



KNOWLEDGE MELBOURNE

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT STRATEGY

DISCUSSION PAPER

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1. INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of the City of Melbourne's International Student Strategy (ISS) is twofold:

- To provide a framework and action plan from which the City of Melbourne will continue to develop the programs and initiatives that enhance the wellbeing of international students in this municipality; and
- Acknowledge the substantial contribution that international students make to Melbourne's diverse social and cultural fabric and the broad knowledge sector in Melbourne.

This discussion paper will:

- outline the City of Melbourne's current international student programs and services.
- provide statistics of the international education sector in the City of Melbourne and throughout Australia.
- provide an overview of relevant literature on international student wellbeing and related research.
- outline current relevant work by local, state and the federal government in Australia relating to the development of the strategy and highlight where there are possible collaboration and co-contribution opportunities.
- outline the key issues that need to be taken into consideration in the development of this strategy, including issues, gaps and opportunities for future actions.
- provide discussion questions for stakeholder consultation.

It is anticipated that through stakeholder consultation and feedback on the discussion paper, the draft City of Melbourne International Student Strategy will be developed.

Background

The City of Melbourne aims to provide international students with a welcoming, engaging, inclusive and connected experience throughout their education journey in Melbourne. It offers a diverse range of social inclusion, arts, sporting, entertainment, business and international trade opportunities to international students.

The City of Melbourne recognises its role as being an education hub. Strategies and programs have been developed to help to enhance the status and wellbeing of international students in the city. The City of Melbourne recognises the importance of ensuring that programs are inclusive of all students where ever possible, and is considering the need to develop programs that treat international students as a 'separate' cohort of students rather than part of the general student population. International students are included in the City of Melbourne's policy for youth, '*Empowering Young People 2010 – 2013*'.

Over the past decade, the City of Melbourne has faced challenges in the development and provision of programs for international students that effectively respond to the needs of this diverse and growing group. The municipality is host to over 300 education institutions, the large majority of which offer education to international students, or dependants of international students.



Context :

The international student strategy must take into account the following strategies and frameworks:

- City of Melbourne: the Council Plan, the Empowering Young People Strategy 2010 – 2013, the International Engagement Framework, Cultural Diversity Framework, Knowledge Melbourne Key Strategic Activity, City Safety Plan, Homelessness Strategy - Pathways
- Victorian local governments: Moreland council research project, the City of Darebin, Monash City Council and City of Stonnington programs
- Capital city councils: City of Sydney strategy, City of Brisbane action plan, City of Adelaide programs, international cities initiatives and activities such as Toronto, London and Boston.
- State Governments in Victoria and New South Wales
- Federal government: COAG International Student Strategy 2010 – 2014, International Education Advisory Council – current work in the development of an International Education Strategy

The City of Melbourne has key strategic activities currently being undertaken which target specific areas and groups within the City of Melbourne. These include the City Safety Plan and the City of Melbourne Homelessness Strategy: Pathways. Through these key areas of work, there are related issues and opportunities to assist international students in Melbourne.

Other documents that are relevant to this work are research reports commissioned by the City of Melbourne to investigate the nature of the international students' experiences in the city. These include: *'City of Melbourne International Student Surveys – 2006, 2008 and 2010'*, *'International Students at Risk in the City of Melbourne : The extent and nature of their hardship, December 2011'*, *'Rooming House Residents in the City of Melbourne Needs and Characteristics February, 2012'* and *'City of Melbourne/State Library of Victoria : International Student Library Needs 2011'*.

Through the development of the strategy, the social impacts along with broader skill and knowledge benefits of international students will be considered within the context of the community and the education sector.

Who are international students?

In many respects, the international student cohort is not limited to individuals who are from overseas and studying in Melbourne on a student visa or bridging visa. Visitors studying in Melbourne on Working Holiday visas, Tourist visas and dependants of holders of Student visas may also be considered international students by virtue of the nature of their stay and experience in Melbourne. However, much research and data in this paper refers to that of the standard definition of international students, those temporarily visiting and studying in Australia on a student visa. This is primarily because this cohort of students is the most surveyed, researched and discussed. In addition, it is usually only student visa holders who are covered under the consumer protection legislation Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000.

In 2010 there were just under 200,000 tertiary students living and/or studying in the City of Melbourne and international students represent a sizable proportion of this population. They make up approximately



30% of the higher education population, and approximately 3% of the private VET population¹. The needs of international students are diverse and can rarely be lumped into one or two homogenous groups. In the first instance, secondary schools have a far smaller proportion of international students than the other sectors. The needs and welfare provisions for students in secondary colleges, however, are more complex because these students are under the age of 18 and attract complex welfare requirements and responsibilities for the education provider.

International students represent a large number of nationalities; speak over 100 different languages as their first or second language (other than English), study in different education institutions and sectors, for qualifications in a wide range of disciplines, of varying levels and for many reasons. International students represent all age groups – some with dependants, some with family – although findings in the City of Melbourne international student surveys in 2006, 2008 and 2010 suggest that most are here alone with neither friends nor family from their home country. There are international students who are in Australia for short periods of time, as little as 4 weeks, and many others who reside in Australia for the main bulk of their tertiary education as well as some of their secondary education. International students' English language proficiencies vary, as do their levels of understanding of their rights and responsibilities in the community and on the education campus.

Research and anecdotal evidence provides conflicting information about the experiences of international students. These range from being at risk of homelessness and vulnerable to exploitation or having their course enrolment cancelled; to being successful graduates, with equivalent native-speaking English language skills and sought after employment opportunities. Research by the City of Melbourne that investigated the extent of the hardship of some international students experience also suggests that this large disparity in circumstances is often the result of poor decision-making by students following access to and provision of inadequate or incorrect advice, support networks and information. The factors that affect the level of vulnerability of many international students and set the international students experience apart from that of the domestic student cohort include:

- loss of family/friends/community
- unfamiliar culture and environment
- language barriers
- high risk-taking behaviour
- lack of knowledge of rights and responsibilities
- low income or access to sufficient funds to meet living expenses.

This paper will discuss the effects of these vulnerabilities and the City of Melbourne's role in the provision of programs and services for international students. The paper will aim to identify the assistance available to students to help prevent and address problems, in addition to providing stimulating and appropriate programs for less vulnerable students.

¹ The source of this data allows VET students to self-classify by describing their home address. Therefore this methodology only records a student as an international student when the student records their address as being outside of Australia.



Discussion question.

Who are international students? How does the City of Melbourne determine who makes up the international student population? Do we need to define who international students are for the purposes of the City of Melbourne International Student Strategy? Do you consider the definition 'international student' to be limited to student visa holders only?

Developing the draft international student strategy

The objective of this project is to develop an International Student Strategy based on:

- a detailed analysis of current City of Melbourne work with international students, identifying and analyzing the data and statistics, issues, gaps and opportunities
- a concise literature review discussing the existing federal, state and local government policies and frameworks, in addition to the international education industry and education sector context
- targeted community consultation framed around a community engagement strategic plan involving both internal and external stakeholders. Community submissions and consultation will be conducted following the development of the draft strategy
- the development of a five-year plan that identifies the City of Melbourne's role in addressing issues faced by international students; key partnerships, time lines and indicators; and provides a framework for concrete deliverables

This discussion paper is to be used to a) guide and frame the discussion at an external stakeholder consultation forums and internal consultation meetings and b) in conjunction with outcomes from the forums, develop a draft strategy.



2. BACKGROUND – INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SECTOR

From 1951, international students began studying in Australia through the Technical Co-operation Scheme, an initiative that was part of the Colombo Plan. This initiative aimed to encompass the education and training of students in vital skills to enhance economic development in their countries of origin. As an economic aid program, it operated most effectively in the 1950s and 1960s providing students from South and South East Asian countries with specialized education programs both on- and offshore. The onshore students were provided living allowances, accommodation, English language tuition and reception programs. Offshore students completing distance education were awarded correspondence scholarships and specialised programs were developed for both on and offshore students. (Auletta, 2001).

Through the Colombo Plan, a growing number of students from overseas began to access the Australian university education. In 1968, there were 1211 students studying in Australia on Commonwealth government funded programs, and a further 4218 overseas students studying in Australia, paying the same fees as local students. In 1974 university fees were abolished for domestic students and a quota of places was imposed for overseas students to address the fact that overseas students were also not required to pay tuition fees for Australian higher education. (Marginson, 1993, Hastings, 2003) In 1979, the Overseas Students Charge Act was introduced and tuition fees for overseas students were introduced at 10 percent of the notional cost of a university place.

Australia also continued to host Colombo Plan students and other aid/scholarship programs were introduced to continue to provide targeted education aid to overseas students. By 1988, the fees charged to overseas students not on scholarships had risen to 55% of the notional cost of a university place. This increase in fees was the result of changes in the way the government and education sector viewed the provision of education to overseas students in Australia. In 1984, two significant reports, the Goldring report and the Jackson report, provided opposing views to the future of international education in Australia. The Jackson report opened the initial discussion into the provision of education to overseas students as an 'export industry' for Australia, while the Goldring report opposed the market based approach to international education. (Universities Australia, 2009)

In 1985, the Australian government introduced an Overseas Student policy. This policy allowed education providers to enroll overseas students outside of the subsidized student quota, and charge full tuition fees. At this time, because of the students' change in 'status' many government concessions such as transport concessions previously available to international students were denied to the new full-fee paying international students. The provision of transport concessions to international students was then at the discretion of individual state governments. Some state governments continued to subsidise public transport for international students, while in Queensland the concession fare was reinstated after student and education provider pressure on the state government. Victorian and New South Wales governments have never reinstated transport concession for international students.

By 1997, the numbers of international students who studied in Australia on student visas had grown substantially, becoming an important source of income for all Australian universities. This was largely due to the many changes to federal government funding to universities and education policy.

Following a major review and Industry Commission report in 1991 discussing the laws that governed the education of overseas students, the Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration of Providers



and Financial Regulation) Act [ESOS Act 1991] was introduced. The ESOS Act 1991 focused on the registration restrictions placed on education providers and tuition fee protection for overseas students. Alongside the ESOS Act 1991 was the introduction of the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students. Many other changes that occurred throughout the 1990s were a result of this report's recommendations for further review and investigation.

The welfare of international students was not considered in the ESOS Act 1991, nor did it provide any regulation regarding the monitoring of students' compliance with visa conditions, such as attendance which was at the time the only education-related visa condition. In comparison, students were limited to working 20 hours per week and monitoring of this restriction was based on an education provider's notification to the immigration department that students had not been attending, thereby implying that they must be working. Academic progress was not deemed a measure of student genuineness.

In 2000, the federal government again reviewed overseas student legislation. And abolished the ESOS 1991 Act and replaced it with the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act 2000).

The ESOS Act 2000 contained more provisions to require education providers to monitor and report international students for non-compliance of their visa conditions. The main addition to the ESOS Act 2000 was the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training.

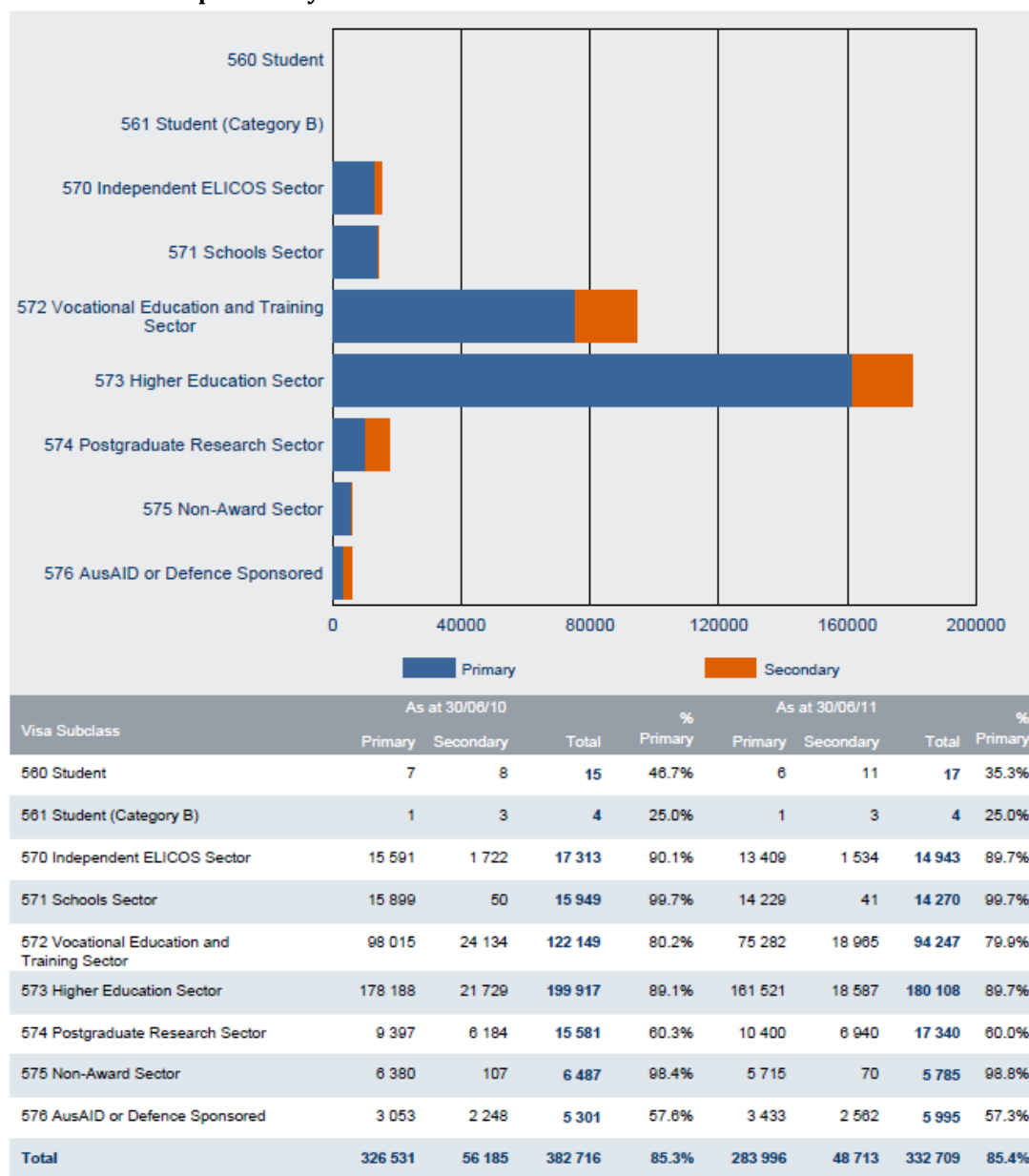
This code of practice's purpose was to provide national consistency in the provision of international education throughout Australia. Aspects of international education such as recruitment; education agents and specific staff for international students; grievance procedures; and student support were addressed for the first time in legislation and supporting documents.

