

AUSTRALIAN TECHNOLOGY NETWORK OF UNIVERSITIES

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SUMMIT

21-23 SEPTEMBER 2020



In collaboration with



ATN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SUMMIT WRAP UP

INTRODUCTION

As Australia's fourth-largest export industry, and a driver of our economic, social and diplomatic success, International Education is now more important than ever. Now that it is under threat from a perfect storm of local and global headwinds, it is crucial to carefully consider its future.

The Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN) organised the International Education Summit to explore international education's impact and discuss its future. The online Summit brought together university leaders, current and former political leaders, international students, and representatives from industries such as tourism, rural and regional development and small business. All of these groups benefit immensely from international education in Australia, be it through students working in hard-to-fill jobs in regional areas, the cultural and intellectual diversity international students bring to classrooms and workplaces, or the diplomatic benefit they provide as advocates for Australia when back in their home countries. At the Summit, all groups present were united in their call for a safe, responsible return for international students in Australia, once Australians return from abroad and community COVID-safety can be assured.

The Summit ran from 21-23 September 2020 and was watched by a combined audience of close to 1000 people, with hundreds more views on our official YouTube channel. High-profile guests included Lord

Mayor Sally Capp, The Hon Ted Baillieu AO, The Hon Senator Penny Wong, The Hon Alexander Downer AC and The Hon Stephen Smith. Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, The Hon Simon Birmingham MP, opened the Summit, and Minister for Education, the Hon Dan Tehan MP closed proceedings. The Summit's final day included broadcasting the signing of our memorandum of understanding with the Philippines Commission for Higher Education, hosted by University of Technology Sydney Vice Chancellor and ATN Chair, Professor Attila Brungs.

The Summit received a large volume of news coverage spread across national, international and community news platforms. It engaged both traditional and social media. And it prompted important discussions and built consensus from a diverse coalition on the value and continued need for international education.

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OF UNIVERSITIES



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OUR HOST



MS GERALDINE DOOGUE AO

ATN were honoured to have one of Australia's most commended journalists as our host. Geraldine's wisdom and experience and attention to detail ensured the right questions were always asked.

Geraldine also made sure every guest felt comfortable, built rapport and, as a stalwart of live television, facilitated the Summit with poise and professionalism.

DAY ONE



"International education is a long-term investment. Yes, it brings money. But it also brings cultural interchange and new relationships."

Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham

Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment

OPENING REMARKS

SENATOR THE HON SIMON BIRMINGHAM

Simon Birmingham opened with remarks about international education's value for the economy, for cultural exchange and for diplomacy. He applauded Australian universities for swiftly responding to COVID challenges. He also urged ongoing innovation, both to maintain Australia's status as an international education world leader and to position us to take advantage of a post-COVID recovery.

"Universities need to keep committing to innovation so that Australia remains the world leader in international education."

Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham

Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment



"International students are integral to every aspect of our city... we are their family and should be looking after these students. They need to be officially recognised."

Sally Capp
Lord Mayor of Melbourne

PANEL ONE **INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND CREATING JOBS**

The panel discussed the direct and indirect economic benefits international students provide.

We learned that international students provide immense value in cities like Melbourne, where for every \$1 spent studying, students will contribute an extra \$1.15 to the local economy. International students also contribute in regional communities, where they work jobs in areas of labour shortages, spend money on regional economies and introduce diversity of thinking.

The prevailing sentiment was that "we are our students' family" and we should care for them as such, given they care for us and Australians more broadly.

"Let's move from economy to community. We should be asking and answering: what's in it for the Australian community?"

Megan Lilly, Australian Industry Group, on benefits of international students



"We shouldn't just be a market. We should be a magnet. We should not just be merchants of education, we should be masters of education."

Hon Ted Baillieu AO
Former Premier of Victoria

"In remote areas... communities are reliant on international students to work there. People in these communities are the most appreciative of the wave of younger people from overseas and it's breaking down cultural opposition."

Stephen Ferguson, Australian Hotels Association

PANEL TWO **INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND DRIVING ECONOMIC ACTIVITY**

Our panellists discussed the enormous economic value international education drives. One highlight was remarks by John Hart from Tourism Australia who said his sector needs international education to be a success in 2020 to allow for a return to normal growth in future years.

