



PO Box 6082
Palmerston North 4445
New Zealand

7 July 2020

Dear Minister Hipkins,

Thank you for your May 8th letter that updated us on the work that is underway to map out the future of international education in New Zealand. Thank you too for your June 25th letter which acknowledged the present suffering providers and students are experiencing and alerted us to the four-year-strategic recovery plan you are preparing.

ISANA NZ commends the work and sustained effort that is being undertaken to explore how our border can be reopened for new and returning international students under a system of managed isolation. The association is presently contributing to the Sector Peak Body Advisory Group that is leading this work.

At the same time, on the basis of feedback from a recent survey of ISANA NZ members, we are obliged to reiterate the confronting challenges international education practitioners are facing. The border's closure and the lack of clear timeframes for sector recovery is creating stress and anxiety among those who are supporting international students.

Our members are finding it increasingly difficult to plan ahead and manage their international programmes. They are responsible for providing pastoral care for the remaining international students while at the same time supporting their own families amidst the job security. Years of hard work building international education programmes are teetering on the edge of collapse. Vastly experienced frontline practitioners are close to being let go as budgets are slashed, and if this occurs education providers' capacity to rebuild and provide effective wrap-around support for incoming students will be profoundly impacted.

Experienced frontline practitioners are the glue that holds the industry together, and without them it is impossible to deliver a safe, well-supported experience for international students in a COVID-19 environment. Therefore, we request that you consider offering a support package not only to schools but also to all education providers that enrol significant numbers of international students and can demonstrate financial solvency into 2021.

Another finding from our recent survey of members was the call for the establishment of a *specialist International Education profession*. We ask you to consider expressing your support for such a profession and allocating funds to support its establishment as part of your four-year strategy. International education stands alone as a lead export earner without sector-specific

courses, professional credentials or professional pathways. Because our members work closely with international students they are most keenly aware of the gaps in practice that result from this. It is clear to us that trained specialists will be essential for effective wraparound support, facilitated integration and a sustainable long-term strategy. The professionalisation of export education practice is long overdue and critical for sector recovery.

We request an opportunity to meet with you to discuss our requests in more detail and look forward to your response.

Yours in education,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Beard', with a large, sweeping initial 'C'.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CRV', with a stylized, cursive font.

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