In 2001, the immigration department made substantial changes to policy and legislation that contributed to the rapid growth in international student numbers over the following decade. A new student visa system was introduced which related a student's country of origin to their English language proficiency and the ability to meet living costs and tuition fees when assessing the students' eligibility for a student visa.

In addition to student visa changes, in 2001 the skilled migration program was changed to allow onshore visa applications for student visa-holders who completed their studies in Australian education institutions. Two visa subclasses were created for this purpose with the intention of attracting a new generation of skilled migrants to Australia to fill skilled worker shortages in many areas. The result was an almost overnight growth in international student enrolments in courses in both Information Technology and Accounting areas, as well as in the Vocational Education and Training sector; cookery; hospitality; and hairdressing courses.

Throughout the past decade, the international student numbers have grown substantially, reaching a peak in 2009 of over 600,000 international student enrolments. In 2011, according to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) there were over 300,000 international students studying in Australia on student visas and the equivalent enrolment figure at that time was 484,000 (see 'Visa holders in Australia' table).

Table 1. Number of student visa holders in Australia as at 30 June 2011 by visa subclass comparison with the same date in the previous year



Note: Subclass 560 - was omitted from the *Migration Regulations 1994* with effect from 1 July 2001.

Subclass 561 (Student - Category B) - since 1 September 1994, has not been specified under the *Migration Regulations 1994*.

Source: Student visa program quarterly report – June 2011, DIAC BR0097

Since 2009, the international education sector has come under much scrutiny in Australia through a large number of reviews at the parliamentary and departmental levels of state and federal governments. Throughout Australia, but primarily in Victoria, students have faced a range of problems in relation to most aspects of their stay in Australia, ranging from education provision, language problems and immigration status to social inclusion, finance, employment, accommodation and personal safety. A measure of international student satisfaction by Australian Education International (AEI) research in 2009 reflected as many as one in ten students not being satisfied with the opportunities for social



engagement, adequate housing and suitable employment. State governments and many local government areas have faced challenges because of the rapid growth of the international student population. At local government level, the challenges are related to the provision, resourcing, scope and access to a large range of services and programs that have traditionally not been accessed by international students (such as welfare agencies, community programs and rooming houses).

As student visa-holders in Australia, international students are required to meet and comply with certain visa conditions. These include academic progress, attendance, medical and employment conditions. The visa conditions provide education providers with guidelines under which they are able to determine the genuineness of a student, in relation to their academic performance and attendance. As outlined earlier, reporting of non-compliance of these conditions is a requirement under the ESOS Act 2000. International students are also required to purchase specialized medical insurance (overseas student health cover) which provides cover for all medical entitlements that residents are provided with under the Medicare system. The student must have this cover for the full length of their student visa and it must be purchased at the time of paying their initial enrolment tuition fees. Lastly, most international students are restricted to working a maximum of 20 hours per week during their prescribed semester dates. This requirement has been the subject of discussion in recent reviews by the Department of Immigration into the student visa program as well as the Senate Inquiry into The Welfare of international Students by the Senate of the Australian Parliament in 2010. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this restriction may contribute to international students' vulnerability to exploitation in the workplace as well as accommodation in some instances.

3. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS STATISTICS

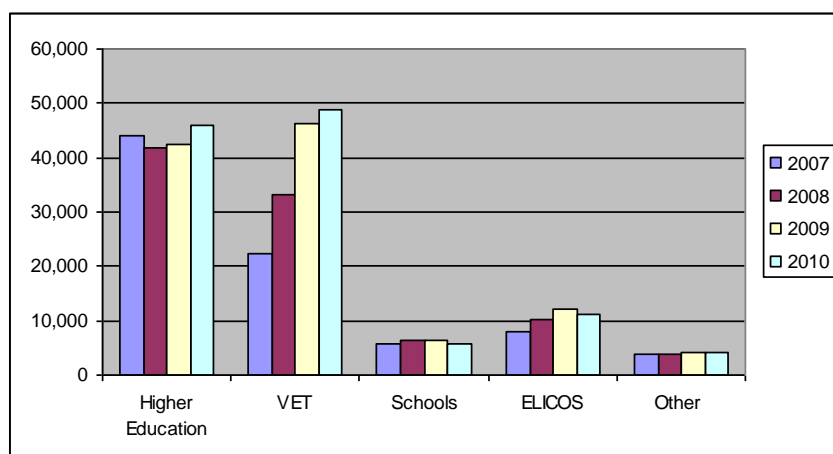
Number of Students

To begin the discussion on the City of Melbourne's role in the provision of services and support of international students, it is vital that there is clear and consistent understanding of how many international students are living or studying in the City of Melbourne; where these students come from; their ages; and where they are studying. Recent data collated by the City of Melbourne from a number of sources suggests that there have been large changes in the international student population over the past 10 years and the impact of this change on the broader community, housing, retail and education sector has been significant.

Across Australia, the international education sector has experienced substantial growth, with student numbers increasing quickly, particularly in the tertiary sector. Initially the fastest growth was in the higher education sector between 2002 and 2006, where the growth in international student enrolments in Australia was 48.7% over that five-year period. From 2004, the vocational education sector began to more aggressively market to and recruit international students, and there was 47% growth between 2004 and 2006 compared with 1.7% growth between 2002 and 2004. Between 2006 and 2010, enrolments in the Vocational Education and Training sector grew by 205% compared with the higher education sector growth of a stable yet still high 30% (AEI 2012). In Victoria, the main period of growth was between 2008 and 2009 when the number of international students increased from 160,000 to 190,000 students. The large majority of new students were enrolling in the Vocational Education and Training sector across both private and public education providers.



Table 2: International student enrolments by sector in Victoria, Feb 2007-2010



(source: Victorian Government - Department of Business and Innovation)

Table 3: International student enrolments by nationality in Victoria

Nationality	YTD Feb 2010	% share	% growth over YTD Feb 2009
China	31,911	27%	16%
India	30,340	26%	-5%
Viet Nam	6,982	6%	26%
Malaysia	6,146	5%	1%
Sri Lanka	3,915	3%	-9%
Indonesia	3,867	3%	4%
South Korea	3,599	3%	-3%
Nepal	2,889	2%	12%
Thailand	2,679	2%	5%
Singapore	2,291	2%	5%
Pakistan	2,047	2%	0.4%
Other Countries	19,682	17%	
Grand Total	116,348	100%	

- Students from 158 countries were enrolled in courses in Victoria
- China and India were the largest markets by enrolment, accounting for more than half of all enrolments in Victoria

(source: Victorian Government - Department of Business and Innovation)

In Australia, over one decade, international education went from being the tenth largest export market in 2000 worth \$3.7 billion (Auditor General Victoria 2002) to the third largest in 2009 with a worth of \$18.7 billion. In 2010, international education remained as the third largest export, despite the fact that the revenue had dropped back to \$16 billion. The economic contribution of international education to Victoria in 2008 was \$4.9 billion, and by 2010 it had reached \$5.5 billion (AEI 2011), making it the largest export industry in Victoria.

In May 2012 there were approximately 92,000 international student enrolments in Victorian education institutions (AEI May 2012). Over half of the international student enrolments were in the higher education sector in the nine main universities. Half of these universities are also dual sector and enrol many of the Vocational Education and Training international students that make up almost another third



of the enrolments. Eight universities have some presence in the City of Melbourne and therefore impact on the number of people who both visit and reside in the city.

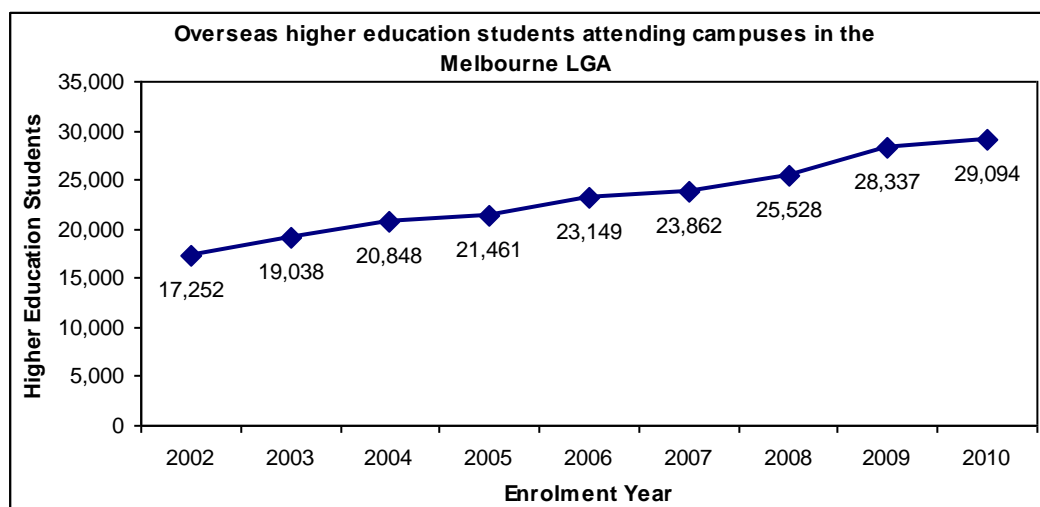
In 2010, there were almost 30,000 higher education international students attending campuses in the City of Melbourne. The overall number of international students studying in the city has grown by 65% since 2002, however the rate of growth has been steady, at approximately 10% per year throughout this time (see table below). The table shows that between 2002 and 2010, the percentage of higher education international students studying in the City of Melbourne, of the total number studying in Victoria, decreased by 2% from 43% to 41%. This table also shows that international students are more likely to be studying at campuses in the City of Melbourne than domestic students and are much less likely to be studying at regional Victorian campuses.

Table 4: Higher education students attending campuses in Victoria, by citizenship and campus location, 2002-2010					
Citizenship	Enrolment Year	Campus Location			All
		City of Melbourne	Metropolitan Melbourne	Regional Victoria	
Domestic Students	2002	29%	52%	18%	179,212
	2003	29%	53%	18%	180,205
	2004	30%	53%	17%	179,065
	2005	31%	52%	17%	178,627
	2006	31%	52%	16%	180,307
	2007	32%	53%	16%	184,520
	2008	32%	52%	16%	187,794
	2009	32%	53%	15%	195,445
	2010	31%	53%	15%	206,720
International Students	2002	43%	45%	13%	42,227
	2003	40%	48%	12%	48,705
	2004	43%	51%	6%	50,971
	2005	46%	50%	4%	50,873
	2006	47%	49%	4%	53,872
	2007	43%	53%	4%	59,949
	2008	42%	54%	4%	64,407
	2009	41%	56%	4%	71,927
	2010	41%	56%	3%	74,486

Source – City of Melbourne, Student and Education Profile of Melbourne LGA, 2012.



Figure 1 – Higher education international students attending campuses in the City of Melbourne



Source – City of Melbourne, Student and Education Profile of Melbourne LGA, 2012.

Table 5 provides the list of the top ten countries of origin of higher education international students in the City of Melbourne. Chinese students make up 29% of the international students studying in higher education institutions, with Indonesian, Malaysian and Indian students making up a further 29% of students. This list of countries of birth is similar to the whole-of-Victoria list and also very similar to the full list of tertiary international students.

Table 5: International higher education students attending campuses in Melbourne LGA (local government area) by country of birth		
Country of Birth	Country	Percent
China (excludes SARs and Taiwan Province)	8,434	29%
Malaysia	3,448	12%
India	3,410	12%
Indonesia	1,533	5%
Singapore	1,446	5%
Viet Nam	1,067	4%
Hong Kong (SAR of China)	811	3%
Sri Lanka	707	2%
Thailand	619	2%
Korea, Republic of (South)	521	2%
All other countries	7,098	24%
Total	29,094	100%

Source – City of Melbourne, Student and Education Profile of Melbourne LGA, 2012.

