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## **NTEU Submission to the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee Inquiry into the Education Legislation Amendment (Integrity and Other Measures) Bill 2025**

The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) represents the industrial and professional rights of over 28,000 members working in Australian higher education and research.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Senate Inquiry into the proposed [Education Legislation Amendment \(Integrity and Other Measures\) Bill 2025](#).

We note that the proposed legislation proposes reforms to:

- the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act)
- the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act)
- the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA)
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999

This submission will focus on the proposed changes to international education, education opportunities for First Nations people and the authority of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

The NTEU is broadly in support of the proposed amendments to the ESOS Act, noting that the intention is to better support the quality and integrity of the international education sector. We agree with the findings of the *Rapid Review into the Exploitation of Australia's Visa System (the Nixon Review)* and see the proposed changes as a positive step towards better regulation and oversight of providers involved in international education and the arrangements they have with education migration agents.

We also support the proposed change to Ministerial powers to suspend and cancel courses at non-Table A providers that have been identified as failing to deliver the appropriate quality of education and/or there is a public interest in cancelling their registration. This is an important step in addressing the integrity problems within the private higher education and vocational education sector, where a series of education providers have exploited international students for illicit purposes and/or failed to provide quality education.

We do, however, flag our concern over the parts of the proposed legislation that enables the Government to determine the appropriate settings and priorities for the size, shape and focus of the international education sector. While we agree that there should be considerations made in relation to broader economic and social settings, we are nonetheless cautious about the

potential for overreach or even interference by future governments. We would like to see there be consultation made with the sector and the public more broadly in the determination of appropriate settings and priorities, and that there be appropriate guardrails embedded in any regulatory frameworks.

We also support the proposed amendment to the TEQSA Act to support greater regulatory oversight of the delivery of higher education courses offshore by Australian education providers. We consider these changes to be both necessary and appropriate in scope; however, we request that any undertakings made by TEQSA in relation to international education be publicly reported on for both clarity and transparency within the sector.

The NTEU also supports the proposed changes to the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA) to uncap places in medical courses for First Nations students, allowing First Nations students who meet the entry requirements to enrol in courses in medicine in a Commonwealth supported place. We consider this as a first step, as the Union would like to see this measure expanded to all degree offerings for First Nations students - a necessity if we are to make genuine inroads on targets that increase higher education participation opportunities for First Nations people and assist in meeting the educational objectives outlined in *Closing the Gap*.

That said, we also emphasise that uncapping places for First Nations students in medical courses alone is not enough. Students must be able to learn in a culturally safe and supportive environment, that is respectful of culture and links with First Nations communities. There must also be appropriate, culturally safe academic and student welfare support available to these students to ensure they are best equipped to undertake studies and complete their degrees.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**The NTEU gives in principle support to the proposed measures to international education, education opportunities for First Nations people and the authority of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), noting however, that we do have some concerns in relation to the potential for future government overreach on international education settings and priorities.**

**We therefore further recommend that there be a process for public consultation and sector engagement in the development of the education settings and priorities.**

**We also recommend expanding uncapped Commonwealth funded places for all First Nations students, irrespective of discipline.**

If the Committee has any questions for the NTEU in relation to our submission, please contact:

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