

# RESPONSE TO JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S TRADE AND INVESTMENT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM

31 MARCH 2017

## BACKGROUND

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The University of Melbourne is pleased to respond to the Federal Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade inquiry into Australia's trade and investment relationship with the United Kingdom.

The University's outlook is global, reflecting the diversity and ambitions of our students and staff, and the global patterns for leading research and innovation. This requires ensuring our graduates are prepared as 'global citizens' and lifting our capacity to engage internationally with universities, governments and industry. This approach is reflected in our ranking as Australia's number 1 University and 40<sup>th</sup> globally on the ARWU Shanghai index.

The University's international standing is in part built upon the significant contribution made by our large community of international scholars, staff, students and visitors. The University has agreements with a majority of the world's 50 top-ranked universities.

The University also has widespread international collaborations, maintaining over 250 agreements for academic cooperation and exchange with universities around the world, concentrated in the United States, United Kingdom, Japan, China, Italy and India.

Australia's trade relationship with the United Kingdom is underpinned by long-standing historical, political and social ties. The United Kingdom is Australia's fifth largest two-way trading partner, our seventh largest export market and our sixth largest source of imports.<sup>1</sup> In 2015-16, two-way trade totalled \$27.0 billion, with Australian exports worth \$12.1 billion and imports from the United Kingdom worth \$14.9 billion.<sup>2</sup>

Australia is the world's third largest international higher education provider behind the US and UK. The United Kingdom is the fifth largest source of international students for Australia and the second most popular destination for Australian students studying abroad. In 2015, the United Kingdom was Australia's second most important country for international research collaboration, following the United States of America.<sup>3</sup>

At the University of Melbourne, the United Kingdom is the fifth highest source of commencing international students, with 52 students with UK citizenship commencing at the University in 2016. In 2016, 198 students whose last place of education was in the United Kingdom commenced at the University. With regards to student mobility, the United Kingdom is the third most popular source for inbound exchange students. In 2016, 130 students from United Kingdom institutions participated in an exchange program to the University of Melbourne.

For further information or to discuss this submission further, please contact Professor Simon Evans, Pro Vice-Chancellor (International), on [s.evans@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:s.evans@unimelb.edu.au) or (03) 9035 8882.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://dfat.gov.au/geo/united-kingdom/Pages/united-kingdom-country-brief.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://dfat.gov.au/trade/resources/Documents/uk.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.arc.gov.au/international-collaboration>

## OVERVIEW OF UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM

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The University has an established and extensive relationship with the United Kingdom through research collaborations, bilateral and multilateral agreements, institutional partnerships and student mobility programs.

### RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS

The University has developed academic links with the United Kingdom covering 283 institutions across a wide range of disciplines. As of 2015, the University's Melbourne Research Windows database lists 10,006 collaborative publications between the University of Melbourne and academics in the United Kingdom and 607 academic staff with research expertise in the United Kingdom.<sup>4</sup> Since 2010, University publications involving one or more United Kingdom collaborator have more than doubled. Collaborative publications with the United Kingdom were strongest in the areas of population and global health, ophthalmology and physics.

### BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL AGREEMENTS

The University has formal bilateral agreements with 12 leading institutions in the United Kingdom including:

- Durham University
- Imperial College London
- King's College London
- Queen Mary, University of London
- University College London
- University of Birmingham
- University of Bristol
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Glasgow
- University of Manchester
- University of Nottingham
- University of St Andrews

The University has 13 bilateral agreements between faculties across institutions in the United Kingdom including:

- Edinburgh College of Art (Architecture, Building and Planning)
- Glasgow School of Art (Victorian College of the Arts -Melbourne Conservatorium of Music)
- Goldsmiths College, University of London (Victorian College of the Arts - Melbourne Conservatorium of Music)
- Heriot-Watt University (Business and Economics)
- London Business School (Business and Economics)
- Manchester Business School (Business and Economics)

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<sup>4</sup> The Melbourne Research Windows is an internal data management tool specially developed to assist the research community of the University of Melbourne. It provides a consolidated view of University Research Information around researchers, departments, research classifications, journals and publications.

- Queen’s University Belfast (Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences)
- Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (Victorian College of the Arts - Melbourne Conservatorium of Music)
- Royal Holloway, University of London (Arts & Victorian College of the Arts - Melbourne Conservatorium of Music)
- Royal Northern College of Music (Victorian College of the Arts - Melbourne Conservatorium of Music)
- University College London, Bartlett School of Planning (Architecture, Building and Planning)
- University College London, Faculty of Engineering Sciences (Engineering)
- University of East Anglia (Arts)

