



## **AAERI Statement**

### **Expressing Concern Over the Student Visa Application Fee Increase (Effective 1 July 2026)**

The Association of Australian Education Representatives in India (AAERI) expresses its concern over the Australian Government's decision to increase the Student Visa (Subclass 500) application fee to AUD 2,500, effective 1 July 2026.

Australia's student visa application fee has increased dramatically in just three years. Australia's student visa application fee remained at AUD 710 until 30 June 2024. It then increased to AUD 1,600 in July 2024, AUD 2,000 in July 2025, and AUD 2,500 from 1 July 2026. This represents an increase of around 300% in just three years—one of the largest increases in student visa fees by any major international education destination.

International students already face significant costs, including tuition fees, living expenses, health insurance, English language tests, medical examinations, and travel. The higher visa fee adds to this financial burden before students even begin their studies.

While governments have the right to review visa charges, the sector would have appreciated advance notice of such a significant increase. Earlier communication would have allowed students, education providers, and education agents to better prepare for the additional cost.

International education is one of Australia's greatest success stories. AAERI supports measures that protect the integrity of the student visa system and prevent misuse. However, visa application fees should reflect the cost of administering the system, not create the perception that they are becoming a revenue-raising measure.

This increase sends the wrong message to prospective students. Genuine students and families carefully consider the total cost of studying overseas, and every additional expense influences their choice of destination. **Policies should encourage—not discourage—genuine students from choosing Australia.**

Another concern is that the student visa application fee is non-refundable. Given the current high visa refusal rates, many genuine students lose the entire application fee even when their visas are refused for not meeting the eligibility requirements. This places a significant financial burden on students and their families.

A more balanced approach would be to **split the visa application fee into two stages**. For example, **AUD 1,000 could be paid at the time of lodging the application, with the remaining AUD 1,500 payable only after the visa has been approved or granted**. Such a model would allow the Australian Government to recover its processing costs while reducing the financial loss for unsuccessful applicants. It would provide greater fairness and help protect genuine students, particularly at a time when visa refusal rates remain high.

Australia and India today enjoy one of their strongest partnerships, with growing cooperation in education, trade, research, and skills. India is one of Australia's largest and most important international student markets and has contributed significantly to the success of Australian international education. In recognition of this close relationship, Australia should consider providing **some form of concession or special consideration for Indian students**.

Australia competes globally for the world's best students. At a time when many countries are working to attract international talent, Australia must ensure its policies continue to support growth, competitiveness, and the long-term success of its international education sector. AAERI respectfully urges the Australian Government to adopt a balanced and predictable approach to future policy changes.

Genuine international students need confidence that Australia remains committed to being a welcoming destination for world-class education.



**Nishidhar R Borra**  
President, AAERI  
01 July 2026