

PROGRESS AGAINST UNIVERSITIES AUSTRALIA 10 POINT ACTION FOR STUDENT SAFETY: JULY 2009

In June 2009 Universities Australia adopted an Action Plan for student safety which emphasised strong law enforcement and associated and necessary actions. Progress has occurred to realise these objectives as outlined in this progress report.

Action Item	Achievement Indicator	Response and Time
1. Support proactive, preventive approaches to assuring student safety; and collaborate with local law enforcement authorities to increase levels of security including through improved cultural awareness and via increased visibility of police and security officers in locations where international students study, work, travel and live, and with suitable complaints bodies being in place to respond to concerns over inaction.	<p>1.1 All Australian universities have encouraged police liaison via universities for students regarding safety issues;</p> <p>1.2 Practical orientation manuals are available;</p> <p>1.3 Briefings for new students given on security contacts and process;</p> <p>1.4 A central university contact point for anonymous reporting of security issues that can be coordinated and passed on to police plus a register of calls/postings kept;</p> <p>1.5 Pre-programming security speed dial numbers into mobiles via mobile telephone providers/companies</p>	<p>1.1: All universities have now initiated this.</p> <p>1.2 All universities provide orientation sessions and information folders and will regularly update these.</p> <p>1.3 All universities provide accessible, well promoted opportunities for students to be briefed on arrival (orientation week programs).</p> <p>1.4 Target all universities within 4 months.</p> <p>1.5 Target all universities within 6 months</p>
2. Work with diplomatic missions and the Australian government to streamline and enhance existing reporting processes for missions regarding student safety. At the same time work in partnership with Australia's own diplomatic posts as required, developing fully integrated communication processes to advise and support students on living and studying in Australia upon receipt of their student visas.	<p>2.1 Annual meeting of all diplomatic missions;</p> <p>2.2 Meet major missions every three months for exchange and cooperation purposes with countries of critical interest.</p> <p>2.3 Liaise with AEI offices to prepare objective information resources for local authorities and media on safety and experience issues.</p>	<p>2.1 Continue to meet annually – Universities Australia meeting has now occurred for 2009 with 30 missions.</p> <p>2.2 Universities Australia meetings with Indian High Commission; Minister-Counsellor for Education (China). Higher Education Summit with China proposed to Ambassador for later 2009. Liaison with DFAT on 2010 Shanghai expo</p> <p>2.3 Commenced with AEI Delhi and with AEI Beijing within three months</p>

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<p>3. Cooperate with government, local authorities and housing industry representatives to ensure the availability of sufficient affordable and secure accommodation for all students including international students upon arrival. Consider innovative finance mechanisms to assist both the students and the construction arrangements e.g. a Fund akin to the Education Investment Fund to support this at appropriately sustainable levels.</p>	<p>3.1 Universities Australia to coordinate a stock-take of available housing on and off campus detailing capacity and providing status updates on new buildings and completion timelines; 3.2 Work in partnership with business organisations and real estate institutes to develop best practice guidelines for the provision of accommodation and employment support to international students; 3.3 Liaison with government on Public Private Partnerships for building accommodation and access to government involvement in specific funding for student accommodation.</p>	<p>3.1 Universities Australia stocktake to be published within 6 months. 3.2 Meetings with ACCI and Real Estate bodies to begin development of guidelines within 2 months. 3.3 Target government announcement on accommodation funding model in 6 months.</p>
<p>4. Advocate that all state and territory authorities immediately make available travel concessions for all students to help enhance their safety and security when moving between campuses, accommodation and workplaces, and improve public transport safety for all, and encourage employer and union support for assuring safety travel conditions for student workers.</p>	<p>4.1 Review research exercises by consultancies in relation to travel concessions and state/territory revenue benefits from international students. Conduct additional research by university transport economists and/or consultants; 4.2 Universities Australia to continue the push for travel concessions to be extended to all students.</p>	<p>4.1 Universities Australia to provide analysis and research to authorities and governments within three months. 4.2 Universities Australia has included the matter of travel concession inequities in its submissions to the Senate Inquiry into International Student Welfare, and the NSW and Victorian State Inquiries. Other representative groups have done the same. Representations made to Infrastructure Australia for inclusion in guidelines</p>
<p>5. Sustain and expand the current provision of information by all education providers on student security and safety from pre-departure programs, arrival and orientation through to graduation; and encourage students themselves to act on this information by taking safety precautions whenever possible.</p>	<p>5.1 Update the student orientation folders and information manuals to explicitly address safety issues; 5.2 Update the domestic pro forma guide for international students (Rainbow Guide ISANA/DEEWR) and post to the UA website. This will assist all students, not just those at universities; 5.3 Institute SMS or email notices to update students on emerging security risks (international office sends alert).</p>	<p>5.1 Target all Universities within 6 months. 5.2 Liaise with ISANA and AEI on updating the Rainbow Guide – outcome within 2 months. 5.3 Many universities already do this. All universities to aim to have a program in all international offices within 4 months.</p>

