

MEDIA RELEASE

19 December 2024

TAFEs welcome federal government's change to visa processing for international students

Australia's TAFE sector supports the federal government's revised visa processing arrangements for international students, which comes into effect today, as a positive direction.

The peak national body, TAFE Directors Australia (TDA), welcomed the replacement of Ministerial Direction 107 with Ministerial Direction 111, which provides a fairer and more balanced approach to offshore student visa applications, and places TAFEs in the high priority category for processing.

The Chief Executive Officer of TDA, Jenny Dodd said the new Ministerial Direction represents a sensible approach to what has been a frustrating period, after the federal government's initial plan for student caps was blocked in the parliament.

"This change is a positive step that balances the need to manage international student numbers with the requirement for a VET and higher education system of the highest quality, where there is ample opportunity to enrol and study.

"The new Ministerial Direction recognises the high quality of TAFE providers by placing TAFE in the high priority category for visa processing," Ms Dodd said.

Under the change, visa applications from students enrolled with TAFE, the public provider, are exempt from the threshold that will apply to certain other providers. This also applies to students enrolled in higher education with a TAFE provider.

The measure is designed to prioritise the processing of visa applications for offshore students and education providers that are operating sustainably and delivering to genuine international students.

Ms Dodd said the government's consultation to address the issue of rapidly expanding international student numbers had taken proper account of the flexibility needed in the system, and the important economic and social place of TAFEs in their communities.

"We are pleased to see the positive message this sends to potential international students and to extend our appreciation for the consultation that has occurred, and for the recognition that has been afforded to TAFEs as high quality providers" Ms Dodd said.

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TAFE Directors Australia is the peak national body representing 28 TAFE institutes, including six dual sector universities with TAFE divisions and nine TAFEs that are also non-university higher education providers.