



Dear Premier,

Whilst we have not met in the context of my position as executive director of the association for private educational providers in Tasmania [AIEPT] I wish to congratulate you on behalf of the association membership for your statesmanlike handling of the pandemic crisis. We have indeed been most fortunate to have you in office at this time.

AIEPT represents those providers having over 90% of the international enrolments not being enrolled at the University of Tasmania or at TasTAFE

As you are aware the international education sector within Tasmania was valued in 2018 terms as being worth \$600 million to the state economy most of that in greater Hobart. Since that time and until the pandemic there were some 13,400 international students studying in Tasmania. Of that 13,400 persons over 7000 individuals were registered as students of the 22 private colleges supporting the educational advances of international students from which the membership is drawn .Clearly vocational sector courses have attracted that engagement.

In these troubled times many conflicting issues surface particularly that of the priority for balancing the health needs of our society against the economic consequences of a prolonged shutdown of the economy.

We appreciate the rationale of the position nationally of closed international and state borders being the concern to ensure that we do not unnecessarily place the community at risk from international arrivals who may be asymptomatic. The federal cabinet has however most recently determined that international borders *might* be able to be opened to allow international students into Australia according to strict guidelines being applied by those territories which have put in place appropriate pilot programs.

The membership of AIEPT stands as one with the Tasmanian government in wanting to ensure the safety and security of the community. It also recognises the extreme economic consequences of not allowing borders to be opened up again and allow this state to once more participate in and gain from the \$38 billion that international education brings into the country on an annual basis.

Incidentally with second term due to commence on 8 July the closure of state borders past that date has already impacted by more than 50% the enrolments from interstate enquirers. Averaged out this is around 3000 to 3200 students and noting that the vocational students, unlike their university counterparts usually have families which buy into our economy in the form of small businesses and housing. Indeed there is much to suggest that the housing activity of the last three years is influenced by this vocational cohort.

When announcing the potential reopening on a limited basis of our borders for international students the federal government specifically mandated that only those states with strict quarantine safeguards and other measures in place would be considered suitable for a gradual resumption of international education from students overseas.

The membership wishes to assure the government that in return for it not being discriminated against that it ***would unreservedly and at its own cost put in place, maintain and champion whatever reasonable health safeguards were necessary to ensure government confidence in being part of this pilot program.*** If we are to extrapolate the number of enrolments in the various colleges against a total of 13,400 students in the event that these private colleges are unable to operate in a sustainable way, freely able to enrolled students directly from overseas **subject to** strict controls up to 50% or \$300 million of the annual income plus jobs are is put at risk.

AIEPT wishes to be part of the conversation, part of the deliberation and most importantly to contribute willingly and freely to the development of appropriate public policy.

In that regard it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the strong and continued support that I have received personally from the Department of State growth and particularly from Mr Mark Bowles, Ms René Woodhouse and Ms Harpreet Gill.

All the very best Premier,

Damon Thomas
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