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<p>6. Reinforce strategies for the integration of students of all nationalities and backgrounds on our campuses and in our communities, and promote a greater understanding of international cultures and languages in Australia through collaboration between the Australian Government, overseas governments and international agencies.</p>	<p>6.1 Universities to pursue closer linkages to ethnic communities councils and community bodies; 6.2 Universities to promote existing good practice in social integration and wider cultural initiatives.</p>	<p>6.1 Target all universities to engage with ethnic communities councils within 6 months, including via regional university groups. 6.2 Universities Australia to promote AEI social integration project (once published) and support greater levels of university involvement – within 2 months. Also, proposal developed for regional institutes to foster knowledge and expertise</p>
<p>7. Cooperate with authorities in student source countries to ensure that university recruitment agents accurately represent all aspects of the international student experience, including safety aspects and the cost of living, and ensure that visa issue by Australian authorities is focused on genuine and suitable educational objectives.</p>	<p>7.1 Following Universities Australia participation in Joint Working Group meetings in key countries, Universities have provided data on education agents used by Australian universities at the request of the Indian government. 7.2 Seek immigration review of adequacy of income support visa provisions and suitability of permanent residence provisions benefiting international students.</p>	<p>7.1 Information provided to AEI for the Indian government on request. Universities Australia continues to provide up to date information to overseas governments and embassies and participates in reviews of agent quality assurance as requested. 7.2. Meet officials for consultation within one month and develop final proposals for revision within three months. DIAC meetings held and submissions forthcoming in September.</p>
<p>8. Enhance campus-based support programs in health, child care, counselling and employment services and expand specific safety programs including through ongoing input from local authorities, such as police commands, road and traffic authorities, real estate institutes and employers. Passage of the Student Services and Amenities Bill by the current parliament would assist this process immeasurably.</p>	<p>8.1 Universities to evaluate campus-based services in light of the Student Services and Amenities Bill outcome; 8.2 Evaluate Overseas Student Health Care provisions to ensure adequate coverage for health insurance, dental provisions and life insurance. 8.3 Universities to consider processes to ensure OSHC for the duration of study, possibly through the inclusion of OSHC in student fees.</p>	<p>8.1 Universities Australia has lobbied government, crossbenchers, opposition and other organisations to influence passage of the Bill. The Australian Parliament will vote on the Bill in 2009 and Universities Australia will actively promote the importance of passing this Bill by direct representations to key senators. 8.2 Life insurance and specific purpose dental cover within OSHC to be reviewed within 4 months. 8.3 Universities to develop processes to ensure students have comprehensive OSHC for the length of their study within 4 months</p>

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9. Encourage campus and national student leadership to take pro-active role in representing and supporting international students to enable them to raise important issues regarding the quality of the student experience.	9.1 Universities to seek to ensure international student representation at a campus level; 9.2 Universities Australia to support international student representation.	9.1 Most universities have international student representation through campus student associations. Target all universities by Semester 1, 2010. 9.2 Universities Australia ongoing liaison with NUS on effective and appropriate international student representation within one national student representative body.
10. Engage strongly in the forthcoming ESOS review and establishment of TEQSA to ensure that appropriate accreditation and quality assurance of all international education providers in Australia is guaranteed, including via strong and effective enforcement mechanisms.	10.1 DEEWR has fast tracked a review of ESOS for 2010. 10.2 Government is to seek consultations over TEQSA and Universities Australia to ensure that it can apply appropriate regulation to all education providers for international students.	10.1 Government to review ESOS within 6 months. 10.2 Universities Australia to contribute to the review process. 10.2 Universities Australia to work with TAFE Directors Australia to obtain an effective model for best practice regulation of education providers to influence TEQSA. Study completed within 4 months.