

## **Statement on the Proposed Increase in International Student Visa Fees Stop Unfair Treatment of International Students**

As students across Australia, we express serious concern regarding the Australian Government's proposal to increase international student visa fees to AUD \$2,000. This proposed fee far exceeds the reasonable administrative costs associated with visa processing, raising legitimate questions about whether visa fees are being utilized merely to cover operational expenses or as a source of additional government revenue. Leveraging Australia's renowned international educational reputation and international students' limited bargaining power in this manner raises significant ethical concerns, deviating from the established principle that visa fees should strictly reflect service-related costs.

International students contribute substantially to Australia's economic strength, cultural diversity, and academic excellence. In addition to paying full tuition fees, they provide significant economic stimulus through consumer spending and job creation, enriching Australia's multicultural community. Excessively increasing visa fees unfairly burdens international students, sending a harmful message internationally and portraying Australia as primarily viewing these students as revenue streams. Such perceptions significantly risk undermining Australia's global image as a fair, inclusive, and top-tier education destination, potentially prompting prospective students to choose alternative countries amid increasing global competition.

Notably, since July 2024, Australia's international student visa fee has already risen sharply from AUD \$710 to AUD \$1,600, representing approximately a 125% increase. A further increase to AUD \$2,000 would nearly triple the fee compared to its pre-July 2023 level, placing Australia's student visa among the most expensive globally. By contrast, other major English-speaking education destinations maintain substantially lower visa fees. For instance, the United States charges approximately AUD \$820, Canada approximately AUD \$108, New Zealand approximately AUD \$400, and the United Kingdom approximately AUD \$930. Such stark disparity illustrates a concerning departure from international norms, potentially damaging Australia's global competitiveness and attractiveness.

With federal elections approaching, we are concerned that recent policy directions may be influenced by political pressures rather than educational and economic considerations. The perception that Australia is becoming less welcoming to international students risks eroding trust and damaging Australia's long-established reputation for openness and inclusivity. Experiences of perceived unfair treatment have lasting impacts, potentially affecting Australia's international relationships, educational partnerships, and economic opportunities far into the future.

We respectfully urge the Australian Government to reconsider and immediately withdraw the proposed visa fee increase. We call for meaningful collaboration between the government, educational institutions, industry experts, and student representatives to develop a fair, sustainable, and student-centred international education policy framework. This collaborative approach is essential to uphold Australia's core values, ensuring long-term national interests, international competitiveness, and genuine respect for international students.

**Weihong Liang**

International Student Officer | **Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations**  
Chair | **New South Wales International Student Representative Committee**

**Join us to stop unfair treatment of international students—sign the petition now:**

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