



Election 2025

Education Policy Brief: Tertiary Education

The Mitchell Institute, Victoria University



Acknowledgement of Country



The Mitchell Institute at Victoria University acknowledges, recognises and respects the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Bunurong/Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung of the Kulin who are the traditional owners of University land in Victoria, the Gadigal and Guring-gai of the Eora Nation who are the traditional owners of University land in Sydney, and the Yulara/Yugarapul people and Turrbal people living in Meanjin (Brisbane).

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Overview

Tertiary education in the first term of the Albanese Government has been shaped by the continuing mantra of making the education system ‘fairer.’ Migration policy imperatives led the Government to propose international student caps to control the influx of temporary migrants, but this measure was ultimately blocked by the Coalition and the Greens.

The Australian Universities Accord review – a Labor promise at the previous election – was tasked with tackling system-wide policy problems. However, the difficult job of determining a longer-term approach to the higher education funding system has been pushed to the next government to solve.

What are the likely battlegrounds?

Nationally felt cost-of-living and inflation impacts loom large over the landscape of this election. How the major parties mobilise these issues will likely be central to how tertiary education features in election debates.

A ‘better and fairer’ system versus ‘Australia first’

Labor has framed its tertiary education policy around a long-term need to expand participation to groups who traditionally miss out and increase attainment rates to meet future skills needs. The party will be hoping to gain significant ground from one of its big-ticket items – the one-off 20% reduction in all student debt – with this commitment following legislative changes to lower the indexation on student loans.

The Coalition has attacked the Labor Government’s economic priorities, calling the student loan debt relief policy “profoundly unfair” and a “cash splash” that would cost all 27 million Australians but benefit only three million [1]. They also attempted to block Labor’s Free TAFE Bill (2025) saying it does not address the national skills shortages [2].

Instead, the Coalition has signalled it will take an ‘Australian students must come first’ approach. This includes targeting ‘large metropolitan universities’ and rebalancing the funding ledger in favour of regional institutions ‘decimated’ under Albanese.

The fight to be fairest is also present in the issue of student safety and the right to protest on university campuses. The Coalition has positioned itself as a tough protector of community values with a no-tolerance stance on racism. By comparison, Labor has tried to balance this sentiment with the protection of academic freedom.

International students and migration

Migration is a big issue in this election. The rise in international students over the past parliamentary term – accounting for half the increase in net overseas migration – has made international education a political flashpoint. Migration debates often involve contests about who is best equipped to manage an orderly immigration program. The much-criticised international student caps demonstrate Labor’s will to assert some control, exhibiting a middle-road approach. The Coalition has positioned itself as more hardline, saying it will go further than Labor in cutting international student numbers. From their recent announcement on caps, the ‘hardline’ appears to be targeted at public universities (that is, almost all of Australia’s universities) which would face tougher enrolment restrictions than vocational or private colleges. This would require the legislative change it blocked in late 2024.

System and funding reform

The Australian Universities Accord reform process has taken up a lot of oxygen for the Labor Government over the last four years. However, the limited outcomes from this process provide ample space for the Opposition to argue that not a lot has changed since they were in government, especially in the all-important funding debate. Despite Labor’s promises to the contrary, the survival of the Morrison Government’s ‘Job-ready Graduates’ Package, which the Coalition still supports, promises to be a thorny issue.

What is ‘tertiary education’ in Australia?

In this country, tertiary education consists of two sectors: higher education and vocational education and training (VET). The large public providers of universities and TAFEs are sometimes used as shorthand for higher education and VET respectively, but there are many private and not-for-profit institutions that also operate in the broader sector.

Higher education providers usually offer qualifications ranging from undergraduate (such as a bachelor’s degrees) to postgraduate awards. The VET sector has a more explicit occupational focus on skills and applied outcomes. VET is often associated with apprenticeships, though it is a remarkably diverse sector that caters to many different cohorts.