The majority of the international students studying in the City of Melbourne are between the ages of 20 and 29, with a large proportion between 20 and 24 years old. The City of Melbourne Young People's Policy encompasses people up to and including 25 years of age, therefore the majority of international students in the City of Melbourne are within the scope of the current youth policy framework.



Table 6: Higher education international students attending campuses in Victoria, by level of age and campus location, 2010				
Age	Campus Location			All
	City of Melbourne	Metropolitan Melbourne	Regional Victoria	
under 20	20,018	37,659	7,265	64,942
20-24	41,670	69,631	11,735	123,036
25-29	15,088	18,898	4,852	38,838
30-34	6,933	8,721	3,125	18,779
35-39	4,049	5,897	2,587	12,533
40-44	2,560	4,051	1,860	8,471
45-49	1,976	3,138	1,382	6,496
50-54	1,359	2,206	804	4,369
55-59	747	1,132	360	2,239
60 and over	np	np	214	1,482
Unknown	< 10	np	-	21
All	94,898	152,124	34,184	281,206
<i>Proportion of total</i>	34%	54%	12%	100%

Source – City of Melbourne, Student and Education Profile of Melbourne LGA, 2012.

Table 7: Tertiary international students attending campuses in Victoria, by level of age and campus location, 2010				
Age	Campus Location			All
	City of Melbourne	Metropolitan Melbourne	Regional Victoria	
under 20	4,615	5,735	146	10,496
20-24	17,103	23,934	1,091	42,128
25-29	5,732	6,239	507	12,478
30-34	1,405	1,674	167	3,246
35-39	490	683	82	1,255
40-44	131	225	34	390
45-49	44	86	17	147
50-54	np	14	< 5	32
55-59	6	5	-	11
60 and over	< 5	8	< 5	10
All	29,543	38,603	2,047	70,193
<i>Proportion of total</i>	42%	55%	3%	100%

Source –City of Melbourne, Student and Education Profile of Melbourne LGA, 2012

Only 34% of all higher education students study in the city, compared with 42% of international students. International students who do study in the city are normally studying a bachelor or postgraduate degree, with a very low proportion studying for non-award or other undergraduate qualification. (City of Melbourne 2012/2)

Table 8: Overseas students attending campuses in Victoria, by level of qualification and campus location, 2010				
Course Level	Campus Location			
	City of Melbourne	Metropolitan Melbourne	Regional Victoria	All
Postgraduate	11,609	12,499	774	24,882
Bachelor	16,334	20,788	1,051	38,173
Other Undergraduate	np	4,756	< 5	5,556
Enabling and Non-Award	np	560	np	1,582
All	29,543	38,603	2,047	70,193
<i>Proportion of total</i>	42%	55%	3%	100%

Source –City of Melbourne, Student and Education Profile of Melbourne LGA, 2012

The table below demonstrates that there are a large number of students overall enrolled at Victorian institutions, with a large proportion in campuses in metropolitan Melbourne. The proportion of international students enrolled in campuses in the metropolitan Melbourne is similar to the overall statistics, with a much lower percentage studying in regional Victorian campuses as shown in Table 10.

Table 9: Students enrolled at Victorian tertiary institutions, by enrolment location, 2010		
Enrolment location (Term Residence)	Higher Education	VET
City of Melbourne	31,221	98,330
Metropolitan Melbourne	185,833	272,475
Regional Victoria	31,640	161,403
Interstate	12,864	246
Overseas	5,601	-
Not known	-	399
All	267,159	532,853

Source –City of Melbourne, Student and Education Profile of Melbourne LGA, 2012

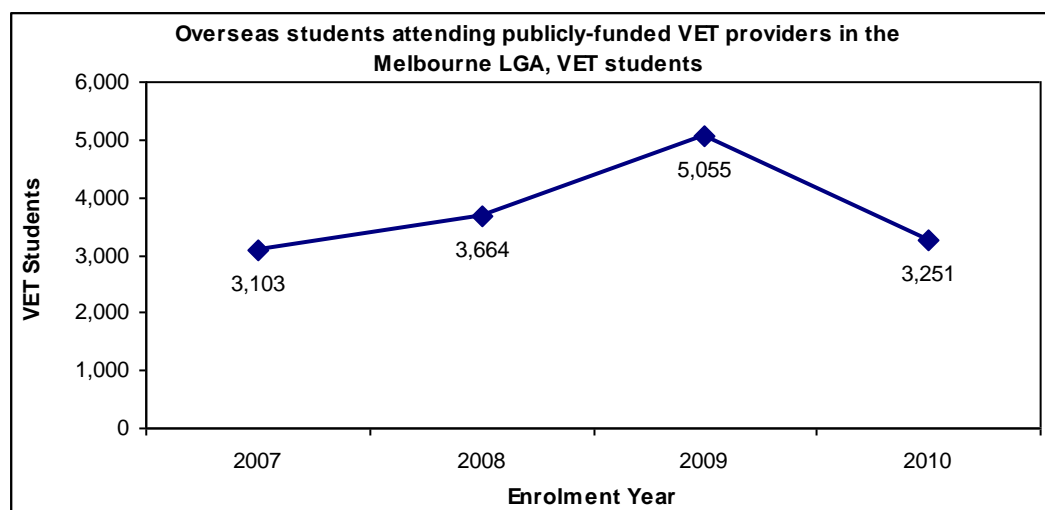
Table 10: International students enrolled at Victorian tertiary institutions, by enrolment location, 2010		
Enrolment location (Term Residence)	Higher Education	VET
City of Melbourne	18,097	3,251
Metropolitan Melbourne	44,515	14,561
Regional Victoria	2,132	639
Interstate	1,097	-
Overseas	4,277	-
All	70,118	18,451

Source –City of Melbourne, Student and Education Profile of Melbourne LGA, 2012



The chart below displays the quick increase and then decrease in international student enrolments at the publicly funded Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions in the City of Melbourne. This data may be compared with the Victorian data on the VET sector changes over the years 2007 to 2010 in Table 1.

Figure 2: International students attending publicly-funded VET providers in the City of Melbourne



Source –City of Melbourne, Student and Education Profile of Melbourne LGA, 2012

Tables 12, 13 and 14 provide statistics on the number of students residing in the city, studying in the city, or both. The separation between students living or studying is an important factor when considering many different research findings, particularly in relation to the cost of living; safety and transport options for students; and housing options that students are able to afford. In addition, it is also important for the City of Melbourne to understand the differences between programs offered to students who are not residing in the city in comparison to those who are. The next section discusses in more detail the difference between students who live in the city and those who live in metropolitan Melbourne, and how the residential location affects the likelihood of students participating in free events and community activities; use of services; and the likelihood of a student having Australian friends or meeting an Australian family.

Table 11: International higher education students attending campuses in Melbourne LGA &/or living in Melbourne LGA, 2010	
Category	Higher Education
Live and study in Melbourne LGA	13,947
Live in Melbourne LGA, study elsewhere	4,857
Study in Melbourne LGA, live elsewhere (in Victoria)	15,147
All	33,951

Source –City of Melbourne, Student and Education Profile of Melbourne LGA, 2012

The table above highlights the low proportion of students who live in the city and then commute out to metropolitan Melbourne to their education institution. This is in comparison to the other way around, where a similar number live and study in the city, or live outside of metropolitan Melbourne and study in the city. Domestic students are much less likely to study or live in the city than international students,



when you compare this with the overall number of domestic students in higher education in Victoria. Almost half of the international students in Victoria were either living or studying in metropolitan Melbourne, whereas less than one third of domestic students enrolled in Victorian institutions were living or studying in the metropolitan Melbourne.

Table 12: Students (by citizenship) attending campuses in Melbourne LGA &/or living in Melbourne LGA, 2010		
Citizenship	Higher Education	VET
Domestic Students	66,574	95,079
Overseas Students	33,951	3,251
All	100,525	98,330

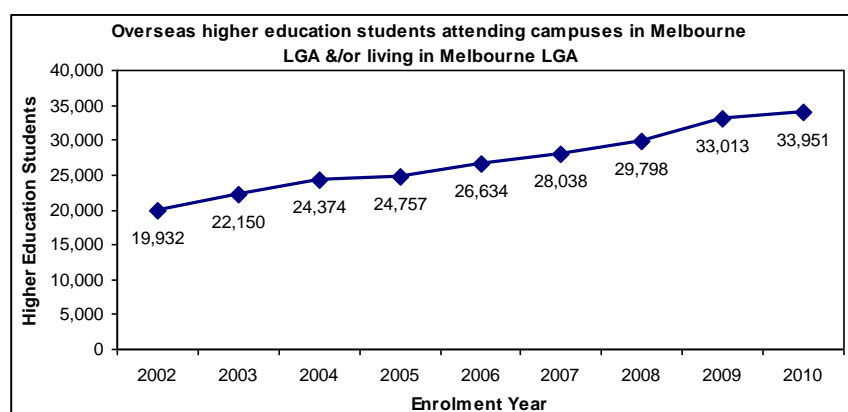
Source –City of Melbourne, Student and Education Profile of Melbourne LGA, 2012

Table 13: Students attending campuses in Melbourne LGA &/or living in Melbourne LGA, 2010		
Category	Higher Education	VET
Live and study in Melbourne LGA	22,827	3,496
Live in Melbourne LGA, study elsewhere	9,643	3,847
Study in Melbourne LGA, live elsewhere (in Victoria)	68,055	82,506
All	100,525	89,849

Source –City of Melbourne, Student and Education Profile of Melbourne LGA, 2012

When the statistics on the overall students are broken down into the number that live only in the city or study and live in the city, it is interesting to see that the large majority of students in higher education and VET live elsewhere, and study in the city. In Table 12, however, we can see that international students are far more likely to live and study in the city than local students. The majority of local students live outside of metropolitan Melbourne. The chart below provides us with information on the steady growth in numbers of international students living or studying in the City of Melbourne. Over the past decade there has been a 50% increase in students in the city. The impact of this growth on changes to the city's cultural diversity, as well as retail and residential growth, will be discussed in the next section.

Figure 3: Higher education international students attending campuses &/or living in City of Melbourne



Source –City of Melbourne, Student and Education Profile of Melbourne LGA, 2012



The education sector and employment

The knowledge sector is made up of finance and business services; information and communication technology; life sciences and health; creative industries; higher education; and advanced manufacturing. Table 16 illustrates how employment has grown in higher education, in comparison to other areas of the knowledge sector. Interestingly, the growth in the strongest industries aligns closely with the courses and skilled migration outcomes for many students during the past five to ten years.

The higher education sector makes up a large proportion of the workforce and is proportionate in the City of Melbourne to the rest of the state, being the seventh largest employing sector in City of Melbourne and sixth largest in Victoria. Employees in higher education make up 8% of the Victorian labour force and 6% of the City of Melbourne labour force.

In total, higher education providers employed 23,555 people in 2010, up from 15,443 in 2002, and were the seventh largest employer in the City of Melbourne as illustrated in Table 17 (City of Melbourne 2012/3)

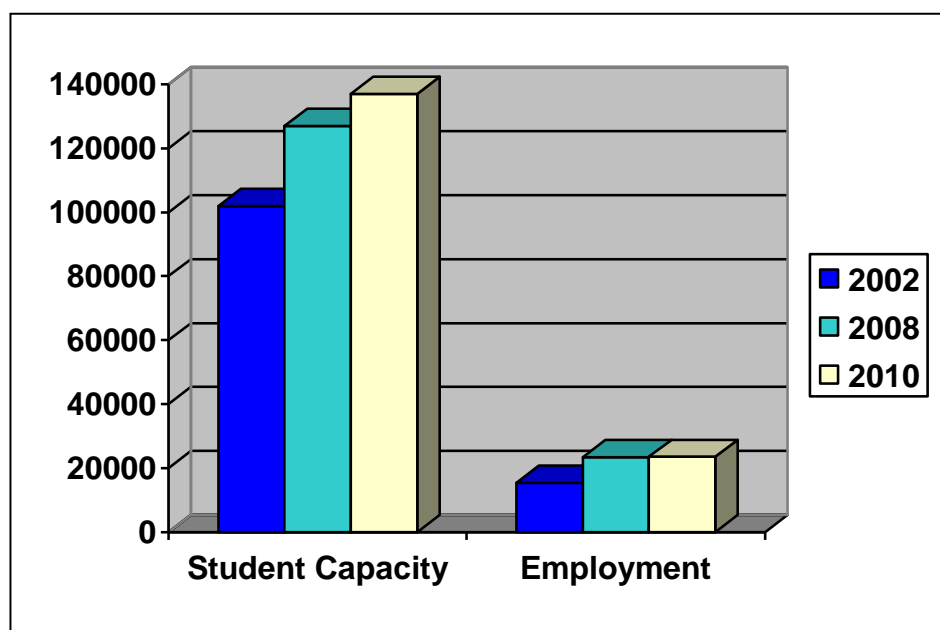
Table 15 : Knowledge sector employment change in Melbourne's CBD			
SECTOR	1992	2006	% CHANGE
Finance and business services	45,516	79,609	+75%
Information and communication technologies	9,322	21,402	+130%
Life sciences and health	2,547	185	-93% (*)
Creative industries	4,295	7785	+81%
Higher education	4,072	9194	+126%
Advanced manufacturing	317	180	-57%
TOTALS	65,211	112,594	+73%
(*) The suburbanisation of several major hospitals from the CBD may explain this.			
Source: City of Melbourne, Census of Land Use and Employment, 1992 and 2006			

In 2008, the higher education sector contributed approximately \$2 billion to the economy of the City of Melbourne, a figure that has doubled since 2001. It is estimated that at least 25% of this figure is contributed by international students to the education sector.

