



Post-Conference Reflective Report

The 33rd ISANA National Conference, themed "Community, Connection: Advancing International Education Services," was a valuable exploration of strategies to enhance student experience, well-being, and tackle challenges in the international education sector. Practitioners resonated on the significance of peer-learning and student partnership programs, emphasising their role in cultivating student-centred practices. A notable insight was the acknowledgment of a divide between domestic and international students, forming "parallel societies." This underscored the importance of initiatives that bridge the gap, allowing both groups to collaborate closely and elevate their connectedness.

The conference delved into discussions on integrating digital technologies and sustainable teaching/learning methods into curricula. Sessions highlighted the merits of reflective learning, autonomy-centred approaches, and the potential benefits of incorporating ChatGPT for academic support. Mental health within international student communities emerged as a crucial topic, with a focus on empowering students to build self-love and self-efficacy. Practitioners emphasised fostering students' sense of significance, contribution, growth, and connection to themselves and others. Enriching the student experience also took centre stage, with the introduction of frameworks for establishing standards in student accommodation that prioritise international student well-being. The conference positioned the welfare of international students as a vital aspect within the quality assessment framework.

A noteworthy aspect of the event was the participation of international students in a panel discussion. Students from Sydney, Melbourne, and Geelong (regional Victoria) shared their experiences and perspectives on challenges within international student communities. As an international student representing regional Victoria, my message to the panel was clear – while Australia's cultural diversity and open-mindedness to innovative ideas enriched my experience, there is room for improvement in the support and resources available to international students in regional suburbs.

Stacy Doan

Signed:

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