

Independent Education Union

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Thursday, 25 February 2021

Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash
Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business
PO Box 6100
Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Email: senator.cash@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Cash,

The IEUA writes on behalf of our members employed in the private post-secondary education sector.

The IEUA represents employees in this sector, including teachers, trainers and support staff in ELICOS, Business and VET colleges, which commonly cater to international students. Speaking more broadly, the international education sector of which our members form an integral part, supports 250,000 Australian jobs, and contributes \$40 billion annually to the economy.

As the Minister would be aware, this sector has been hard-hit by the pandemic, and the associated economic impacts. In particular, the effective closing of Australia's borders to non-citizens (especially international students) has started this sector of business, and as a result, business margins have plummeted.

The Federal government's JobKeeper program was a lifeline for this sector, allowing colleges to stay afloat in the face of unprecedented challenges, and to maintain an employment relationship with their employees. There appears little doubt that JobKeeper has directly led to the survival of many institutions in the sector who would otherwise have gone out of business.

The approaching end of the JobKeeper program, while generally understandable as the worst effects of the pandemic recede, brings with it renewed risks to providers and employees in the post-secondary sector, and is causing great anxiety among our members and their employers.

The IEUA therefore calls upon the Federal government to extend JobKeeper and/or other assistance to businesses in the private post-secondary education sector, to maintain the viability of these organisations, and to maintain the jobs of our members.

The private post-secondary education sector has proved to be very resilient over the years, but it has never faced a crisis like this one. Once conditions return to something approaching normal, the industry should be well-placed to start up anew, and continue to attract foreign investment and

export earnings for Australia. However, the industry will need continued assistance for the rest of 2021 while conditions return to relative stability.

The IEUA stands ready to assist the industry and the government help our members in this difficult time.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like any further discussion.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Watt', written in a cursive style.

CHRIS WATT
FEDERAL SECRETARY