The City of Melbourne Census of Land Use and Employment (CLUE) survey data provides valuable information about the changes to capacity and employment in the education providers, as well as housing providers in the city. The data has been collected since 2002 and was last collated in 2010. In 2002, there were 148 education providers and in 2010 this had grown substantially to 329. The capacity of students in the education providers in the City of Melbourne grew by almost 20,000 students, from 115,000 students to 137,000 students. This may be in part due to the growth in the number of smaller more specialized registered training operators. (City of Melbourne, 2010/3)



Table 16: Education providers in City of Melbourne – student capacity and employment 2002 - 2010



Source- CLUE data 2002 – 2010.

In the City of Melbourne, students comprise 48% of the residential population. As we demonstrated in Table 12 above, in 2010 there were 33,951 international students living or studying in the City of Melbourne. There were over 18,000 higher education international students residing in the City of Melbourne and the large majority of these students were aged under 25 years and studying either postgraduate or undergraduate bachelor degrees.

Table 17 International students attending campuses in Victoria by course level and residential location, 2010					
Course Level	Term Address Location				All
	City of Melbourne	Metropolitan Melbourne	Regional Victoria	Interstate	
Postgraduate	5,436	18,228	793	425	24,882
Bachelor	11,908	24,551	1,065	649	38,173
Other Undergraduate	861	4,548	127	20	5,556
Enabling and Non-Award	599	745	178	60	1,582
All	18,804	48,072	2,163	1,154	70,193
<i>Proportion of total</i>	27%	68%	3%	2%	100%

Source –City of Melbourne, Student and Education Profile of Melbourne LGA, 2012



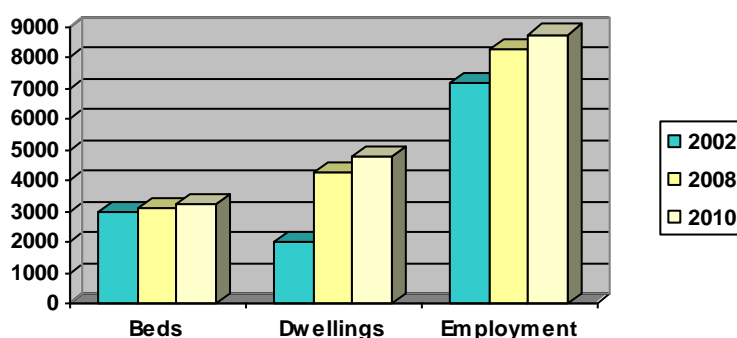
Table 18: Overseas students attending campuses in Victoria, by level of age and residential location, 2010

Age	Term Address Location				All
	City of Melbourne	Metropolitan Melbourne	Regional Victoria	Interstate	
under 20	3,822	6,328	268	78	10,496
20-24	11,528	28,763	1,198	639	42,128
25-29	2,638	9,144	447	249	12,478
30-34	573	2,452	128	93	3,246
35-39	168	960	78	49	1,255
40-44	50	286	31	23	390
45-49	15	102	9	21	147
50-54	6	22	< 5	< 5	32
55-59	< 5	7	-	< 5	11
60 and over	< 5	8	< 5	-	10
All	18,804	48,072	2,163	1,154	70,193
<i>Proportion of total</i>	27%	<i>68%</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>100%</i>

Source – City of Melbourne, Student and Education Profile of Melbourne LGA, 2012

We discuss student accommodation and the problems faced by students in more detail in Section 4, however, in line with the research findings, the majority of students live in private rental accommodation. The data in Table 20 below suggests that there has not been a large amount of growth in the number of beds in the student accommodation facilities, as the number of beds has increased from 2972 in 2002 to 3226 in 2010. In comparison, the number of student apartments in the private rental market has risen significantly from 2050 in 2002 to 4785 dwellings in 2010. These dwellings increased by 133.4% from 2002 to 2010 and were the fastest growing residential dwelling in the municipality. In line with this finding, employment in student accommodation has also increased from 7194 to 8746.

Table 19: Growth in student accommodation beds, student apartment dwellings and employment in accommodation facilities, 2002, 2008 and 2010.



Source – CLUE data, 2002 - 2010

Due to the growing number of students, the growth of the housing sector and current research that has been undertaken investigating the types of accommodation students live in across the City of Melbourne, the Melbourne Planning Scheme was amended in 2011 to include a Student Housing Policy. Since 1999, the City of Melbourne has had a Student Housing Development and Management Control Guidelines. These guidelines, developed over ten years ago, did not take into consideration the issues students face



with affording accommodation and connecting to the resident population; the large growth in students numbers, in particular international students; and the importance of the student housing on the quality of students life in the city.

The Transnational and Temporary Report (Fincher et al, 2009) highlighted that existing student housing provided insufficient opportunities for social engagement and contributed to the social integration experienced by international students. The report recommended more affordable student housing with designs that encouraged social interaction, cultural diversity, and internal and external interaction.

Essentially, the introduction of the Student Housing Policy recognises the importance of education institutions and the need for housing to support the numbers of students choosing to study and live in the City of Melbourne, and that the demand for this type of accommodation will be ongoing. The policy recognises that student accommodation facilities need to support and consider student wellbeing and welfare, and enhance students' social inclusion opportunities through design and location, amongst other factors. The quality of life of students living in the city is important to the City of Melbourne and this policy seeks to 'encourage purpose built student housing that is well designed, affordable and meets the practical requirements of students.'

The policy addresses the social interaction of student tenants, by requiring shared common spaces (both indoor and outdoor) while also respecting tenants' privacy. For existing buildings being converted, the communal space is of particular consideration in planning application assessment. In addition, students' room sizes, bathroom, ensuite and cooking facilities are all considered in relation to the shared common space requirements. Other aspects of the policy relate to environmental considerations such as promoting more bike usage, less car parking spaces, and more efficient waste management and energy use. (City of Melbourne 2011/2)

Retail strategy

Developed in 2006, the Melbourne Retail Strategy is evaluated each year to ensure it meets its key objectives. The strategy was developed in partnership with the state government.

In relation to education and international education, the strategy recognised value in:

- forging links with education providers to encourage new fashion designers to the city
- assessing and reinvigorating specific cultural precincts, such as Chinatown and Lygon Street
- highlighting the multicultural face of Melbourne
- increasing homeware and other retail outlets to meet needs of the increasing number of residents in the city.

According to the CLUE data, employment in retail, restaurants and fast food outlets has grown substantially from 2002 to 2010. Employment in retail grew from 16,912 to 21,158, and employment in food and beverage services grew from 17,061 to 24,571. This is important because many international students are employed in these workplaces and research findings in the following section suggest that student report employment as one of their key issues. (City of Melbourne 2010/3)



4. CITY OF MELBOURNE - RESEARCH AND REPORTS

As outlined in the previous section, between 2002 and 2010, the international student population in Melbourne increased at a rapid rate and the City of Melbourne was impacted in a number of ways. There was a change in the profile, eating and shopping habits of the residents and visitors. Following this, the number of reports of problems for international students in relation to personal safety was steadily increasing. During this time and up until 2009, the City of Melbourne participated and initiated a number of forums including one with the University of Melbourne, addressing the welfare and safety of international students in Melbourne. In 2004, discussions began through a forum that discussed safety issues in the City of Melbourne. From the initial forum, a bi-monthly meeting called the Melbourne City Student Safety Committee was formed for local government, education providers, police, student accommodation providers and student representative organisations to discuss and report the safety concerns of international students in the City of Melbourne. This committee discovered that the underlying reasons for many of the safety concerns of international students were not always because the students were living or traveling in an unsafe city, but rather were socially isolated and disconnected; financially insecure; or lacking important information about housing and transport, and therefore placed themselves in unsafe and insecure situations to survive. In addition, the committee found that students' perceptions and experiences of police, immigration officers and other agencies were often very poor, and at times based on incorrect or ill-informed notions.

In 2005, the City of Melbourne adopted a holistic approach and the first Lord Mayor's Welcome event was held in 2006. A letter of welcome from the Lord Mayor was distributed across the city's education providers to international students. The City of Melbourne became involved in a number of other initiatives via funding grants. These included the Transnational and Temporary Report, Victoria Police crime prevention campaigns, and community radio programs for culturally diverse groups where safety issues for young people were discussed. In 2007, an international student guide called 'Discover Melbourne Guide' was developed in partnership with the state government. From 2008 onwards, this became a City of Melbourne publication along with other safety information brochures, and the City of Melbourne also became involved in activities created within the city to engage international students in the community, such as GloBALL, a program designed to give international students hands on experience learning about AFL in Melbourne. The program provides students connections with a football club, and experiences such as banner making, clinics, and meeting football players.

In 2006, the first international student survey by the City of Melbourne was conducted. The aim of this survey was to further understand and document the perspective of the international student in relation to their experiences of living and studying in the City of Melbourne in the following six areas: (demographic information) about the student; students' wellbeing; social engagement and community participation; making a choice about where to study; rating Melbourne as a place to study and live; and factors influencing the decision to stay in Melbourne. The survey provided evidence to assist the City of Melbourne in ascertaining international students' level of use of City of Melbourne services, and then determining the programs and resources required to meet the needs of international students in the City of Melbourne.

Of the 1500 participants in the 2006 survey, 90% were attending the same university in the city. The survey was repeated in 2008 and 2010. In 2008, there were almost 1700 participants representing 21 tertiary education providers overall, although 70% were from RMIT, Monash and Melbourne universities



combined. In 2010 there were fewer participants (780) and of these 50% were attending the three main universities.

In all three surveys, there were more female respondents than male, and approximately 78% of the participants were between the ages of 21 and 26 years old. In 2010, the respondents overall were older than the 2008 and 2006 respondents, with a larger number over 26 years of age. From 2008 to 2010 the number of participants who lived in the City of Melbourne increased and the number of students who were employed in part time work decreased, although the spread of hours they typically worked remained the same. There were significantly more students with no family in Melbourne, 63% in 2010 and 55% in 2008. Family members were normally brothers, sisters or cousins. A large majority of students in all surveys were living in private rental accommodation – over 60% in 2008 and almost 70% in 2010. Relatively few students chose other housing options in comparison to the private rental option, and the other main types of accommodation comprised off campus student accommodation (5.5%), on campus student accommodation (3.8%), in a relatives' home (7.6%) and rooming houses (2.7). 3.2% reported owning their own home, and a small number reported living in their partner's home.

The surveys began by rating students' levels of happiness at the time of being surveyed. Overall, in both 2008 and 2010, students reported being happy or very happy, however, students were slightly less happy in 2010 than in 2008.

Students have been progressively less satisfied with all aspects of living and studying in Melbourne since 2006. When asked to rate living and studying in Melbourne, the aspects that students rated least were cost of living, accommodation and public transport, as well as availability of accommodation and employment. The diversity of food outlets, restaurants, cafes, cultural diversity, entertainment and free things to do were the aspects students were most satisfied with. In 2008, students were dissatisfied with the cost and quality of public transport, and in 2010 the main focus of students' dissatisfaction had broadened to include most of the main cost of living items - accommodation, tuition fees, goods and services and public transport.

There were a number of key themes in the surveys that attracted comments by students and the level of importance of these themes changed in each survey. These will be discussed individually below as they appeared in the 2008 and 2010 survey reports, however, it is prudent to acknowledge that the themes are closely linked to each other and changes by government or education providers to policy, legislation or services may impact on more than one theme. In addition to discussing the survey results below, findings in research commissioned by the City of Melbourne in 2011 and 2012 will be discussed where this is relevant in relation to the key themes identified in the survey reports.

