

# Creating influence for International Education

In 2010 Primary Communication was contracted by the Australian Council for Private Education and Training following a critical decline in international student numbers. As a result of significant changes by the Government to the student visa program, education providers taking advantage of gaps in the federal and state government regulatory oversight of international education and, Australia's 3rd largest export industry was in crisis.



Primary was asked to recommend and implement a strategy to affect change in the opinion and actions of key decision makers and to reverse the negative effects. It was a two year program.

## Strategy

- » Develop a unified voice for the international education sector in Australia
- » Develop a strategic stakeholder communication program which unified the sector's key influencers and invited support and participation from the business sector
- » Establish the financial credentials and contribution of the international education sector to Australia's economy
- » Represent key policy issues to key target audiences
- » Coordinate ongoing representation of all 12 peak groups; integrating the skills and working visa policy parallels into the proposed changes, coordinating an industry wide response to the announced review of the student visa program
- » Manage ongoing influence on legislative and regulatory change



## Outcomes

A united sector achieved by forming a standalone *International Education Taskforce* with 12 industry peak group members

- » The Taskforce worked together to:
  - » Convene a Taskforce meeting with relevant Ministers and Opposition spokespeople, to discuss the critical nature of the issues and possible resolutions at an all day Parliamentary meeting
  - » Collaboratively develop a proposition paper which encapsulated the sector's common issues and provided policy and regulatory proposals for change
  - » Represented the issues in regular briefing meetings with Ministerial advisors
  - » Provide a unified voice to the media and public
  - » Received endorsement from the Government
  - » Government announced a full review of the student visa program, inviting all of the Taskforce members to participate

The Government's Knight Report into the sector included a number of Taskforce recommendations.

Regulatory review and reform was undertaken at a state and federal level, new legislation was developed in consultation with industry, and implemented to protect students and place a rigorous framework on providers.