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ACKNOWLEDGE EDUCATION AND MIGRATION NEXUS

In a submission to the Senate *Inquiry into the Welfare of International Students*, the Migration Institute of Australia proposes dramatic changes to drag the nexus between education and migration out into the open and make the relationship between the two more transparent.

“International students who study in Australia with the aim of eventually getting permanent residence are not exploiting illegitimate, “back door” entry. Rather, the Australian Government has provided the General Skilled Migration (GSM) pathway for overseas students studying in Australia.” says Maurene Horder, CEO of the Migration Institute of Australia.

“It is therefore disingenuous for anyone to assert that the student visa program and the GSM program are separate. In fact, by pretending there is no connect has meant a whole-of-government approach to regulating and monitoring the entire education and migration process for overseas students has been neglected and has allowed shonky ‘colleges’ and unscrupulous operators to flourish.”

The Institute’s recommendations include:

- Introduce a ‘provisional residency visa’ for high-calibre overseas students to better satisfy Australia’s skills demands, and to provide a transparent pathway to permanent residence.
- Amend definition of who may provide immigration advice
- Regulate the qualifications and activities of education agents
- Declare commissions paid by education providers to increase transparency
- Form a working group of relevant government agencies to consider student visa conditions pertaining to paid and unpaid work experience hours
- Ensure greater certainty of migration outcomes for overseas students eg remove retrospective legislation and policy changes for current students

It is in Australia’s best interest to gain highly skilled overseas students to address Australia’s skills shortages and strengthen the economy whilst treating all visa holders fairly and honestly.

A copy of the Institute’s submission can be found at:

http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/eet_ctte/international_students/submissions.htm

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