Public transport

In the 2008 survey, public transport was the leading concern of participants. In both 2008 and 2010, students discussed their dissatisfaction with the cost of public transport and their ineligibility for public transport concession. In addition to the cost of public transport, many students discussed their concerns about the safety and quality of the public transport system. A significant proportion (34%) of the comments from students about feeling unsafe were because of incidents they had either witnessed or experienced on public transport or at transport stations/stops. In many cases the incidents involved persons who were intoxicated. Data released by Victoria Police in 2007 suggested that crime involving intra-personal violence and anti-social behaviour has risen between 2001 and 2007. (Data quoted in City of Melbourne's Policy for the 24 Hour City, 2010). The findings in both 2008 and 2010 City of Melbourne



surveys suggest that improving the cost of and safety on public transport would significantly increase students' overall satisfaction with living and studying in Melbourne. In the City of Melbourne Young People's Policy, the City of Melbourne committed to advocating for improvements to late night public transport services, and developing and supporting early initiatives in relation to antisocial behaviour and drug and alcohol misuse, well as information and resources about safety in the city. There has been a plethora of work by the City of Melbourne for international students and the general population to address safety, including information brochures, an international student drop-in centre and drug and alcohol-free activities for young people. Recent work by the Salvation Army has included introducing an additional element to the City of Melbourne's Youth Street Teams program to include teams in train stations and on trains 'to create a positive presence on trains and at train stations, improving the perception of public safety and responding to the needs of the public. The train teams will particularly focus on connecting with vulnerable, intoxicated and disadvantaged people using the rail network, assisting them to find safe solutions home, working closely with Youth Street Teams and the Safe Exits Program to deliver a coordinated support system for people.' (Salvation Army 2012)

Cost of living and access to accommodation

Students in 2008 reported that they were dissatisfied with both access to accommodation and the cost of accommodation. In 2010, students reported spending more money on accommodation than in 2008. In addition, only 43% of the student participants accessed the accommodation services that were available to them at their education provider. This finding suggests that there may have been a need to improve information for students about where to find accommodation services. In 2010, students were less satisfied with the overall cost of living, which was notably attributable to the global financial situation, and the value of the Australian dollar. Many students entered Australia prior to the changes in the Australian dollar value and exchange rates, and students have faced increasing challenges as global financial situations have changed. The survey findings suggest that there is an ongoing need to support students to meet their cost of living. Students who are not able to meet basic cost of living expenses are far more likely to be vulnerable to homelessness, exploitation in workplaces and other social problems, such as problem gambling and crime. The survey found that financial constraints impacted on students' participation in many activities outside of their academic requirements. The 2010 survey findings also suggest one of the key reasons students would not recommend studying in Melbourne is because of the high cost of living. (City of Melbourne 2010)

In 2012 research commissioned by the City of Melbourne investigating the needs and characteristics of rooming house residents in the City of Melbourne revealed a significant proportion (29%) of the residents surveyed and interviewed are international students. (City of Melbourne 2012) The cultural definition of homelessness developed by Chamberlain Mackenzie in 1992 was applied in this research report and found that the international students living in rooming houses can be defined as being in 'tertiary homelessness' - 'people in marginal accommodation, who live in single rooms in private boarding or rooming houses, without their own bathroom, kitchen or security of tenure, on a medium to long term basis.' (City of Melbourne 2012)

International students in this research were usually residing in rooming houses owned by companies or individuals in Carlton and Melbourne, rather than not-for-profit establishments, and were aged between 15 and 29 years old. The top five countries represented were China, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Indonesia. The students were mainly reliant on parental income to meet living expenses, however, 32% were in paid part-time employment with a further 20% seeking part-time employment. Of the 32% in work, 11% regarded their paid work as their main source of income. The cost of the rooming house



accommodation varied greatly between the rooming houses, and the rent in rooming houses owned by companies was higher than in not-for-profit or privately-owned rooming houses. The maximum amount a student paid (for rent only) was \$428 per week and the minimum was \$80 per week. The average amount students paid in rent per week in was \$260. The residents of rooming houses who were not students were paying less on average per week, \$152. (City of Melbourne 2012)

The housing history of international students indicates that the choice to stay in the rooming house was not one made through lack of other options, but rather, that this was their choice of accommodation. The students had usually lived either with friends or relatives prior to living in the rooming house, very few had lived in other rooming houses, and one had been in a refugee detention centre. The majority of the students had lived in the rooming house for less than one year, had lived in less than five places in the last ten years and had only lived in one rooming house in the past 10 years. Concern is expressed in the report in relation to international students residing for long periods of time without tenure or housing security and in rooming houses that accommodate people with complex needs and long term homeless people. The report suggests that this group of international students may be at risk of homelessness, and recommended that work is undertaken to document and analyse the pathways into homelessness for international students in order to determine appropriate intervention strategies. (City of Melbourne 2012)

In 2011, the City of Melbourne commissioned a report to investigate the extent and nature of international students' hardship in the City of Melbourne. Through in-depth interviews with students and welfare support agencies, the inquiry found that the majority of agencies had either had direct contact or heard of international students who were in *primary* and *secondary* homelessness as well as *tertiary* homelessness. (see definitions, page 26 and page 32) They reported students living in overcrowded housing, experiencing sudden evictions, or living in transitory accommodation, such as couch surfing, or keeping belongings at friends' accommodation and sleeping on trains between work and study. The agencies suggest that these forms of insecure and tenuous housing arrangements are most likely to develop into primary homelessness, which is long term. The research found that students who face crises are more likely to experience short-term homelessness and are more likely to be vulnerable to exploitation when their access to information about tenancy rights and obligations is poor. The research discussed the existence of a small number of students in extreme situations of hardship and desperation in finding suitable accommodation being vulnerable to exploitation. (City of Melbourne 2011)

Acceptance of other cultures, religions and languages – international students feeling welcome.

In 2008 the City of Melbourne student survey found that the way students perceived their status in Melbourne was at an all-time low. Students commented on their experience with racial discrimination and the need for greater acceptance of cultural diversity. African students (25%) were least likely to feel that cultural diversity is accepted in Melbourne and felt that there was little tolerance in Australia of cultural diversity. Between 10 and 20% of the students from other regional backgrounds felt the same. (City of Melbourne 2008) Overall, students' perceptions of the way people who live in Melbourne accept cultural diversity have not improved since 2008. At that time, 87% of all students believed Melbourne to be accepting of people from other cultures, although this dropped to 81% in 2010. Similarly, the survey asked students if they thought people in Melbourne are accepting of people from other religions. In 2008 91% said yes, while in 2010, this reduced to 87%. (City of Melbourne 2008, 2010)



In 2010, when asked about reasons for feeling safe or unsafe in Melbourne, students emphasized experiences of discrimination more than in 2008; in particular, comments about religion, language and cultural background. When asked about factors that influence recommending Melbourne as a place to live and study, discrimination and racism were discussed in 13% of the comments. Students felt excluded and attributed their racial or cultural background to the lack of social interaction with the local community. (City of Melbourne 2010)

Personal safety and perceptions of feeling safe

In 2008, the survey asked students when they felt most and least safe, and the perceptions of safety expressed by the survey participants were dependent upon their own experiences and observations. Most students felt safest during the day, on their institution campuses and in the city. Students felt least safe after dark, on public transport and in the city. Generally, the less time students had spent in Australia, the less safe they felt. Overall, students from East Asia (China) and SE Asia (Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam) felt less safe than students from India and other regions. However, students from India felt safe as infrequently as these students after dark in the city, on campus and on public transport. (City of Melbourne 2008) In 2010, this had not changed significantly and students from Asian regions reported feeling much less safe after dark in all areas than students from other regions. The participants were asked to rate how safe they felt in different areas of Melbourne. Generally the South Eastern suburbs were perceived as safest, while the West and North West suburbs were least safe. In choosing a city in Australia to study, students under 20 and over 30 were influenced by the city's reputation as a safe place to live. (City of Melbourne 2010)

Over 40% of the students surveyed had experienced an incident in 2008 that made them feel unsafe, and of these approximately 40% provided comments on these incidents. In the comments, the students reported that they felt unsafe after dark when they witnessed substance abuse (44%) and intoxicated people displaying intimidating aggressive or unruly behavior on public transport or in public. 34% of the comments related to students observing or experiencing incidents on public transport or at transport stops or stations. In most instances where the comments related to physical assault, the students hadn't been a victim of physical assault but had witnessed, read or heard about one (20%). When they reported experiencing verbal assault it was most often related to ethnicity or cultural background and by intoxicated individuals (20%). A small number of students commented on being approached by beggars who were aggressive or forceful requesting money or cigarettes. (City of Melbourne 2008) Agencies interviewed in the City of Melbourne report into International Students at Risk in the City of Melbourne reported that all had worked with students who had been victims of crime against property (theft) and themselves (assault). Just under half of the agencies had worked with students who were victims of sexual crime. The remaining agencies knew of cases, but hadn't worked directly with the students. The report found that students who are homeless, isolated and financially insecure are more likely to be victims of crime, were less able to deal with the consequences of crime, and are vulnerable to resorting to petty crime. (City of Melbourne 2011)

In 2010 the survey results found that the reasons that students felt unsafe had changed slightly. Students were asked to select incidents they had experienced from a list, and 69% had experienced an incident that made them feel unsafe. Again, over 40% of those who had experienced an incident provided comment. The number of incidents discussing substance abuse decreased from 44% of comments to 34% and there was more emphasis on the way they were approached by beggars in the city, feeling afraid because the beggars were aggressive and verbally abusive. In 2010, 28% had experienced personal verbal abuse, harassment or intimidation on public transport or while walking, however in the



survey comments there was less emphasis on feeling unsafe on public transport and at stations or stops. Instead, the students commented significantly on their experiences of discrimination and in both surveys there were a number of students who reported having experienced verbal abuse that related to their cultural background. (City of Melbourne 2008, 2010)

Students in both surveys were asked to discuss if they reported the incidents. In 2008, 37% of students did not report incidents to anyone and in 2010 this increased to 73%. Students discussed reasons for not reporting in both surveys and in 2010 19% of the students commented on reasons for not reporting. The main reason was that they thought the incident was not serious enough (74%). 30% of the students said they would not report because they thought the police would not do anything, and 22% did not know how to report an incident. A small number commented that they didn't want the inconvenience or feared repercussions, such as migration problems. 13% of the comments were about the students' perception of police. Comments included remarks such as *unhelpful, ignore issues or reports, racist, corrupt*, and students were generally disappointed with the response they got from police. In both 2008 and 2010 incidents were usually reported to friends (approx 50%) and family (approx 30%). In 2008, only 20% said they would report an incident to police, in 2010 this increased to 60%. In 2008 the survey showed that approximately 63% of students would report an incident to someone, and students from East Asia (including China) were most likely to report an incident (75.6%) while students from the Americas were least likely (43.8%). (City of Melbourne 2008, 2010)

Access to employment (both part time and relevant to course of study)

The findings in both the 2008 and 2010 surveys clearly highlight the students' dissatisfaction with their ability to access employment. In many instances this is in regard to students' access to employment in their field of study, however, in 2010 in particular students reported being concerned about not being able to access part-time employment to meet their living costs. This is supported by the statistics in 2010 that revealed fewer students surveyed were in paid employment and those in employment were working fewer hours. Students in 2010 reported that they found it difficult to access information about employment, however, more students reported accessing employment services to find work, and were generally more satisfied with the assistance they were provided. (City of Melbourne 2010) In 2008 and 2010, students reported that gaining employment in their field of study was made more difficult because employers required students to have permanent residency status or Australian references, or insisted on paying lower wages. (City of Melbourne 2008, 2010)

Interaction with local students and social activities

In 2008 the survey asked limited questions about the participants' interactions with locals and social activities. 72% of students had met an Australian student, and 56% had experienced Australian culture. Only 35% had met an Australian family.

Students were asked about their participation in events and activities over the previous 12 months. There were 11 types of events and activities listed, and all had been attended by at least 4% of students. Between 18% and 32% of participants had attended 6 of the 11 activities. The most attended activity was markets (69%), 62% had attended a free event in the city and 37% attended a religious event. Less than 14% attended a community workshop or forum. 4% listed their own event, and these ranged from exhibitions to motor sports, marathons, festivals, shows (Melbourne Show, Melbourne Cup, Diwali, and other nationality festivals) and university-run events. Interestingly 25% had attended an event as a



volunteer. As the most highly-attended activities were free or low-cost to the students, this data provides evidence that cost is an incentive to participation and engagement. (City of Melbourne 2008)

Overall, comparatively slightly fewer students in 2010 had attended markets (59%) or free events in the city (58%), and the same percentage of students had met an Australian student, or experienced Australian culture. In 2010, the survey results provided more information about the relationship between participation in activities and where the student lives and studies. The survey found that students living in the city are more likely to have participated in any of the community activities, than students living outside the city, were more likely to have met an Australian student but less likely to have met an Australian family. (City of Melbourne 2010)

The 2010 survey included additional questions to obtain more detailed information about the students' social, community engagement, recreational activities and barriers to participation. Thirty activities were listed and of these 10 were participated in by more than 60% of the respondents. 20 activities were attended by less than 40% of the respondents. The students mostly participated in walking (48%), running (30%) and swimming (26%). Most students (55%) participated in the activities at their institution. Students also expressed interest in activities that they would like to participate in, but hadn't yet. The highest interest was in swimming (38%), dancing (36%) and martial arts (35%). (City of Melbourne 2010)

As discussed earlier, the activities that are most participated in are the ones that are free of charge to students and 50% of the comments obtained from students about barriers to participation confirmed that cost is the most frequent barrier, in relation to equipment and facility hire or classes. Nineteen percent also noted that time was a factor; 6% attributed paid work commitments; and 11% noted location or access to public transport as a barrier. 10% of students commented that they did not participate because they didn't have friends with whom to participate. Students were asked about the impact of language problems on their experiences in Melbourne. Less than 20% of respondents reported problems with language, and 17% of those that did report problems with language provided comments. In particular, the aspect mentioned in 36% of comments related to communication, engagement and interaction with the local community. Students suggested that the use of slang, jokes and idioms made it difficult to communicate, caused misunderstandings and that the language barrier made it hard to make friends with locals. (City of Melbourne 2010)

The 2010 survey also asked students about their awareness and use of public library services in the City of Melbourne. Eighty percent of students were aware of the libraries in the city; while 15% were unaware that access and use of these services were free of charge. 25% of survey participants had not visited any of the listed libraries in the City of Melbourne over the past 12 months. The State Library of Victoria was accessed by 63% of participants and 37% had accessed the Melbourne Library Service. In 2011, the City of Melbourne commissioned research to obtain a more in-depth understanding of international students' usage and needs as users of the State library of Victoria (SLV) and Melbourne Library Service (MLS). The report supported the survey findings that most students know of the libraries in the city but found that many were introduced to a library, in particular the Melbourne Library Service, by a friend. This report explored why international students use libraries, what they use them for, the services they access and knowledge of the services available in the library, and what services students would like to see introduced in the library.