In a wide-ranging discussion, the panel emphasised the need for Australia to be a 'magnet', not just a 'market', by providing an exceptional quality of education in a safe, welcoming environment.

"We've got play this right, reopening [borders] and bringing the sector and international student support back so that students come back, seeing us as a trusted place to study and live."

John Hart, Tourism Australia, on the post-COVID recovery

"There's an inextricable linkage between international students and the contribution universities make across society."

Professor Alan Duncan, Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre



"Migration adds about 7% to GDP nationally. Any activity that brings people in our country is great for GDP."

John Hart
Board member, Tourism Australia

DAY TWO



OPENING REMARKS

LUKE SHEEHY

Luke Sheehy opened with reflections on day one and a preview of day two.

"Yesterday, Sally Capp gave a wonderful recognition of international students and the value they provide to us."

Luke Sheehy

ATN Executive Director



"I think Australia's competitive position hasn't really changed yet. We of course need to get our borders open."

Mr Taliessin Reaburn

SA Department of Trade and Investment

PANEL ONE

STATE AND SECTOR PERSPECTIVES

Panellists from the university, VET sectors and state government departments discussed the welcoming back of international students pragmatically and responsibly, and positioning Australia as a destination of choice for students post-COVID.

The international student market will be very competitive, but Australia has advantages that should give us the upper hand.

Above all, this is premised on the right political conditions, including first looking after Australians abroad who want to return home, and ensuring COVID-safety.

"Our sector is probably the biggest job-creator in Australia. If we can protect Australians and ensure things are safe, we'll win confidence in the Australian community to reopen for international students."

Luke Sheehy, ATN Executive Director



"To get our social license to operate, we need to treat political questions carefully."

Mr Craig Robertson

TAFE Directors Australia

"Globally, over 77% of students are willing to quarantine... if we can open the border for them, they will come."

Jane Li, Outgoing CISA National Secretary



"I doubt that the new normal will be like the old normal. The way we relied on a large number of international students may need to be rethought... we're going to have to do better than telling international students to go home."

Senator the Hon Penny Wong
Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs



"We're still seeing very strong demand in places like the UK... the parents of students continue to want high-quality education. It's hugely important to students and their families, and Australia can offer it."

Hon Alexander Downer AC
Former Foreign Minister



"There will always be families overseas... who want their children to have their education in another country, and in this class we are very competitive with the US and the UK... we will continue to see students come, how many and of what mix only time will tell."

Hon Stephen Smith
Former Foreign Minister

PANEL TWO

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND CREATING JOBS

Alexander Downer, Penny Wong and Stephen Smith served as our foreign policy expert panel discussing geopolitical tensions and their impact on international education.

While the panellists agreed that caution is needed in public and government declarations about China, there were differing views as to how demand would change from Chinese students.

Penny Wong was concerned that Chinese demand would diminish post-COVID, and stressed the importance of a pragmatic diplomacy.

Stephen Smith raised the point that Australia has long over-relied on China in its international education and argued the need to diversify to new, emerging markets.

"Our universities are a huge part of our soft power. A degree from an Australian university is really worth something."

Alexander Downer

DAY THREE



"There's no reason why Australia can't be welcoming... I want to be able to open international borders to international students to quarantine before the general traveller... how we've managed COVID presents Australia a great opportunity to do this."

Hon Stuart Ayers

NSW Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney



"We're a really good place to come, but we'd like some more assistance from government to help students come."

Catriona Jackson

Chief Executive, Universities Australia

PANEL ONE

STUDENTS AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Students have raised issues about international students already in Australia feeling unwelcome and unsupported by the federal government, despite states' and universities' sincere efforts to provide academic, mental health and financial support.

There remain many great attractions to studying in Australia, and the right steps now will help us seize the opportunity to retain our status as a welcoming, safe place in the eyes of future international students.

"When we choose to come to Australia, we're not just choosing the university, we want a great student experience... is my university going to do more post-COVID to make me job-ready?"

Varsha Devi Balakrishnan, outgoing CISA National Secretary, on the new online education in 2020

"You need to make a practical difference to students' lives in the moment, so they feel confident about their study and the future."