## **UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE KEY PARTNERSHIPS WITH UNITED KINGDOM INSTITUTIONS**

### **The University of Birmingham partnership**

In 2016, the University of Melbourne and the University of Birmingham signed an expansive new agreement to formally collaborate on research, education, and cultural engagement. The partnership will help strengthen the existing collaboration between the universities, with the centrepiece being a joint PhD program co-funded by both institutions. The program will give up to 20 scholars in engineering the opportunity to study alongside world-leading academics in Birmingham and Melbourne across shared areas of priority research including energy storage, biomechanics, artificial intelligence and robotics. The AUD\$4 million ‘Priestley PhD Fellowships’ program reflects the unique, 20-year relationship between the universities, which have a shared history in Sir Raymond Priestley, the British geologist and Antarctic explorer who was Vice-Chancellor of both institutions. Beyond the Fellowships, the partnership also provides for a \$200,000 collaborative fund to encourage research staff mobility and collaboration between the UK and Australia.

### **The University of Manchester partnership**

The University of Melbourne and the University of Manchester have established a research fund to deepen and extend collaborative research links between the universities. Grants up to AUD\$10,000 are awarded for collaborative research projects including symposia, workshops and researcher exchanges. The fund is targeted to areas of common interest between the two universities. In 2014, nine grants were made available to support University of Melbourne staff to undertake short-term visits to Manchester. The visits provided the Melbourne staff with a unique opportunity to develop and strengthen their professional ties in teaching, learning and research. Corresponding visits to the University of Melbourne were undertaken by University of Manchester staff.

### **The Melbourne Law School and Oxford University partnership**

In 2009, the Melbourne Law School launched a dual degree program with Oxford University linking two of the world’s leading law schools. This program enables Melbourne students to undertake a 3.5 year combined Juris Doctor (JD) program with either the Oxford Bachelor of Civil Law (BCL) or the Oxford Masters in Law and Finance (MLF). Each combined program

consists of 2.5 years study in Melbourne and 1 year at Oxford. The JD/BCL partnership marks a significant stage in the development of the University's global outreach.

### **European Union Centre on Shared Complex Challenges**

The University of Melbourne-based European Union Centre on Shared Complex Challenges was established in August 2014 with support from the European Commission. The Centre is part of the European External Action Service (EEAS), a global network of 39 centres hosted by universities worldwide, and one of five located in Australia. The Centre aims to promote awareness and understanding of the EU and its relationship with Australia. The focus of the EU Centre's activities is on EU-Australia policy and action in response to the complex challenges of climate and energy, regional governance and innovation. The Centre regularly facilitates visits to Australia for UK-based researchers.

### **Kings College- Dublin- Science Gallery**

The University of Melbourne has secured the rights to Australia's only node in the highly successful Science Gallery International network. Science Gallery Melbourne will launch its inaugural pop-up exhibition, BLOOD, in 2017 ahead of its formal opening in Melbourne in 2020. Science Gallery will be a public-facing, dynamic and engaging space to inspire young adults into the STEM workforce while delivering direct economic benefits via tourism, job creation and the export of Australian arts and science.

Founded in 2008 at Trinity College Dublin, Science Gallery is a dynamic new model for engaging 15-25 year olds with science. Science Gallery is a 'living laboratory' that conducts real research while stimulating creativity and innovation by encouraging greater interaction between scientists, engineers, designers, artists and the creative industries. Science Gallery is part of an international network with leading global Universities; each with a common mission: to ignite creativity and discovery where science and art collide. The Science Gallery partners include: Kings College London, Trinity College Dublin, University of Melbourne, Indian Institute of Science, National Centre for Biological Sciences, Srishti Institute of Art, Bangalore and the University of Venice.

## **STUDENT MOBILITY**

### **Incoming students from the United Kingdom**

The University of Melbourne is a highly desirable education destination for international students. In 2016, Melbourne was judged as the most liveable city in the world for a sixth consecutive year by the Economist Intelligence Unit. Melbourne was also named the 2nd most student-friendly city in the QS Best Student City Rankings in 2016.

As previously noted, in 2016, 52 students with UK citizenship commenced at the University of Melbourne. In 2016, 198 students whose last place of education was in the United Kingdom commenced at the University of Melbourne. This figure has been increasing since 2005.

## Exchange programs between Australia and the United Kingdom

The University of Melbourne has approximately 180 exchange partners in 39 countries around the world. Most students of the University of Melbourne are eligible to apply for an exchange place. An exchange involves spending either one semester, a year (two semesters) or sometimes shorter periods at one of the University's international partner institutions for full credit towards the student's degree. In return, the University of Melbourne receives a student from the participating university.

Completing part of their degree overseas provides students with a unique experience, allowing cross cultural learning, an opportunity to internationalise their degree and make new connections from around the world.

The United Kingdom is the second most popular destination for outbound University of Melbourne students and the third most popular source for inbound exchange students from the United Kingdom. In 2016, 150 students from the University of Melbourne participated in an exchange program to a United Kingdom university. In return, 130 students from United Kingdom institutions came to Melbourne.

