

24 November 2020

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

Navitas welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Committee in regard to the Immigration (Education) Amendment (Expanding Access to English Tuition) Bill 2020 to amend the Immigration (Education) Act 1972 (the IE Act).

Navitas English Pty Ltd is a subsidiary of Navitas Pty Ltd and has been delivering Commonwealth Government programs to migrants and refugees since 1998. Our submission is drawn from our experience delivering the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) since 1998, the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) and Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) from 2005 to 2017, and the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program since 2010.

Navitas fully endorses and supports the proposed amendments in the Bill to the IE Act. Navitas believes that the proposed changes will enhance the workforce and civic participation of migrants and refugees settling in Australia. We make some specific comments on some of the key elements of the proposed changes below.

Removal of the 510 hours statutory limit on an eligible person's entitlement to English tuition to support and incentivise English proficiency

The current 510 hours statutory limit does not reflect the language learning needs of clients. Many AMEP clients have little or no English, this, coupled with the fact that they often have low or very low educational attainment means that they require at least 2,000 hours of English language learning to reach social proficiency, that is functional English, based on accredited English language curricula.

Amendment of the upper limit for eligibility to access English tuition to a new level of 'vocational English', which will enable eligible persons to continue their language learning to a higher level of English proficiency

Navitas thoroughly supports the move to enable AMEP clients to reach 'vocational English' proficiency as this will measurably improve their future employment and further education outcomes.

Removal of the statutory time limits for registering for, commencing and completing English tuition for certain people who held a visa and were in Australia on or before 1 October 2020

Navitas fully endorses the removal of the time limits on registering for, commencing and completing English tuition for those identified cohorts. These limits do not reflect the reality of a settlement journey for many people. For example, women often prioritise the needs of family over learning English, other people may suffer major or chronic health issues and some find employment with lower levels of English, exiting the program before meeting the requisite proficiency levels.

Should the Committee wish to seek further information on this submission please contact Ms Kadi Taylor, Navitas' Head of Strategic Engagement and Government Relations

Yours sincerely

Scott Jones
Group CEO