Phil Payne, CEO, Study Perth



"I think we can bounce back very quickly. Not everyone believes that... but we as a nation need a big view of our future and universities' part in it."

Mr David Thodey AO
National COVID-19 Coordination Commission.

IN CONVERSATION THE PATH TO RECOVERY

Professor Attila Brungs, ATN Chair and UTS Vice-Chancellor, in conversation with Mr David Thodey AO, Deputy Chair, National COVID-19 Coordination Commission.

The session began with a re-affirmation of the need for universities to articulate their value to the public.

The sector needs to find ways of doing that in a positive sense.

A good discussion ensued on the role universities must play in accelerating Australia's post-COVID recovery. A considered, but bold plan would turbocharge this effort.

The conversation included migration and skills shortages, with international students a great way to advertise Australia to possible future skilled migrants.

David applauded universities' focus on job creation as a driver of Australians' standard of living. By having international students, we are creating new jobs and filling jobs particularly in regions that are otherwise difficult to fill. The conversation included migration and skills shortages, with international students a great way to advertise Australia to possible future skilled migrants.

We need to plan for a world where vaccines are not available in the short term and should plan to exist in this COVID-world. There is a sense of positivity that universities, businesses and governments can and will work towards common goals in a recovery. Universities support and drive public debate, but also offer the sort of hope that can overcome the crippling "abundance of caution" that sees Australia not taking any risks and becoming insular.

CLOSING REMARKS HON DAN TEHAN MP

Minister Tehan officially closed the ATN International Education Summit 2020.

"International students are extremely important to Australia, contributing \$40bn to our economy."

Hon Dan Tehan MP



"Students want to study here, and we want to welcome them back in a measured way, when it is safe to do so."

Hon Dan Tehan MP
Minister for Education

LINKS AND RESOURCES CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.ATN.EDU.AU/IESUMMIT

MEDIA WRAP

ATN's International Education Summit was watched by a combined audience of close to 1000 people, with hundreds more views on our official YouTube channel.

We received a large volume of news coverage, much of it based around Stuart Ayers' comments on International Students potentially resuming their studies in NSW.

Coverage was widespread across national, international and community news platforms.

Another highlight was an Op-Ed by John Molony from Deakin University that was featured in The Australian on 15 September.



The Australian

15 September 2020

Overseas students bring more than export dollars to communities

For any young person, the decision to pack their bags and travel across borders and cultures to pursue their academic and life dreams requires considerable courage. This is particularly so for the brave souls who continue with their study plans in face of all the uncertainties that 2020 is presenting them.

Pie News

The Pie News did an extensive piece on our summit which focussed around the plight of international students studying in Australia and the frustrations of industry and political figures on their treatment in being denied access to our country. The Pie News also highlighted the economic benefits to Australia, not just in the education sector, but tourism as well.

28 September 2020

Aus: Int'l students shunned not supported – ATN Summit

During the ATN International Education Summit, a panel of speakers that included Melbourne lord mayor Sally Capp, CEO of Australian Hoteliers Association Stephen Ferguson and the Australian Industry Group's Megan Lilly discussed what they believe to be a lack of understanding and appreciation of the value of international education to the wider Australian economy and community.

Study International

24 September 2020

International students could return to Australia by year-end or 2021, said senior minister

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Times Higher Education

23 September 2020

Return of overseas students to Australia 'manageable'

International students may be allowed back into Australia well before holiday and business visitors, according to a politician who has overseen quarantine arrangements in the country's most populous state.

Stuart Ayres, minister for jobs, investment and tourism in New South Wales (NSW), said he was "optimistic" about students arriving at the start of 2021 and would not rule out an earlier time frame.

"I foreshadow that we'll be able to open borders to international students, through quarantine regime, much earlier than we'll be able to open borders to the visitor economy or to tourists," he told an international education summit organised by the Australian Technology Network (ATN).

Sydney Morning Herald/The Age

23 September 2020

International students could be in NSW by early 2021, senior minister says

"I foreshadow that we'll be able to open borders to international students through a quarantine regime much earlier than we'll be able to open borders to the visitor economy," he said, speaking at the ATN International Education Summit on Wednesday.