The report found that the students mainly use the libraries for somewhere to study. The libraries generally provides students a sense of belonging to a community in a public place that is often separate



from the student world but helps to motivate students because although they are alone, they are often in areas where they are surrounded by other people studying. Many students commented that their accommodation did not provide adequate space, facilities (wifi) or a suitable environment for study and therefore they sought out libraries to study. Some students commented that they had no space to study in their school library, or that they lived a distance from their education providers and found the city libraries easier to access than their institution libraries. Importantly, students reported feeling safe inside the library, however some were far less trusting because they had experienced having possessions stolen in the library. (City of Melbourne 2011/3)

International students saw the State Library of Victoria as a quiet and private place to study with friends around them but rarely used the services available; very few had joined the library, accessed the book or reference collections or interacted with staff. In contrast, students who frequented the Melbourne Library Service used the space for study but also often accessed non-academic material such as DVDs books and comics in their first languages or in English or IELTS (International English language Testing System) material. Most students interviewed were members of the Melbourne Library Service but even so, were not aware of all of the resources. The report found that the students accessed either library with friends but do not see the library as a place to make new friends, nor do they attend library events. Melbourne Library Service users were more interested in making friends and finding employment than State Library of Victoria visitors. Most saw the social aspect of library use as merely a break to study or to study with fellow students. During the break time, however, the report found that students do engage in and appreciate the recreational and cultural resources available in both libraries. (City of Melbourne 2011/3)

A library's late opening hours and space they can eat, drink and study or relax in comfortable surrounds is attractive to students, particularly when they don't have active social lives. Interestingly, the final section of the report explored what else libraries could offer to meet international students' needs and suggestions for the Melbourne Library Service included:

- a space where visitors could watch the news on television and engage with English language newsreaders
- facilitated bookclubs for readers of books in languages other than English or in both English and languages other than English
- hosted information nights with speakers on topics of interest to international students

(City of Melbourne 2011/3)

The report highlighted a level of social isolation among the library users and the need for public libraries such as Melbourne Library Service to provide opportunities for different levels of engagement. International students are keen to engage on a social level rather than just use the library as a place to study and connect to the internet. (City of Melbourne 2011/2) In the 2011 report, International Students at Risk in the City of Melbourne, welfare agencies, police and the city library agreed that the library is accessed by students seeking warm and safe places to sleep during the day or access to low cost entertainment or activities in the city. Library staff are aware that there are students accessing the library who are sleeping rough and have responded by inquiring after the students' welfare and listening to their stories. (City of Melbourne 2011) In the library report, students spoke highly of the library staff



at the Melbourne Library Service, and comments described staff as good listeners, knowledgeable about everything, including international knowledge and cultural differences. (City of Melbourne 2011/2))

Gambling problems

The City of Melbourne surveys included questions about students gambling behavior. In 2008, 88% had not gambled in the previous twelve months and 93% of the students who reported gambling more than a few times in the past year did not experience any financial problems due to their gambling behaviour. The results that discussed gambling behaviour of international students were not significantly different in 2010 other than that 6% of respondents reported that gambling had caused some financial problems, while in 2008 there were none. When broken into demographic data, 11% of females and 6% of males reported financial problems caused by gambling. (City of Melbourne 2010)

The survey also found that while a very low proportion of international students accessed gambling support services, over 50% of those who did reported that the service did not meet their needs at all. Research and general awareness about international students and their vulnerability to problems associated with problem gambling has increased since 2010, with more programs and services being offered to students, both on and off campus. This will be discussed further on. In the report *International Students at Risk in the City of Melbourne*, both welfare support agencies and students discussed gambling as an issue of concern. Agencies noted that heavy gambling among some international students had led to some involvement in petty crime, and one student interviewed described his spate of visits to the casino in the hope that he could win back money to help find a place to live or send home to his family. (City of Melbourne 2011)

Access and use of services and information

Services and support

There were sixteen types of services listed in the 2008 survey. The most commonly accessed services were immigration, accommodation, general health services and employment services. Three quarters of the students surveyed had never accessed 12 of the 16 services listed in the survey. When the students were asked to rate whether the services they accessed met their needs, students rated seven services over 80% in meeting all or some of their needs. The highest rated services were counselling, general health and immigration services, followed by family support, sexual health, legal, migrant support and accommodation services. Employment services met students' needs only 70% of the time, which correlates with findings that students are least happy with the employment opportunities in Melbourne. (City of Melbourne 2008)

In 2010, the same four services were accessed most, however in 2010 accommodation and immigration services were accessed a little less frequently. The overall satisfaction with the standard of service has improved since 2008, but an in-depth look at the ratings describes the picture a little differently. Approximately 30% of students who accessed dental, general health and sexual health services reported the services met all of their needs. Between 50% and 60% of students who accessed sexual assault/domestic violence, gay/lesbian/queer support, gambling support or disability support services reported that the service did not meet their needs at all. While the results demonstrate an overall improvement on the ratings in 2008, the services that are utilized by extremely vulnerable students demonstrate a shortfall which leave students more at risk of discontinuing their education and vulnerable to homelessness, exploitation, and crime.



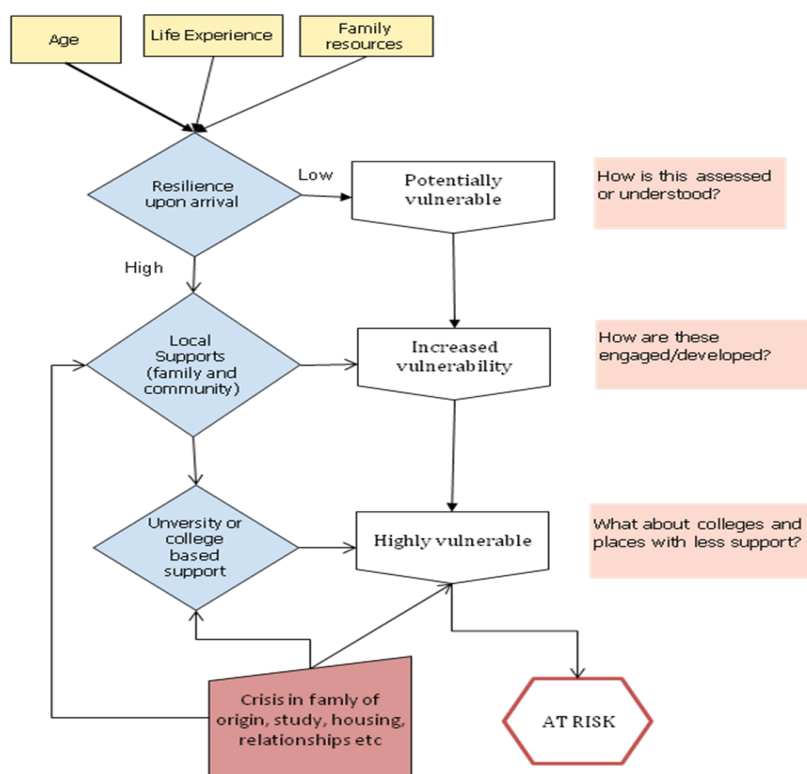
In 2011, the City of Melbourne investigated the nature and extent of hardship experienced by international students in the municipality. Most of the agencies interviewed in the report agreed that students experiencing extreme hardship and at risk of or experiencing homelessness, crime, or sexual exploitation were no longer accessing the usual student support services provided through education providers, but were accessing the generalist welfare support services, sometimes despite their ineligibility for these services due to visa status. The institution-based counselling services agreed that although they see many students experiencing difficulties, once they are in extreme hardship situations, they break contact with the institution and the support services available to them through their education provider. (City of Melbourne 2011)

The welfare agencies in the study expressed concern about the level of international students' knowledge about sexual health, contraception and pregnancy. (City of Melbourne 2011) Fortunately the services that are accessed by students for general health were reported in 2010 as meeting all of the students needs. The same cannot be said for the small number of students who may have sought assistance in dealing with domestic violence or sexual assault, as these services were reported in the 2010 survey as not meeting any of the students needs. (City of Melbourne 2010) Further investigation into why this is the case is crucial to ensuring the services and support are able to be resourced to adequately meet students' needs.

Overall most of the agencies involved in the 2011 study reported having direct experience with or knowing of students who are experiencing extreme hardship including '*primary homelessness*' – '*sleeping rough or in temporary or emergency housing*'; disassociation with their education providers and no longer studying; victims of crime (theft or assault); working in the sex industry or relying on sexual partners for accommodation; mental health problems; low or no income or support systems. The general welfare support services reported seeing international students every week, and that an increasing number are accessing these services. (City of Melbourne 2011)

The findings in the 2011 report highlight the factors that contribute to international students experiencing hardship. Isolation and disconnectedness are key factors that increase the vulnerability of students to being at risk of homelessness, crime and exploitation. Other factors include stress, lack of access to services, gambling, exploitation in the workplace, and migration or visa status uncertainty. In many cases, agencies found that the occurrence of a crisis such as an illness, death in the family or financial problems may have been at the beginning of the students' problems. Incidents or issues such as a job loss, lack of financial security, problems with study, loss of secure housing or a relationship breakdown are much less manageable as a result and contribute to students overall vulnerability. The report includes a model describing international students' vulnerability and resilience from which international opportunities and methods may be defined. (City of Melbourne 2011)

Figure 4: Model of risk and resilience for international students



The report suggested ways of preventing problems occurring and actions for the City of Melbourne. All included more collaboration and specialized services for international students.

Prevention:

- Employ resilience testing for newly arrived international students to gauge students' individual need for support.
- Utilize peer education programs that will assist in preventing social isolation and encourage connectedness and engagement with local communities. International students tend to look for anonymity when seeking counseling and assistance, more so when their problems are most complex. The report suggests providing peer support education to all students on how to help before problems become complex and students withdraw from education providers, family and friends.
- Provision of mental health training for staff who work with international student and student counselors. This will help staff identify students who are exhibiting signs of mental illness or experiencing extreme stress or anxiety and provide access to appropriate support.

The report suggested actions for the City of Melbourne:

- To convene a regular meeting for agencies who identify and provide support for students who are experiencing extreme hardship, to ensure support is coordinated between agencies.
- To advocate for reciprocal health care arrangements between Australia and other countries to allow for provision of a health care card or Medicare in cases where students are found to be in extreme hardship.



- To advocate for mental awareness programs for students and staff.
- To support gambling awareness and support programs to connect with student events.
- To provide co-ordination and partnership around agencies in relation to the welfare of international students.
- To highlight and encourage discussion of the issues at key forums.
- To discuss provision of support and some assistance to international students with migrant resource centres (who are experts in settlement work, but currently international students are outside of their responsibility).
- To utilise student leaders at the City of Melbourne to connect with students at risk of homelessness, financial problems, and exploitation or crime, in areas such as libraries, stations and services agencies. (City of Melbourne 2011)

Information provision:

In the survey in 2010, students were asked about the types of information they accessed. There were 12 types listed. Students were asked how they had accessed information. The most commonly and easily accessed information was about events, culture, arts and festivals, education and tourist destinations. The most difficult information students found to access was about employment. This corresponds with satisfaction levels with services on employment and the low satisfaction with the ease of obtaining employment.

The results also provided us with information about where students are accessing information while in Australia. Students used the internet as the main method to access most types of information. Word of mouth and education providers were also listed as the other main methods of obtaining information. The main method of accessing information depended on the type of information sought. For example, up to two thirds of students accessed information about employment, accommodation, arts and culture, events and festivals, public transport and tourist attractions via the internet. Students obtained information about night life and entertainment, safety, arts and culture, festivals and events and social networking more often by word of mouth. The education provider was a key source of information on education, health and wellbeing, safety and legal rights. (City of Melbourne 2010)

In 2010 students were dissatisfied with the information they had accessed. In particular, more than a quarter of students at this time felt that the information on accommodation (31%), legal rights (29%), opportunities for social networking (28%), public transport (26%) and safety (25%) were in need of some or a lot of improvement. The findings suggest that further research is required to investigate how information should be targeted and disseminated; in particular ways to ensure students are receiving information when and where they need it, how students are influenced and the trusted sources of information. (City of Melbourne 2010)



Immigration

The ability to stay in Australia after graduating has been a very important influential factor for students when deciding where they choose to study, and this has become more important since 2008, when it was rated about the fifth highest factor. The 2010 survey results indicate that early on in making the decision on where to study, the most influential factor for students was having a job opportunity after graduation. Males were more likely than females to be influenced in their decision to study in Melbourne by their ability to live in Australia after they have completed their courses, as were respondents under 26 years of age. (City of Melbourne 2010)

Between 2008 and 2010 there were significant changes to the immigration policy which impacted the way that students discussed and responded to the survey questions on post study immigration opportunities. In 2008, 62% intended to stay in Melbourne after graduating. Almost half (49%) of the respondents indicated that they would seek full time work to stay in Melbourne. A further 18% planned to enroll in another course of study in Melbourne and 21% planned to return to their home country. The decision for most students was influenced by their ability to find a job in the right field at the right level of salary. The ability to obtain permanent residency was also of high importance. The regions that students were from influenced their choice about what to do after they had completed their course. The first choice for students from Asian regions and Africa was to find a job in Melbourne. Students from the Americas and Europe were planning on returning to their home country. Their second choices were a little different, with students from East Asia, South Central Asia and Africa indicating they would enroll in further studies in Melbourne. European students indicated they would look for a job. Students from South East Asia would choose to return home.

