



**Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee**  
*the council of Australia's university presidents*  
(ACN 008 502 930 - ABN 53 008 502 930)

**Our Ref: G-04-024**

26 March 2007

Mr Andrew McGowan  
Inquiry Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on  
Economics, Finance and Administration  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

[Andrew.Mcgowan.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Mcgowan.reps@aph.gov.au)

Dear Mr McGowan

**Inquiry into the current and future directions of Australia's service export industries**

Further to your correspondence of 16 March 2007, I have reviewed the proof transcript and propose a number of minor changes as well as provide responses to questions raised during the committee hearing. A copies of these changes is attached as "tracked changes".

The first matter raised by the Chair, was a request for a comparison table of upfront visa costs among our competitor countries of the UK, USA and New Zealand. This data has been compiled from information listed on the respective government sites and has been converted to Australian dollars as at Thursday 22 March 2007.

Student visa costs:

<b>Country</b>	<b>Visa Application cost (\$AU)</b>
Australia	\$490*
United Kingdom	\$258
New Zealand	\$124 in NZ \$176 outside of NZ
United States of America	\$161.00 plus \$124.00 SEVIS** fee for students

\* This amount includes the permission to work application fee of \$60 which the Department of Immigration and Citizenship will shortly incorporate into the overall visa application cost for all students.

\*\* In respect to the United States, exchange visitor and student information is maintained in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). All student visa applicants must pay a SEVIS fee toward maintaining this system.

The second matter was raised by Mr Ciobo who was interested to know what percentage of first year students change into another course of study because they were initially unable to get into their first preference course. Despite my initial confidence the AVCC would be able to obtain this information; I have been informed that it is not possible to do so.

This is to do with the manner in which the data is collected. Student identification numbers have not always been unique to the student. Prior to 2005, students who changed from one university to another

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would be allocated a new student identification number at their new university. Therefore it was only possible to track students who changed courses within their original university. From 2005 students have been allocated a Commonwealth Higher Education Student Support Number (CHESSN). This is unique to the individual so students can now be tracked across universities. However, communication with the Department of Education, Science and Training indicates that the AVCC will not have access to the 2006 data till late 2007 or early 2008. Therefore, we are unable to give the Committee any information on the percentage of 2006 first year students transferring courses before the Committee's 31 March 2007 deadline.

In addition, the 2006 data, whilst providing information regarding the number and percentage of first year students who transfer courses, does not provide the reasons for transfer. As discussed by the Committee, there are many reasons students choose to change their courses including issues related to family and location, changes to career aspirations, and or undertaking a more specialised or different course at an alternate university. It is not possible to extrapolate from the data, which the CHESSN number enables, those students who have transferred to a higher preference course due to their initial preference being unavailable.

I hope this information is useful and look forward to receiving the final proof of the transcript.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "I. R. Young". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Professor Ian Young  
Vice-Chancellor, Swinburne University  
AVCC Representative to the House Standing Committee  
on Economics, Finance and Public Administration Public Hearing