The Australian Financial Review

24 September 2020

NSW planning to bring back international students in 2021

International students will be brought back into NSW for the 2021 academic year using an education-related quarantine program in a major boost for struggling universities that have been making staff redundant as revenue collapsed.

NSW Minister for Jobs, Investment and Tourism Stuart Ayres told an international education summit in Sydney on Wednesday that high-level talks in the state government were aimed at looking at alternative quarantine arrangements

Campus Morning Mail

24 September 2020

Sydney ready for international students in 2021 (maybe earlier)

Stuart Ayres told the Australian Technology Network's international education conference yesterday that NSW could bring international students back, before borders open to visitors.

WATCH THE SUMMIT



DAY ONE

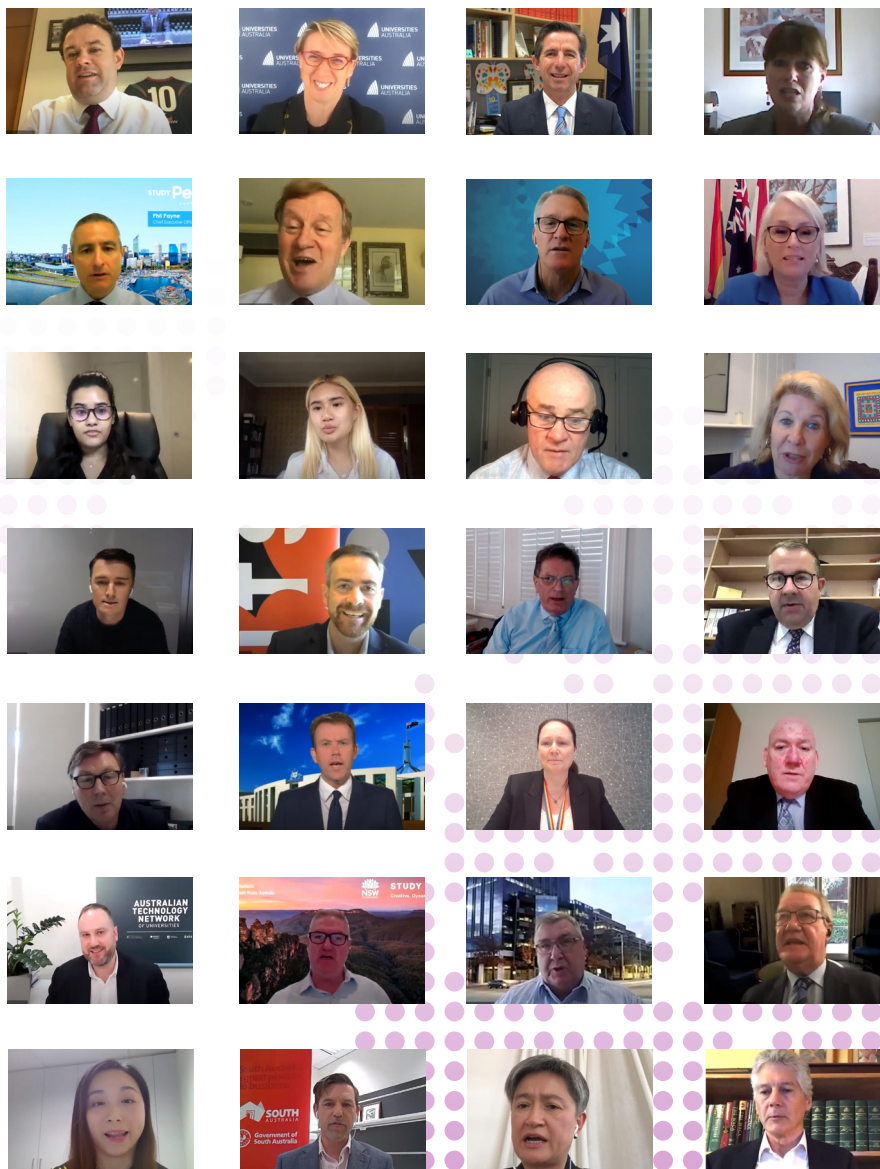


DAY TWO



DAY THREE

Thank you to all our panellists





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