



**ASSOCIATION OF
AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION
REPRESENTATIVES IN INDIA**

Registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI 1860
Registration No: S-31213 of 1997

Mailing Address:

**1018 Hemkunth Chambers
89 Nehru Place, New Delhi 110019
Website: www.aaeri.org.in**

12 Feb 2024

**To
Hon. Clare Ellen O'Neil , MP
Minister of Home Affairs (Australia)**

**Hon Hon Jason Clare
Minister of Education (Australia)**

**PETITION ON BEHALF OF ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION
REPRESENTATIVES IN INDIA (AAERI)**

In my role as **Secretary of Association of Australian Education Representatives in India (AAERI)**, on behalf of the President, Executive Committee and all members of AAERI, I would like to submit this petition that draws attention to the plight of students and their families that are caught in a political cross fire leading to high rates of unfair visa rejections or delays in their student visa applications.

Stats are easy to deal with because statistical information does not show the faces or families behind the numbers or their pain and bewilderment.

A student's journey to study abroad is not a sudden or a quick decision but is a long drawn out process of academic preparations , language proficiency , financial capability and a series of exams and tests that he has to go through . A family pays the tuition fee upfront before the visa application is lodged and this is done after multiple checks by the agencies and universities compliance teams.

This entire process takes 8 to 12 months of advise and preparation . Recruitment agencies , universities and students spend hundreds of hours together to help make the process seamless at a great cost . The students and their families are invested financially and emotionally in this journey at every stage and when they are handed a visa rejection or a cancelled ecoe or asked to withdraw their file , the bewilderment and the horror is so acute and profound that it is hard to explain that there has been a sudden policy change and that Australia wants to bring down net migration.

It is a fact that international students are not a part of the voting population and hence have no voice or a recourse to any form of protest but is it a fair practice to introduce these policies overnight without any clear guidelines or timelines ? Australia is a country that prides itself on fairness and equal opportunity . A country that recognises honesty and transparency , so how is the practice of unfair visa rejections or delays fair ?



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Students , their families , Agencies and universities are all reeling under this onslaught of rejections . This is damaging Australia’s reputation , its brand and its credibility . Students will turn away in hordes and so will the Agencies because they have other options and it will be very hard to bring the quality students back into Australia . Australia needs this diversity and the talent that these students bring into the universities . Their research potential and their entrepreneurship will build Australia and its future economy.

According to Ted Baillieu – former Victorian premier and the chair of Australian Heritage Council *“The Indian Diaspora here are well tuned to education and to commerce . You put the two together and inevitably the cream will rise to the top”*

Taking this argument further , according to data provided by Australian Bureau of Statistics to ATO , *“Indian born migrants have paid AUD 18 billion in taxes in the financial year 2016 – 2017 . Indians make 20% of the tax paying population in Australia. This data relates to persons 15 years and over who have migrated to Australia under a permanent or provisional visa , with an arrival date between January 1 2000 and June 30th 2019.”* This is analysed and shared by Associate Professor Harminder Singh in the department of finance at Deakin University .

The Australian , lists the Top Indian origin CEOs that are driving change in Australian businesses . To name a few here , 1. Tarun Gupta – Stockland , 2. Sanjeev Gandhi – Orica , 3. Vivek Bhatia – Links , 4. Sanjay Dayal – Pact’s , 5 . Sandeep Biswas – Newcrest and 6. Vik Bansal – Cleanway’s. proves the point that todays international students from India are the future talent that Australia needs . That they contribute more in every way than they take away and are a great bridge between the two countries.

It is our request that the student visa process is reconsidered in its entirety . We want to highlight a few points below that need urgent fixing and may provide some solutions to the current problems we are all facing.

- 1.The Streamlined Visa process system is outdated and has no relevance today.
2. University classification of govt funded universities is confusing and unfair because every student chooses a university according to their own needs and circumstances . They are forced to make contrary choices if the government classifies these universities at different levels.
3. There should be enough time given within the policy that allows students to make other choices and not waste their time or money waiting for a visa or being rejected.
4. Unfair rejections of brilliant students who meet all requirements should have a recourse to appeal.
5. An approval in principle or a PVA should trigger a full fee payment to the university so that loss is minimised if there is a visa rejection for the student and his family.



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Keeping all this in mind , it is our request that the government reconsiders its policy of reducing migration through randomly rejecting or delaying student visas and creates a proper well thought out plan to reduce migration after discussion with all key stakeholders.

AAERI would be more than happy to be a part of this discussion and will provide all the research and support that is needed.

Look forward to a positive response from your office.

Kind Regards

Sonya Singh
Secretary – AAERI.

Copy to:

1. Reuben Gray, Counsellor (Immigration), Department of Home Affairs
2. Nathaniel Webb, Counsellor (Education and Research) – South Asia
3. Matthew Johnston, Minister, Counsellor (Education & Research) - South Asia
4. Monica Kennedy, Sr Trade and Investment Commissioner, Austrade
5. John Wellard, Policy Director, Universities Australia
6. Vicki Thomson, Chief Executive- Group of Eight
7. Phil Honeywood, IEAA
8. Jogvan Klein, Chair, AUIDF
9. AAERI Executives