

7th April 2019

ISANA NZ (International Education Association) is the peak body for practitioners in the international education sector and draws a third of members from schools. A summary of concerns of Tomorrow's School Report voiced by ISANA NZ's members are:

- wellbeing of students of overseas origins including international students;
- support for practitioners/educators dealing with students of overseas origins including international students; and
- the portrayal of international students as financial incentives.

With MOE funding support and Education New Zealand (ENZ) sponsorship, ISANA NZ is currently co-leading work to enhance professionalisation across the international/export education sector. We see in the Tomorrow's Schools proposal opportunity for a step-change in improving student experience and developing professional pathways involving intercultural skills for schools education and support staff. However, the report shows an apparent lack of awareness of, or attention to:

- demographic changes affecting the nature of future education provision in New Zealand;
- the considerable value to educational outcomes of the contribution of international students;
- international student presence enabling additional staffing and support in our schools; and
- the role of international education's in preparing students for the global society of the future.

Currently the recognised benefits of international education in schools are as follows:

- International student fees provide an important revenue stream;
- International students provide cultural capital which enriches global citizen perspectives in all programmes of study, as well as extra-curricular activity; and
- International students catalyse development of staffing and resource excellence relevant to increasing diversity within our population and corresponding domestic student bod.

ISANA NZ's view is that a healthy professional international education stream within our schools sector has significant benefits for the enhancement of the whole education sector. The value of this to the sector needs consideration, and not relegation to, and toleration for, fund raising purposes. The report appears to reflect a lack of communication with government agencies and other relevant bodies.

ISANA NZ recommends a greater level of consultation with schools providing international education, and with the wider international education sector: ISANA NZ, regional international education bodies, ENZ, SIEBA, MOE International Unit, MFAT, as well as MBIE and MSD. This may assist consideration of the wider context of demographic change; educating for global citizenship; and the importance and value of international education in our schools.

The wellbeing of students of overseas origins including international students

ISANA NZ recommends that the report give more consideration of the impact of the proposed changes on student wellbeing. It is imperative that students have a high level of support while pursuing their studies. World class student support should optimally reflect tailored, proactive approaches rather than passive services-in-waiting. Centralising staff and services across a wide catchment area risks the loss of personal connection and rapport with students of overseas origins including international students. This risk may exacerbate the adjustment challenges and stressors they negotiate. Relegating international students to being merely "cash cows" for schools is short-sighted and an affront to those who work in international education, the schools that engage in international education, and Te Tiriti values. If such an attitude is to become endemic and persist

through any restructuring of our schools, then it will result in negative impacts on wellbeing amongst international students and possibly many domestic students of overseas origins as well.

The opportunity in the Tomorrow's Schools proposal is for implementation of professional education standards for students of overseas origins including international student engagement nationwide. Such standards could enhance intercultural knowledge and skills, enrich teacher and student services training, and propagate culturally responsive pedagogy across subject areas using advantages of a centralised model. The development and implementation of evidence-based, tailored practice for international students (with obvious spins offs for recent migrant children) is an area of specialisation for ISANA NZ. ISANA NZ is willing to work with Tomorrow's Schools' processes and the Ministry to ensure students of overseas origins and international student welfare needs are met during the reform process and beyond. Tomorrow's Schools' reforms could be an opportunity to improve international education and safeguard the welfare of the growing profession throughout change.

ISANA NZ is currently exploring in the intercultural professional development space an approach to international student engagement that blends our bicultural understanding for multicultural application and champions *he tangata he tangata he tangata* values unique to New Zealand and sets New Zealand schools education system apart as an attractive study destination.

Support for practitioners/educators dealing with students of overseas origins including international students

The proposal to produce administrative and management hubs appears to offer advantages in delivering cost efficiencies, uniform quality in governance, better utilisation of resources, and reductions in choice options. There are, however, also inherent risks with restructuring, and a one size fits all approach is frequently non-reflective of the diversity that exists within education and our schools. Schools' international education personnel that have value to the future of education deserve encouragement and support as to the value and continuity of their services through restructuring. The failure to do so has caused consternation amongst this talented educational resource that collectively exercises passion, shares expertise and works hard for development and standards in education, education delivery, education systems and education support within our schools.

In this proposed restructure we would ask that the needs of all education professionals, but especially those engaging in teaching and supporting students of overseas origins and diverse cultures, including international students, receive due consideration. ISANA NZ is disappointed that international education personnel appear to have been ignored in the Tomorrow's Schools Report. In any change, clarity in relation to job importance and security; canvassing of working conditions; as well as qualifications and career pathway needs, are important and contribute to maintaining and stimulating morale.

ISANA NZ through current delivery of workshops on professional boundaries and self-care practice for international education practitioners recognises the impact proposed changes can have. We are available to work with the Ministry in support of centralised development and delivery of professional standards for Schools Education practitioners supporting students of overseas origins including international students, but we would value doing so with a clear understanding that reforms in the schools sector are being taken with a good understanding of international education.

The portrayal of international students as financial incentives

The report promotes a view that suggests the following:

- International students are not entitled to educational resources, despite their under-utilisation;
- Based on the tone of the report, there is a possible systemic or overarching policy attitude which ignores issues pertinent to students of overseas origins and international students in particular; and
- International education has limited value other than financial benefits to schools, thus ignoring the derivatives of a healthy international education stream such as in the area of global citizenship and contributing to better educational resource utilisation.

ISANA NZ shares the government's desire to share the benefits of international education with the wider New Zealand community and the regions in particular. The imperatives for regional and community development for the future are enhanced by a healthy international education stream within schools. While the proposed reforms seek to unify practices and resources nationwide, as they stand there are potential unintended effects and risks.

Quality international education providers fear loss of identity and a perception from abroad is that hard-won reputations for international student recruitment may be lost. ISANA NZs view is that careful consultation is needed with agencies such as ENZ, SIEBA, regional education groups, agents and international directors to address reputational risk. A school's identity is important to its community and its reputation and the value of these could be lost

In summary, the Tomorrow's Schools Report reflects a lack of understanding and value of international education and how it could be of greater use in developing our education system. In the current proposal to improve and centralise some aspects of schools management, any gains that might occur for international education may be lost in the dismissal of its value. Instead, the proposal could be reconsidered as an opportunity for enhancing international education in our schools to benefit schools and all their students. A significant proportion of ISANA NZ members work in the schools sector and our association is ready to contribute to further consultative work and assist with the development of policies that ultimately advance the schools education sector.

On behalf of ISANA NZ,

Yours Sincerely



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