

20/08/2021

To: Ministry of Education
From: Daryl Streat (President, [TESOLANZ](#))
Regarding: High-value Education Draft Policy Statement

To whom it may concern,

The purpose of the letter is to respond to the draft policy statement: High-value international education.

[TESOLANZ](#) is the national association for English language teachers in Aotearoa, New Zealand. We represent teachers, educators, researchers and assessment experts across all areas of education (ECE, primary, schools, tertiary, refugees/migrants). Our members play a key role in the education journeys of a diverse range of learners, both international and domestic.

While Covid-19, and associated border restrictions, have been incredibly damaging to the English language sector, we believe that this does provide an important opportunity to accelerate planning for a future English language sector that is of high-quality, and of high-value, for international students and New Zealanders alike.

General

TESOLANZ feels that international students do bring significant benefits to our country. However, in the past, international students have been commodified by the sector. They have been viewed through the lens of economic social benefit that 'they' bring to 'us'. This document has a heavy focus on the values that international students will bring and does not do enough to highlight the value we (as an education destination) will offer them. While we understand this may not be the primary intent of this document, we do feel the balance needs to be addressed.

Definition (page 3)

The definition of high-value international education (IE) is clear. However, the section on Ākonga/students states that learners must have appropriate English language proficiency. TESOLANZ supports this statement. However, we do note that in most cases (both within New Zealand and internationally) the [levels of English language proficiency required](#) are below those [levels suggested by the assessment associations](#). We also advise that the assessments selected by NZQA (and listed on The Table) are not necessarily equivalent and may prove variable in their determination of readiness. It is also worth noting that if a learner's primary motivation for studying in New Zealand is to improve English language then they may have a low level of English proficiency.

TESOLANZ feels that this further strengthens the need for high quality English language teaching (before study) and ongoing support (during study), as both are of primary importance. While we have done an excellent job as a sector of delivering the former, the education sector (on the whole) could do more to support the latter.

Risks (page 4)

The risks section on page 4 mentions pressures on capacity and IE driving inequities. We recognise that in certain sectors of education, there exist inequities between institutions. However, we also note that in many cases, revenues from IE have been used to address inequities.

The [NELP/TES document](#) identifies barrier-free access (including language) as a main objective. Our members play a key role in supporting linguistically diverse learners into education. In many cases, the roles our members fulfil are supported by IE revenues.

Therefore, while we recognise some inequities exist, English language teachers play a critical role in providing equitable access for all learners.

Who and where will we target to maximise value (page 5)

The statement around target markets only identifies English language as part of the education tourism market. However, English language is a critical component across every sector of education within Aotearoa, New Zealand. English language education also plays a key role in academic pathways. Many students complete English programmes as a pathway to admission to further study. In addition, many learners access English language support during their studies.

How will we get there? (page 6)

The section on immediate focus identifies expanding offshore provision as an important pathway to onshore study. TESOLANZ accepts that offshore/online provision will become a key part of IE pathways in the future. However, we are concerned by a potential shift towards third-party, offshore institutions providing these pathways. There are numerous international examples of instances in which such partnerships have resulted in poorer pedagogy, weaker quality assurance, and inferior academic outcomes and student experience.

TESOLANZ asserts that the majority of offshore/online provision, as a pathway into NZ institutions, must be done by providers (or a conglomerate of providers) who are experienced and highly familiar with the curriculum and quality assurance requirements of New Zealand education.

TESOLANZ welcomes the opportunity to discuss the future of IE, and education broadly, in Aotearoa/New Zealand. We believe an approach that considers academic quality and pedagogy, alongside market considerations, will result in an educational landscape which keeps learners at the centre and provides barrier-free access for all (regardless of language or point of origin).

Nāku iti noa, nā,



Daryl Streat

President – TESOLANZ

president@TESOLANZ.org.nz

Mob +64 27 455 6514