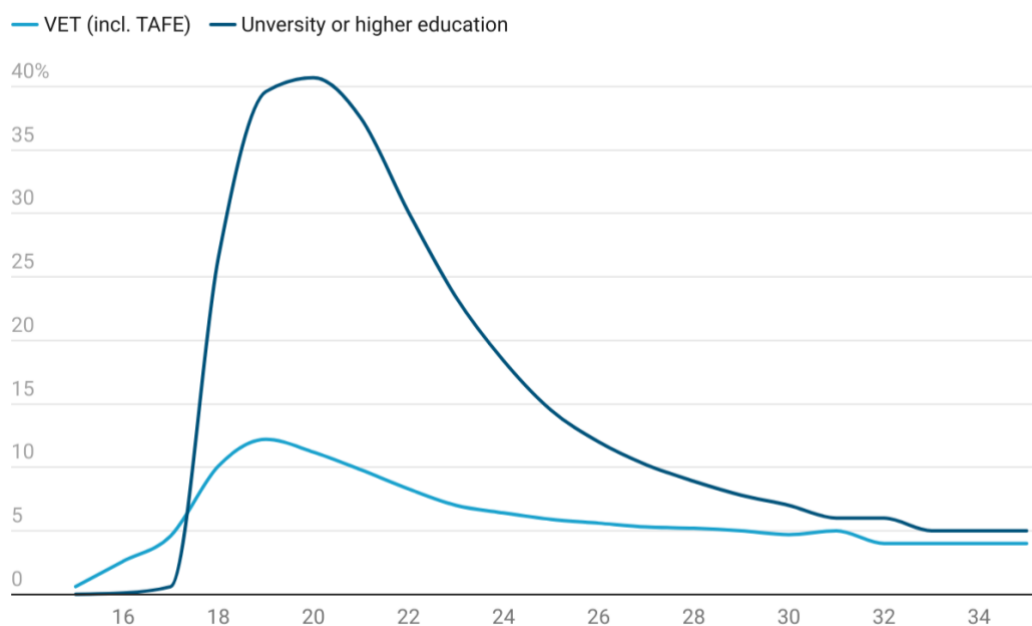
Higher education is by far the larger of the two sectors in terms of full-time equivalent students and revenue. In 2023, there were 1.6 million students in higher education, of which 410,000, or 28%, were international students [3]. In 2022, revenue for universities was about

\$35 billion, a figure which excludes the smaller non-university providers [4].

Quantifying the number of students and revenue in the VET sector is much more challenging. The sector produces a dizzying number of statistics, which makes it difficult to get a grasp on its activity and reach. In 2023, it was reported that there were 5.1 million students in VET - about 20% of the Australian population [5]. This figure includes large swathes of single subject enrolments in first aid and other regulatory aligned units like responsible serving of alcohol. Government funding for the VET sector in 2023 was \$10.7 billion, with about \$3.3 billion related to employer incentives for apprenticeships and trainees [6].

Census data shows that the proportion of young people attending higher education has risen over time, while participation in VET has stagnated. As Figure 1 shows, over 40% of 19- and 20-year-olds are enrolled at higher education providers compared to about 12% in VET for the same age groups.

Figure 1: University is the main pathway for young people following school



Tertiary education participation rate by type of institution attended and age in 2021 census [7]

