

THE HON JULIA GILLARD MP
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Minister for Education; Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations;
Minister for Social Inclusion.

MEDIA RELEASE

12 June 2009

International student safety and welfare

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today welcomed the collaborative approach agreed by education and training Ministers to improve the international student experience in Australia and announced a number of initiatives to promote and protect their welfare.

Australia welcomes students from more than 190 countries every year. Most report that they are satisfied with both their education and social experiences.

The Australian Government is taking steps to ensure international students and their families remain confident that Australia will not tolerate discrimination or the victimisation of students who are guests in our country.

Close consultation with the international student community is continuing across all levels of government. The Minister has welcomed the work of state police with the Indian community to address recent concerns regarding student safety.

The Australian Government is committed to providing the highest quality education system and providing international students with the support they need while studying.

As part of this commitment, an International Student Taskforce has been established to develop strategies to support the wellbeing of overseas students. It will also work with the taskforce established by the Prime Minister to address crimes against international students.

At today's Joint Ministerial Council meeting, all Ministers agreed that comprehensive information about studying, living and working in Australia is essential to improve international student experiences.

To ensure Indian students departing for study in Australia have up-to-date information to help them settle into their Australian life and study, the

Australian High Commissioner to India has today published the 3rd edition of the Australian Government's *Guide to Studying and Living in Australia*. It will be provided to each new student who obtains a visa to study in Australia.

The Minister has announced the establishment of a student hotline - 1300 363 079. Students can anonymously raise concerns which will be collated and published on www.studyinaustralia.gov.au so that all students can benefit from this information.

The Minister also announced that the Government is fast tracking a planned review of the legal framework for the provision of education services to international students. The review will now commence in 2009-10 and will examine the operation of the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000* and the associated national code.

Obligations under the ESOS Act were highlighted in a letter to education providers today. The letter from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations outlined the critical role they play in ensuring a positive experience for international students that meets the high standards expected of Australia and its education system.

These initiatives will support the International Student Roundtable announced by Minister Gillard in her Statement to Parliament on 26 May 2009 and the *Study in Australia 2010* program announced on 16 March 2009.

These strategies are part of the Australian Government's strong commitment to providing a high quality, welcoming, safe and rewarding experience for all international students.

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