Interestingly, students from all but the European region rated feeling safe as one of the top five factors that would influence their decision to stay in Melbourne. European students were more focused on having networks of friends and a friendly community.

In 2010, two thirds (69%) of the students surveyed intended to stay in Melbourne, and over half (52%) intended to seek employment. 17% intended to enroll in further studies. Obtaining permanent residency was the third most important factor that influenced students' decisions to stay in Melbourne, only after being offered a job and having opportunities in the job market. Gaining employment that was related to students' field of study was a priority in many of the students' comments about staying in Melbourne. Students were also influenced by family and friends in Australia or in their home country, and in the comments some suggested that having family overseas was a reason they would not stay in Australia after graduating. Students were, however, aware that their ability to gain permanent residency would determine their ability to stay and commented on the changing immigration policy. Changes to immigration regulations and policy since 2010 have been made despite the evidence above and the impact on the international education sector speaks for itself as we have been able to see a large decrease in student enrolments and commencements since 2009.



Mapping Across the City of Melbourne

Table 21: City of Melbourne Engagement with International Students

CITY OF MELBOURNE BRANCHES	CURRENT ENGAGEMENT
Community Safety and Wellbeing CITY PEOPLE	<i>Lord Mayors Student Welcome</i> <i>Student welcome desk</i> <i>The Couch</i> <i>Melbourne Youth Services Forum</i> <i>Youth programs and policy</i> <i>Rooming house information</i> <i>Football programs</i> <i>Dance groups</i> <i>Information sessions</i> <i>Intercom3 committee</i> <i>Street teams</i>
Community Safety and Wellbeing CITY SAFETY	<i>Perceptions of safety research</i> <i>Domestic violence and prevention of violence against women programs</i> <i>24 hour city policy</i> <i>Cycling program</i> <i>Transport safety</i> <i>Drug and alcohol programs</i>
Business and International	<i>Collaboration and connections with the education sector in main source countries – India and China in particular</i> <i>Development of an ambassador program for students offshore</i> <i>International engagement framework</i> <i>Connection and collaboration with state and federal government departments</i>
Tourism Melbourne	<i>Current research into visiting friends and relatives of international students market.</i> <i>City of Melbourne Tourism plan</i> <i>City ambassador volunteer program</i>
Events Melbourne	<i>Attending free events in the city</i>



Strategic Planning

Health Services

Street Trading

City Research

Community Strengthening

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Libraries

Recreation Services

Parks Services

Arts & Culture

Student housing policy

Food policy

Access to culturally appropriate food

Access to affordable and nutritious food

Cultural precincts and restaurants

Employment in restaurants and fast food outlets

Retail strategy

Cultural precincts

Retail outlets

Cultural supermarkets

Social connectivity

Employment opportunities

Measuring the changing demographic of students

Tracking numbers of students

Access student enrolment data

International student survey

Knowledge Melbourne initiatives

Events and Community Engagement

Multicultural Hub

Opportunity to participate in cultural experiences and express cultural background

Research into needs of international students in libraries

Development of new program

Library strategy

Use of sport and recreation facilities

Involvement in dedicated programs and connections with external sporting associations

Free activities

Use of public spaces

Education programs

Hub and spaces – opportunities for cultural and arts programs



6. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent research into international student well-being and support needs

Both in Australia and abroad, research and reviews into international education have uncovered a plethora of evidence relating to the 'international student experience', which identify opportunities for all levels of government, local communities and the education sector to improve the experiences of international students in Australia. In response to the challenges faced by international students in many aspects of their lives in Australia, the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission recently drafted guiding principles that are designed in part to assist government to develop policies and services for international students and their families. It is through findings in recent government inquiries and evidence based reporting in published research that such documents have been produced.

Evidence suggesting that the challenges faced by international students when they are adjusting to new cultures impacts on academic outcomes, as well as the mental and physical health of international students, has been produced by researchers for many years. Werhly (1986) published a comprehensive literature review on research about the issues and concerns, and programs related to counselling international students. At this time, the programs and research that reported the most successful outcomes in supporting international students through their problems with homesickness, social isolation and barriers to communication and connectedness, were those that involved the provision of cultural diversity training to staff within institutions, counseling and welfare services.

Wehrly noted that as early as 1981, research in the United States investigating the adjustment of international students into new cultural communities and vice versa identified the same challenges that are faced by students, welfare support staff and community organisations today. Research conducted by Alexander, Klein, Workneh, and Miller in 1981 (cited in Wehrly 1986) found that students found making friends and adjusting to new cultures challenging and many students, from Asian countries in particular, gave higher priority to academic adjustment than social adjustment (Werhly 1986). The more different the new culture is from the students' culture, the more problems students faced in adjusting. The Alexander et al research in 1981 noted the dissatisfaction expressed by students about the poor development of interpersonal relationships in both housing and workplaces. Research at this time identified homesickness as a barrier and problem for a large majority of students, and the most difficult challenge faced by students. In line with key findings in City of Melbourne research, the main problems faced by students in the 1980s in the United States related to obtaining suitable housing, finances, social relationships and English language use. (Werhly 1986)

More than a decade later, research into the experiences of international students in Australia addresses the same challenges in a number of ways. A ten-year study of first year university students in Australia by Krause et al in 2004 expressed concern at the low level of social integration of international students in the classroom setting in particular. Less than half of the international students in the 2004 study felt a sense of belonging or connectedness to their fellow students or lecturers. This research was supported by findings in a study by Rosenthal et al, in 2006 (A Growing Experience) that investigated the health and wellbeing of international students in Melbourne. In this study between 3% and 6% of students interviewed reported feeling isolated. In line with the 1980s research above, homesickness, loneliness and diminished importance are experienced by international students, and interestingly, in 2006 supported the City of Melbourne student survey findings that discrimination and safety concerns are not widely reported. The authors expressed the most concern with the findings that a large percentage (53%) of students reported 'feeling a lack of belonging to a considerable or great degree with students from Asian countries feeling this significantly more than other students'. (Rosenthal et al 2006) This research found that almost 30% of students were not satisfied with



their level of financial support, and among the 71.3% who were satisfied, finance still caused students to worry, particularly in relation to their financial reliance on their families and in return family expectations of the students to do well.

Later research based on interviews conducted in 2005 and 2006 and published in 2010 by Marginson et al ('International Student Security') supports previous research findings and goes one step further to connect the students' challenges with finance, housing, welfare, health, and social connectedness to the overall right of the student to feel safe and secure throughout their education journey in Australia. The study provides evidence that students' overall health and wellbeing is impacted by the cultural differences between service providers and students, and the level of understanding that many students have of their basic entitlements and responsibilities in Australia in relation to housing, finances, employment, and health. Language barriers are identified as an important factor in the social and academic isolation experienced by international students and impact on the physical and mental health of international students. Marginson et al suggested that homesickness was an aspect of the cultural loneliness experienced by students, even among students who had close family with them in Australia. (Marginson et al 2010)

In 2009 a report by Ruth Fincher et al ('Transnational and Temporary: students community and place-making in central Melbourne') considered the experiences and learning that occurs for international students outside the classroom. The study provided in-depth discussion about the impact of public space and housing on the international students' experiences in the City of Melbourne and opportunities for interaction with the community.

This project found that current student accommodation facilities were poorly designed, and did not facilitate interaction between local and international students, or any residents for that matter. Interaction between residents is more common in smaller student housing complexes or more traditional student share house circumstances. The study also highlighted the separate administrative practices of education institutions that discourage any interaction between local and international students, denoting the difference between the two cohorts of students from the moment they arrive at the institutions to enrol. In addition, the study observed the public spaces around the City of Melbourne, and noted that the design of public spaces is not conducive to interactions between international students and the local community. The authors note that 'the most engaged students, community groups and institutions interact routinely, simultaneously and comfortably with many different cultures and that this is crucial to individual and collective senses of belonging. It is also necessary to the development of common interests.' (Fincher et al 2009)

The study poses a challenge for the city "to develop programs that are neither targeting students able to interact nor constructed places that are narrow and 'false' or 'commercial' but rather provide a place for all to participate and meet own needs, ideas and interests." (Fincher et al 2009).

More recent research that is important to the City of Melbourne's current and ongoing role in communication with international students is a collaborative research project 'Mapping the social networks of international students: Foundations for improving communication'. The authors note that in recent discussion on the 'international students' experience', there is a more widespread recognition of the need for students to be further integrated into the wider community outside of their education campuses. The initial findings were compiled in a research paper 'International Students in the Digital Age: Do you know where your students go to for information?' The researchers conducted a number of focus groups and sought information on the social networks of international students, in relation to the how the students were effectively provided with information before their arrival. In addition to discussing the ways students receive and use information, the study seeks to understand how international students share information in relation to their self-perceived social roles and networks. (Chang et al 2012). The study found that country of origin alone was insufficient in determining the way that students seek and disseminate information but rather social networks played a far



more influential role. Students with a wider range of social networks beyond that of other students from their home country were more likely to seek information from a broader range of sources outside their own country and, even to the extent where the social network group of students whose networks include both international and local students, were unlikely to have sought information from their home country at all. This information will progressively become more useful for organisations such as the City of Melbourne as we seek to find the most effective ways to provide students with information about and engage students in the community in which they are living. The research suggests that social media has a role to play because the students from most social network groups approach friends, or rely on word of mouth for most information they seeking, including general, academic, and social information. (Chang et al 2012)

Outline of other government work with international students

There are a large number of programs throughout Melbourne, Victoria and Australia by all levels of government to support and engage international students in addition to the international education sector as a whole. Below is a brief outline of a number of local councils, capital city councils and state and federal governments' current and recent work.

Local councils in Victoria:

In 2010, the Victorian Local Government Multicultural Issues Network developed a brief audit of the networks current services available to international students by local governments. 16 councils responded to the audit. Four councils supply services directly to international students and 12 do not. Examples of services that are provided directly to international students include welcome events, funding to services providers for international students, emergency awareness programs, drop-in centres, community guides and forums that connect services, education providers and council officers.

Local councils have developed relationships and liaise with many other organisations to run programs and support initiatives for international students, including:

- education providers
- community legal services
- faith organisations
- Metropolitan Fire Brigade and Victoria Police
- Department of Immigration

Programs and initiatives include:

2010 - Stonnington City Council launched a pocket guide, 'A guide for international students'; information stalls at education providers orientation and information days promoting the Stonnington council services.

2010 – City of Darebin received Department of Immigration and Citizenship funding to develop a raft of programs under the banner 'A Fair Go For International Students' to engage international students.

Programs developed included:

- Establishing the Darebin Overseas Student Advisory Committee



- Providing space at the youth drop-in centre Ozone Lounge for international students to get together and run events such as Ozone Writing workshops, migration seminars, sports days, movie afternoons, and other events
- Developed a pocket guide 'Essential Services Guide for Overseas Students'

2011 – Monash City Council: development of an international student engagement policy, community meeting roundtable about international students issues, connection with Monash University and membership of community council panel at Monash University.

2011 – City of Moreland and Moreland Multicultural Settlement Forum: Community Profile and International Student Issues

2012 – City of Moreland: Commissioned Research by RMIT to profile international students in the City of Moreland, and investigate their use of services and needs and support required

2012 – City of Hobsons Bay: conducted 3 information sessions for international students throughout April and May, providing information to students on legal issues, support services and to provide a connection for students to the council officers.

2012 – City of Whittlesea: included a seminar on international students' issues in a series of cultural information sessions, between March and June

Capital City councils:

City of Sydney

The City of Sydney has developed programs over the past few years for international students such as internship programs, and cultural diversity programs. In 2012, the City of Sydney worked with Insider Guide to produce the 'Insider Guide for international students in Sydney'. The City of Sydney has also developed a draft Knowledge Sydney strategy and action plan. The plan involves a schedule of actions (including a student guide) for the city over the next 3 years and is currently being considered by council.

City of Brisbane

The City of Brisbane has been very attentive to the needs of international students over the past 5 years. In 2008, the City of Brisbane produced a report that investigated the experiences of international students in Brisbane and provided recommendations for council to make improvements. Brisbane Marketing has developed Study Brisbane, a marketing arm for the city and education providers. This organisation also has support and engagement programs for students, such as a welcome program, airport reception and student ambassadors. Further work is currently being undertaken by the City of Brisbane to look at new programs and initiatives.

