

# **Charles Darwin University**

Submission to the Education Legislation  
Amendment (Integrity and Other Measures)  
Bill 2025.

November 2025

## **Charles Darwin University – Our Context and Our Contribution**

Charles Darwin University (CDU) welcomes the opportunity to comment on selected elements of the Education Legislation Amendment (Integrity and Other Measures) Bill 2025. We are committed to being Australia’s most connected university — headquartered in Northern Australia and one of a small number of dual sector institutions. Our footprint includes campuses in Darwin, Palmerston, Alice Springs, Katherine and Sydney; study centres in Nhulunbuy and Tennant Creek; and emerging international delivery, including a developing presence in London and partnerships across Indonesia and Timor-Leste.

CDU plays a distinct national role by contributing to the education, workforce development and research capacity that underpin the Northern Territory, where 30 per cent of the population is First Nations and more than half of our domestic students are from regional and remote locations. We educate the teachers, nurses, engineers, allied health professionals and other skilled workers that sustain communities across the North, while strengthening Australia’s broader engagement across the Indo-Pacific.

We are mission driven and community focused, working closely with First Nations communities, industry and governments to deliver programs that respond to local needs and build national capability. This includes active engagement across Southeast Asia, supported by a regional leadership model and strategic international partnerships.

Within this context, CDU provides feedback from the perspective of a small but strategically significant regional institution, committed to strong regulatory integrity while mindful of the practical operating realities of regional and remote delivery.

## **First Nations Medical Commonwealth Supported Places**

CDU welcomes the introduction of demand-driven Commonwealth Supported Places in medicine for eligible First Nations students. This is a timely and important reform for Northern Australia and aligns strongly with CDU’s mission to be part of improving health outcomes across regional and remote communities. The establishment of the CDU Menzies School of Medicine, welcoming its first cohort in 2026, provides new pathways for aspiring First Nations doctors to study and practise in the Territory. A Territory-designed curriculum, developed in partnership with First Nations communities, ensures learning is culturally grounded and responsive to local health priorities.

To maximise the impact of this measure, CDU recommends CSP provision be supported by funding for pathway programs and wraparound supports, including mentoring, student wellbeing, academic assistance and culturally safe environments. Such support is critical to enabling student success and progression into the Territory health workforce.

## **Amendments to the ESOS Act — Integrity & Transparency**

CDU supports amendments that strengthen integrity and transparency across the international education system. We note the value of clearer regulation of education agents, enhanced “fit and proper person” requirements, cancellation provisions for inactive providers, and ministerial powers to pause new registrations. These measures contribute to safeguarding student welfare and maintaining Australia’s international education reputation. CDU has been proactive and diligent in its support of ensuring all students recruited are genuine.

CDU supports a better coordinated regulatory approach — particularly across TEQSA, ASQA and the Department — would enhance quality assurance while reducing duplication and administrative burden. Streamlined and consistent regulation would strengthen compliance across the sector and deliver meaningful benefits for smaller regional institutions with limited workforce capacity.

CDU encourages implementation pathways that are proportionate, practical and tailored, recognising the diverse operating contexts of regional universities.

## **Amendments to the TEQSA Act — Offshore Authorisation**

Given Australia’s education diplomacy objectives, particularly across Southeast Asia, it is important that international delivery maintains high standards and clear accountability. CDU is actively growing its international partnerships and presence, including a developing presence in the United Kingdom and delivery partnerships in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. These initiatives are underpinned by strengthened governance and quality assurance frameworks aligned with TEQSA expectations.

As a smaller provider with a multi-jurisdictional footprint, CDU notes that additional reporting and oversight obligations compound existing regulatory load. We reiterate the importance of:

- Streamlined requirements between TEQSA and ASQA for dual-sector providers
- Clear guidance for offshore delivery approvals and reporting
- Transition arrangements acknowledging the limited administrative capacity of regional universities

A proportionate and practical implementation approach will ensure that institutions with strong governance, such as CDU, can continue to expand sustainable offshore delivery without unnecessary administrative pressure.

## **Conclusion**

CDU supports the overall direction of the Bill and its focus on strengthening integrity, increasing First Nations participation, and improving oversight of offshore delivery. We encourage implementation that is proportionate, practical and collaborative, ensuring that regional universities with unique national roles can continue contributing strongly to Australia’s workforce, regional development and international partnerships.