Government support for international engagement will greatly benefit the University's capability to enhance this important knowledge exchange. In particular, financial support for PhD exchanges and post-doctoral exchanges can build a global network that further supports the growth of existing and new markets.

## ALUMNI

Australia's university alumni are an important diaspora and network that the nation.

Membership of the alumni community is extended to all those who have successfully completed at least one year of full-time study at the University, or in the case of international students, have completed a semester length Study Abroad program at the University.

The London-based University alumni association has been in existence for nearly 30 years. On average, 250 University alumni attend and engage with alumni events in London per year.

Alumni are vital to the success of the University's international engagement activities. Philanthropy from our alumni has enabled the University to extend into new fields of research, provided new buildings and facilities, and established scholarships and prizes to encourage access to education. It is a proud tradition of the University, as generous gifts from the public and industry continue to change the lives of future generations.

The Government's *National Strategy for International Education 2025* recognises the importance and value of partnerships formed with university global alumni. The *Australia Global Alumni Strategy* will provide support to Australian universities to help strengthen and leverage links with their student alumni.

### **Commonwealth Government**

The Australian Trade Commission (Austrade) promotes Australia's education sector internationally. Since 2012, enrolments from United Kingdom citizens in Australian universities has grown by 40%.<sup>5</sup>

### **Victorian Government**

The Victorian Government has established Business Offices (VGBOs) in eighteen locations around the world, including London. The VGBO network promotes Victoria's international education providers.

### **Universities Australia**

Universities Australia works closely with its counterpart, Universities UK, to deepen engagement between universities in the two countries. This relationship has been forged through a joint policy dialogue in October 2012 which led to the execution of a formal agreement in June 2013. That agreement provides for cooperation in areas of common interest to enhance the activities of both organisations. A Joint Working Group has been established to consider a program for collaboration and sharing of best practice.

## INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

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Australia's third largest export is education, supporting around 130,000 jobs and contributing \$20 billion to the domestic economy. It is Victoria's largest export. The continued growth of this sector requires stable policy settings, well-funded, world-leading research and robust regulation to ensure standards remain high and Australia is seen and known as a high quality provider of education services.

Australia has much to gain by the significant links that each cohort of international students takes with them when they conclude their study in Australia. Our international alumni network is one of Australia's greatest assets. These ultimately help to drive political, economic and cultural activities globally.

Australian universities operate in an increasingly internationalised higher education market where global talent is highly mobile. While there is fierce competition to attract the best students and academic and professional staff internationally, Australia's successful and well-regarded higher education sector can continue to expand the opportunity for Australia bringing benefits not only to students and staff but to the Australian economy and society more broadly. The UK will continue to be an important source of student and academic exchange that will enrich Australian universities.

As it becomes more common for students to select their university on a global basis, Australia is well positioned to continue to offer high quality education at a competitive price for internationally-recognised qualifications. As a destination for study, Australia offers high

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.austrade.gov.au/Australian/Education/Countries/United-Kingdom>

quality education, an English-speaking environment and great lifestyle that has contributed to building a strong 'brand Australia' in the international market.

There are some immediate challenges to Australian universities including rising international competition and rapid expansion of domestic higher education systems in our major export markets. The Commonwealth's international network of counsellors has been an important mechanism to build collaboration and market standing in-country.

To continue to realise the widespread benefits of the international higher education market there is an important role for government in providing supportive policy settings for the international educational sector. A sustainable sector needs appropriate regulation which can ensure quality offerings that meet student expectations while enabling educational innovation by experienced providers.

Maintaining Australia's excellent reputation as a destination for international students is critical for the health of the whole sector. Australian universities have the advantage of statutory quality assurance regulation through TEQSA and the ESOS framework. For its part, The University of Melbourne remains committed to rigorous entry standards and verification of entry credentials. The University has robust processes to ensure prospective students are correctly credentialed, particularly with regards to academic transcripts and completion statements. The University's overseas agents meet all the requirements set by the Australian government's streamlined visa processing standards. These same standards should be required of all higher education providers.

Universities need stable and predictable financial support for teaching and research as well as some targeted programs to drive international collaboration. Government has a role to ensure policy settings for employment, housing and immigration and border control align with the country's goals for a thriving international education sector.

The success of the Australian Government's International Education Strategy will rest heavily on a shared understanding across departments of the importance of international education as a key export market for Australia - its international standing as a high quality offering, ranked in the top three in the world. Higher education institutions and government must work together in the recruitment of international staff and students in a seamless, efficient and cost-effective manner. To achieve this, the National Strategy should be integrated within the activity and policy settings of other relevant areas of government, in particular that of Austrade and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

The Council for International Education is one channel through which inter-governmental communication, coordination and collaboration can be advanced across government and, in particular, between the Education, Trade, and Immigration and Border Protection portfolios.