(The City of Perth and City of Adelaide are members of partner organisations with state government and education providers to attract and provide support to international students in these two cities.)



International Cities:

Toronto

International students in Toronto have been greeted at the Toronto International Airport since 2011 and a welcome booth has been created for students during the August-September arrival period. The program is to welcome international students and provide them with a welcome package. Assistance at the welcome booth includes accommodation, transport and telephone services.

Toronto's website contains general information for students about the international education student population in Toronto, and the cultural diversity of Toronto. The website provides international students with information about accommodation, safety, health services and the public library service.

London

Overseas students are considered in the overarching discussion about access to housing, the benefit to the diversity and calibre of the workforce in London, and the variety of language skills they offer as well as the concentration of enrolments in particular fields.

Boston.

Boston Council has an array of services and information for all students. There are over 50 universities and 300 education providers in the city municipality and therefore many students relocating from across the United States and overseas to study in Boston.

The key information on housing, safety, getting around, volunteering and employment and services are directed at all students and there is a small amount of information for international students which pertains to immigration information, English language assistance, and access to information about services and event in languages other than English. Each year there is a large event for new Bostonians where they are welcomed to the city.

State Governments:

Victoria – Throughout the past five years, the Victorian government has produced the following reports about international education in Victoria:

- *Overseas Student Education Experience Taskforce Report 2008*
- *Thinking Global: Victoria's Action plan for International Education, September 2009*

These reports have highlighted the need to continue to support and grow the international education sector, and as a result the main bulk of the funding for in the action plan was to provide more funding into this area. The '*Thinking Global*' framework directly considered the recommendations in the taskforce report. Supporting the students through targeted information and support programs and maintaining and increasing the quality of education received less than half the funding that the market development initiatives were provided. Programs that were designed to support students onshore through this framework included the redevelopment of the Study Melbourne website, information resources, the Culture Card program, the Buddy Up program and welcoming and information programs which included the provision of funding to the City of Melbourne's Student Welcome Desk.



Since 2009, there have been no other reports provided in relation to international education but a new international education framework is currently being developed.

New South Wales (NSW)

Until recently in NSW there has been very little investigation or public reports released by the state government in relation to international students. In late 2011, the NSW Parliament conducted an inquiry into international student accommodation in NSW. At the same time, an international education and research taskforce was established, to be chaired by Philip Marcus Clark AM. This group has met on three occasions and conducted consultation and research into the international education sector in NSW. The focus was on three areas – marketing and promotion, schools and international research. At the time of this discussion paper distribution, the final report had not been released. The draft report made some observations about the sector and put forward recommendations for the NSW government. These included a large number of actions under three main areas: profile and promote NSW's position as an international education and research division; build on comparative strengths and emerging markets; and removing barriers to business. The actions included a number of similar initiatives to those currently being undertaken in Victoria, such as an assistance desk at the airport, and more collaborative programs between community and providers. In addition, the actions included the development of Study NSW, an interactive website and employment programs for students and employers.

Federal government:

International Education Advisory Council – Discussion paper for developing an International Education Strategy for Australia April 2012.

In 2011 an International Education Advisory Council was established to develop a five-year strategy to 'support the sustainability and quality of the international education sector' in Australia. In 2012 a background paper was produced and feedback was sought throughout Australia from the international education sector to help to inform the development of the five-year strategy. Feedback to the questions and themes raised in the background paper was received in June 2012.

Themes included:

- quality of education
- the student experience
- sustainability in student enrolments
- offshore education
- positioning Australia in Asia
- changing global and economic environment
- strengthening international research collaborations
- enhancing Australia's reputation.



Council of Australian Governments (COAG) International student strategy 2010 – 2014

In response to a number of reviews and subsequent reports in 2009 by state and federal government departments and parliaments, the Council of Australian Governments developed an international student strategy in 2010. The Strategy's purpose is to 'support a high quality experience for international students to ensure a sustainable future for quality international education in Australia'. (COAG 2010) The outline of the strategy is below:

Source: COAG 2010, International students Strategy for Australia 2012 – 2014

PURPOSE To support a high-quality experience for international students to ensure a sustainable future for quality international education in Australia				
OUTCOMES				
<p>International students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are able to make informed choices about studying and living in Australia • have a positive study and life experience in Australia • acquire skills that equip them for a successful future. <p>Australia has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an international education sector positioned for a sustainable future • a reputation for high-quality education • a regulatory framework that assures quality education. 				
ACTION AREAS	STUDENT WELLBEING	QUALITY OF EDUCATION	CONSUMER PROTECTION	BETTER INFORMATION
INITIATIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student personal safety guide • Provider student safety plans • Stronger health cover arrangements • National community engagement strategy • International student consultative committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A stronger Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) • A stronger ESOS Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider closure taskforces • Stronger complaints handling and dispute resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study in Australia portal • Information on government services, fees and concessions • International student surveys

Discussion Question:

What do you consider the City of Melbourne's role to be in advocacy around policy and legislation for international students to state government, federal government and the education sector?



7. THE CITY OF MELBOURNE'S CURRENT ROLE

The City of Melbourne's Community, Safety and Wellbeing branch of the Community Development division currently delivers programs specifically for international students. The needs and wellbeing of international students are addressed within the city's strategy 'Empowering Young People' however, in addition to this, there are also many other parts of the City of Melbourne that assist in addressing the needs of international students. While some programs are delivered specifically for international students and many others are not, all work is required to align with the current Council Plan.

Programs specifically targeting international students are included in three of the main goals in the 2009-2013 Council Plan.

These are outlined below:

GOAL	OUTLINE
<i>A City for People</i>	<p>The City of Melbourne has an important role in making the municipality great for people to live in and visit.</p> <p>This Council recognises that it must address the needs of a growing population. We want people to experience our city's array of activities and to meet, play and relax in streets and public spaces that are clean, inviting and alive.</p> <p>This goal includes relevant and affordable services and community infrastructure and recognises the need for safety and security. We promote and encourage healthy people and communities and want to ensure that our rich cultures are celebrated, embraced and connected to the broader community.</p>
<i>A Knowledge City</i>	<p>Melbourne's appeal to the international education market and our world class research facilities are a sound basis for growing our potential and reputation as a knowledge city.</p> <p>Our work to further position Melbourne as the city of choice for international students will continue. The city's international students continue to have access to the array of services and facilities that make Melbourne</p>



A Prosperous City

a global leader in the provision of education. Enhancing our education, research and development, industry innovation, business and access to the world through information technology will ensure we remain at least a step ahead as a world-renowned knowledge city.

The sustainability and resilience of our city's economy is critical.

This plan capitalises on our international profile as a sporting city and continues to promote our world famous events to ensure people continue to visit and be part of our robust events and activities calendar.

Our support to the city's businesses will emphasise small and medium businesses, draw on the diversity of our local economy and educated workforce, and assist Melbournians to achieve prosperity through social enterprise. The Council will work locally, nationally and globally to continue to strengthen the local economy.

As a city we will be prepared and well positioned to meet the challenges of the global economy.



The ‘**Empowering Young People**’ policy contains 5 goals to which the programs for international students must align. The goals and outcomes for this policy are below:

GOALS	OUTCOMES
<i>Goal 1. Participation, leadership and empowerment</i>	Young people actively participate in and contribute to the social, cultural, creative, recreational and civic life of the city
<i>Goal 2. Healthy and active young people</i>	Young people are supported in all aspects of their physical, mental, spiritual and emotional health so they can get the best start in life. Young people can access responsive and integrated services and supports when needed within the context of their families, schools and communities.
<i>Goal 3. Fulfilling learning and earning potential</i>	Young people can access, and are supported in, pathways to education, training and employment that meet their diverse needs
<i>Goal 4. Safe places to go and things to do</i>	A diverse range of safe and welcoming spaces and places are provided for young people across the city during the day and night, with a calendar of events and free, youth driven activities.
<i>Goal 5. Effective partnerships and joint responses</i>	Work in partnership and develop joint responses with all stakeholders to ensure that young people have enriched and fulfilling lives.

The programs that are currently being delivered by the City of Melbourne under this policy are diverse and unique to the City of Melbourne. In some cases they were the first of their kind in Australia, such as the Lord Mayor’s Student Welcome, the Couch and the programs and events operated within this space, the EDGE Leadership Program, Student Ambassador Program and the Student Welcome Desk. The city has led the way for local municipality and capital city councils by prioritising and recognising the needs of international students as being both a specific group and part of a much larger group of residents and visitors who make up over 50% of the residents of the city. Both the Lord Mayor’s Welcome Event and the Student Welcome Desk have won national awards in the international education sector for excellence.



The City of Melbourne's role in the international education sector in relation to responding to the needs of international students can be divided into 4 areas. These are summarized below with examples of Councils' responses:

CITY OF MELBOURNE'S ROLE	CURRENT RESPONSES
<i>a. Building and maintaining strong stakeholder partnerships</i>	International education advisory committee, Intercom3 Committee, Melbourne Youth Services Forum, E Newsletter to stakeholders
<i>b. Advocacy and leadership</i>	Intercom3 Committee, membership of networks – Victorian Local Government Multicultural Issues Network, ISANA International Education, International Education Research Group,
<i>c. Research</i>	International student survey, city research student statistics, international students at risk research, library services research into the library needs of international students, rooming house research, research collaboration – University of Melbourne – students and social media research.
<i>d. Education and information provision</i>	Student Welcome Desk, International Student Legal Advisor Clinic @ The couch, International Student Guide, Grogger – Safety program, On The Move brochure, Womens health Connect project, City of Melbourne International and Youth E Newsletter
<i>e. Innovative and responsive program development</i>	LMSW, SWD, EDGE, The Couch, Mayibuye Dance Troupe, Global, Indigenous Art workshops, Comic Book Club, Comic Drawing workshop

Discussion Question:

How can the City of Melbourne best engage with international students in order to develop programs and allocate resourcing? Could there be a dedicated international student committee for the City of Melbourne or could the City of Melbourne consider developing a youth committee that would include international student representation? Any other ideas?



8. CHALLENGES, ISSUES, GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

Issues and challenges

The main challenges and issues for the City of Melbourne in delivering effective programs for international students are:

- The numbers of international students (consistently increasing)
- Engagement with stakeholders and reaching international students
- International students have a broad range of needs and welfare requirements
- International students represent various age groups, and are usually from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds – therefore a ‘one size fits all’ approach is not always suitable
- Aligning programs with federal, state and other local governments
- Aligning programs with the service provision of education providers under legislation
- Funding, infrastructure, collaboration and partnering

Gaps and opportunities

The gaps and opportunities for the City of Melbourne are:

- A clear definition of the role of the City of Melbourne in relation to the wellbeing and experience of international students as residents or students in the City of Melbourne
- Collaboration with broader community to develop programs
- Consultative approach to develop international student representation in the City of Melbourne
- Consultative approach to develop relationships with stakeholders
- Alignment with other local governments, federal government and state government frameworks
- Development of frameworks and policies within and across the City of Melbourne

Discussion Question:

Where are the gaps and opportunities in the support services and programs for international students during the early period of their stay in Melbourne? How can the City of Melbourne work with your organisations to develop programs to address these gaps?



9. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & CONCLUSION

<i>Discussion Questions</i>	
1. Who are international students?	<i>How does the City of Melbourne determine who makes up the international student population? Do we need to define who international students are for the purposes of the City of Melbourne International Student Strategy? Do you consider the definition 'international student' to be limited to student visa-holders only?</i>
2. City of Melbourne's role in delivery of programs and services	<i>What do you consider is the City of Melbourne's role in engaging with international students? In particular, in the areas of information provision, delivery of specific programs and resourcing specific services, and enhancing opportunities for international students to feel connected and engaged with the community?</i>
3. Engaging with international students	<i>How can the City of Melbourne best engage with international students in order to develop programs and allocate resourcing? Could there be a dedicated international student committee for the City of Melbourne or could the City of Melbourne consider developing a youth committee that would include international student representation? Any other ideas?</i>
4. City of Melbourne's role in policy and legislation development	<i>What do you consider the City of Melbourne's role to be in advocacy around policy and legislation for international students to state government, federal government and the education sector?</i>
5. Gaps and opportunities	<i>Where are the gaps and opportunities in the support services and programs for International Students during the early period of their stay in Melbourne? How can the City of Melbourne work with your organisations to develop programs to address these gaps, in particular, with social connectedness?</i>

The main themes throughout this document highlight the broad and varied work that is undertaken across Victoria and in the City of Melbourne to support and engage international students. Education providers, in particular, provide vast amounts of support and opportunities for engagement for international students, however, this is not enough. Students are seeking more engagement and connection with the community, and need the opportunity to experience and understand life in Australia within homes and families. For many, this would assist them in overcoming their homesickness and a sense of isolation.

In addition to addressing the needs of many students with social connectedness, the discussion paper looks at various ways in which the City of Melbourne might engage with stakeholders as well as students in future and how the current programs and initiatives align with council policy.



An International Student Strategy will help to ensure that the City of Melbourne continues to develop and improve the programs and policy that affect international students.

The discussion questions in this document are related to sections of the discussion paper and will be considered throughout the consultation process and development of the International Student Strategy. The City of Melbourne welcomes feedback on the discussion paper and submissions addressing any of the points in the paper, or responses to the specific discussion questions.



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