



25 June 2020

Chris Beard
Executive Director
ISANA
chris.beard@isana.nz

Dear Chris

Update on International students

I want to acknowledge that the international education sector has been significantly impacted by the border closure due to COVID-19 and many providers and students are suffering.

I'd also like to thank you for your hard work in looking after the 50,000 international students who remained here and providing them with the pastoral care, support and advice they needed - and for some students, practical help to take flights home. This has not been an easy time and we acknowledge your ongoing work and effort.

The Government's top priority is, and must be, the health and safety of people in New Zealand. New Zealanders need to have confidence that there is a robust system in place that will ensure that any cases that come across the border will be identified, managed and contained. Recent events have shown there is zero public tolerance for failure.

International students remain a priority group in the Government's planning for any managed border entry arrangements. The Ministry of Education and Education New Zealand, together with other key government agencies, are working to ensure the interests and perspectives of the international education sector and international students are considered in all cross-government work that is underway to consider border restrictions.

Enabling student re-entry whilst protecting New Zealand's border defence against COVID-19 is a complex issue with many details to be worked through including, quarantine and isolation arrangements, monitoring processes and how the costs can be shared by those arriving.

Given the complexity of the issues, international students will not be returning to New Zealand in July or August this year. We hope that a suitable model can be developed so we can start to bring in small cohorts of students and begin building up towards 2021.

The Government and the education sector are working closely together to ensure that the international education sector emerges stronger and more resilient from this challenging time.

Next month I will share a four-year strategic recovery plan for international education. This plan is about stabilising the system, strengthening the system and then having the whole international education ecosystem work together to build a more robust, sustainable future. A future that's mutually good for providers and learners, and benefits New Zealand.

I ask that you continue to work with your peak bodies, government agencies and communities to ensure we are ready to provide a safe and supportive welcome to our international students when they are able to return. New Zealand is well-placed to capitalise on our global reputation of being a safe place that offers an excellent education experience.

Finally, thank you again for your work this year. I look forward to working with you as we navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead to build a stronger international sector for New Zealand.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'CHIPKINS', written in a cursive style.

Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education