



# **The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP**

## **Premier of NSW**

### **Minister for Western Sydney**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Tuesday 24 April 2012

### **WIN FOR NSW ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENT VISAS**

International students will find it easier to study in NSW in a significant shot in the arm for the State's economy, NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell said today.

NSW has successfully led a national push for streamlined international student visas to be extended to high quality vocational education and training (VET) providers including TAFE NSW, rather than just universities.

"International education is a \$6 billion industry for NSW – our second largest in terms of exports," Mr O'Farrell said.

"We have the largest international education industry in Australia but in recent years it has been hit by the double whammy of visa changes and the high Australian dollar.

"The tightening of Commonwealth visa requirements in 2009 contributed to a significant drop in enrolments and export earnings.

"There was a 20 per cent decline in international student enrolments at NSW VET providers in the last few months of 2010/11 alone.

"Under the changes NSW has secured through COAG, new streamlined risk-based visa arrangements will be available to high quality VET providers including TAFE NSW, meaning they are treated the same under the visa arrangements as universities.

"The reforms will reduce the documentary evidence needed by international students, irrespective of their country of origin, intending to study in NSW.

"It will put us back in the game as we compete with other education markets around the world.

"The Commonwealth has agreed to expedite implementation in time for enrolments later this year."

Extending the streamlined international student visas changes was a major element of the Interstate Reform Partnership signed between NSW and Victoria last year and was a key Priority Action in the *NSW Strategy for Business Migration and Attracting International Students*.

There are currently 230,000 international students enrolled in NSW. The most popular subjects are Business and Management, Food and Hospitality and Accounting.