Sydney NSW 2001

By email: [sydneyoursay@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:sydneyoursay@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Lord Mayor,

### **Draft International Education Action Plan**

The University of Sydney commends the City of Sydney for the proactive, evidence-based and highly-consultative approach it is taking to ensure Sydney remains a leading global destination for international students.

As a major provider of education to international students (more than 22,000 enrolled in 2018) we are pleased to have been part of the discussions that have helped develop the City's Draft International Education Action Plan to this point.

The three themes around which the draft plan is framed – *welcoming, wellbeing and work-integrated learning* – are appropriate and sit well with our own priorities for strategic action. Maximising housing and living affordability, student safety and well-being, levels of community engagement and expanding opportunities for rewarding work experiences for international students are priorities we share with the City.

We warmly welcome the City's efforts to promote and celebrate the substantial cultural, social and economic contribution international students make to life in this city. We could not agree more that the future competitiveness of our education sectors and of our increasingly knowledge and services-based local economy depends on ensuring Sydney maintains a global reputation as a great place to visit, study live and work.

The figures in the draft about the economic contribution international students make to the Australian economy (p.2) would benefit from being updated. According to the latest trade data we have seen, in 2016-2017 international education exports were worth \$28 billion to the Australian economy, while in NSW international education was by far the state's largest services export sector (\$10.3 billion) and the second largest export earner overall.<sup>1</sup>

With global demand for international education predicted to climb strongly over the next 15 years, Sydney should be well placed to capitalise on opportunities for further growth. There are, however, various looming challenges and risks to the future strength and sustainability of the sector. These will need to be managed carefully with enhanced levels of collaboration and coordination between education providers; local, state and federal governments; industry and the wider community. In this regard, we welcome the City's commitment to work

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<sup>1</sup> <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/australia-s-trade-by-state-and-territory.aspx>



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closely with education providers to advocate to other levels of government for action to address issues that are beyond the control of local governments.

So far as the specific practical actions set out under each of the plan's three themes in the draft's Appendix 1 are concerned, we note most of these describe activities already in place. Many of these initiatives are excellent and are making tangible positive differences to the student experience. We note and welcome the City's commitment that this plan will become a living document, with actions to be refined regularly through monitoring of progress and ongoing consultation with students and education providers.

We look forward to being part of future discussions with the City of Sydney and other stakeholders to identify new and innovative activities to help ensure Sydney is viewed internationally as a uniquely-attractive destination for the best and brightest international students.

Yours sincerely,

(Signature removed)

Michael Spence