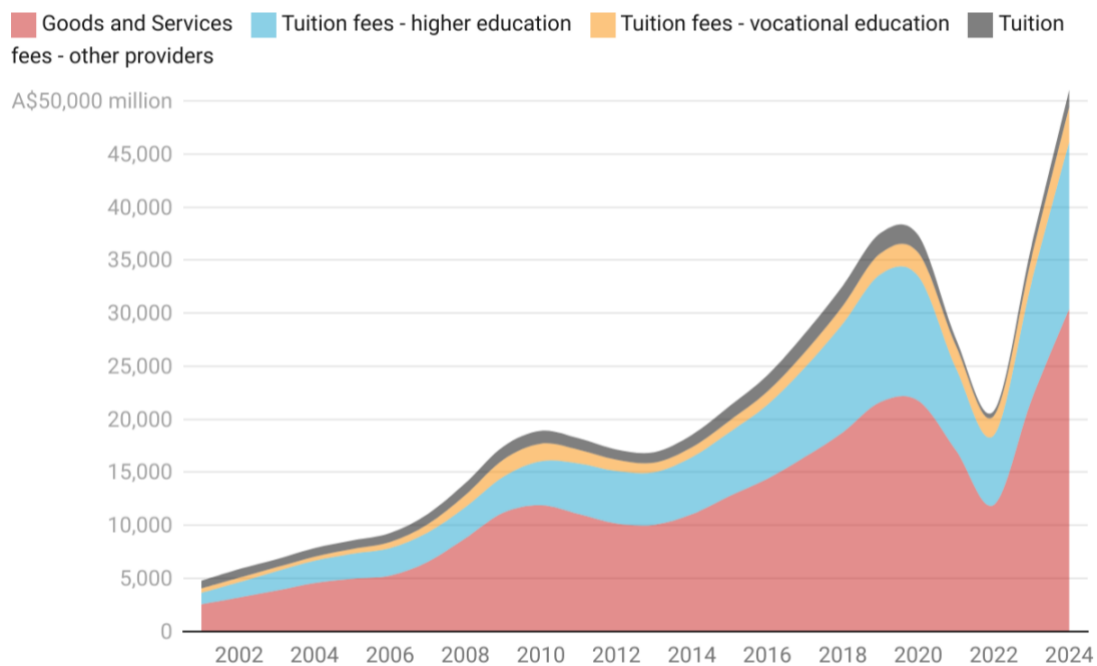
Higher education policy is largely directed by the Federal Government. State and territory governments have more of a say in VET policy direction with the Federal Government contributing funding and employer incentives for apprentices.

Income-contingent loans, known as HECS or HELP loans, are available to eligible students in both sectors, although university students hold the lion's share of total loans. The Australian Tax Office reports that in 2023-24, there were about \$81 billion in outstanding higher education student loans, with a further \$2.6 billion in student loans related to the VET sector.

An increasingly key part of the tertiary education sector is international education - Australia's fourth largest export industry. As Figure 2 shows, the sector has recovered after the closure of international borders during the pandemic and is now worth an estimated \$51 billion per year. The majority of this, about 60%, relates to spending in the broader economy.

Universities collect the most in international student revenue as they can charge more, especially the more prestigious universities. In the VET sector it is the private colleges that dominate, with TAFE's accounting for only 1% of all international student enrolments.

Figure 2: The value of international education is at a record \$51 billion per year



Value of international education sector (education related travel credits) by type and financial year [8]

What has happened in tertiary education policy since the last election?

The Australian Universities Accord

Solutions to the most intractable issues in higher education were scant at the 2022 election, instead the Labor Party proposed a sweeping review of higher education called the 'Accord.'

The need for an 'accord' suggests discord, highlighting the tensions emerging in higher education over the past five years. The greatest pinch points were in relation to university funding regimes, international student enrolments, and tertiary 'harmonisation' which is about looking at the tertiary education system – VET and higher education – as a cohesive whole.

The Australian Universities Accord Panel conducted a 12-month review with a broad remit covering almost every aspect of higher education, including student fees, research, teaching, student and staff welfare, and international students. A key task was recommending a funding model to replace the Job-ready Graduates Package, introduced in the last term of parliament. The package raised student contributions for business and humanities courses in an attempt to steer students towards courses perceived to be more in line with labour market needs. The spectre of an ‘international student levy’ to fund reforms in the sector caused some of the greatest controversy.

Delivered in February 2024, the final report made 47 recommendations around access, equity and participation which included a target to increase tertiary education attainment for the working age population from the current 60% to at least 80% by 2050. Instead of an international student levy, the Accord proposed a \$10 billion Higher Education Future Fund (HEFF) funded jointly by universities and the Australian Government. On tertiary harmonisation, it recommended reforms to break down barriers between the higher education and VET sectors by aligning courses, qualifications and regulations so they work together as one system.

The report recommended the replacement of the Job-ready Graduates Package and the introduction of a ‘needs-based’ funding model, though it did not provide much by way of detail. Instead, a key recommendation was the creation of an Australian Tertiary Education Commission to do the detailed work required to implement any changes.

The Commission, which will include the VET sector in its perspectives, is due to be established in an interim capacity in July 2025, after the election.

Attempt to introduce international student caps

International education has consistently been one of the biggest issues in tertiary education through the Morrison and Albanese governments.

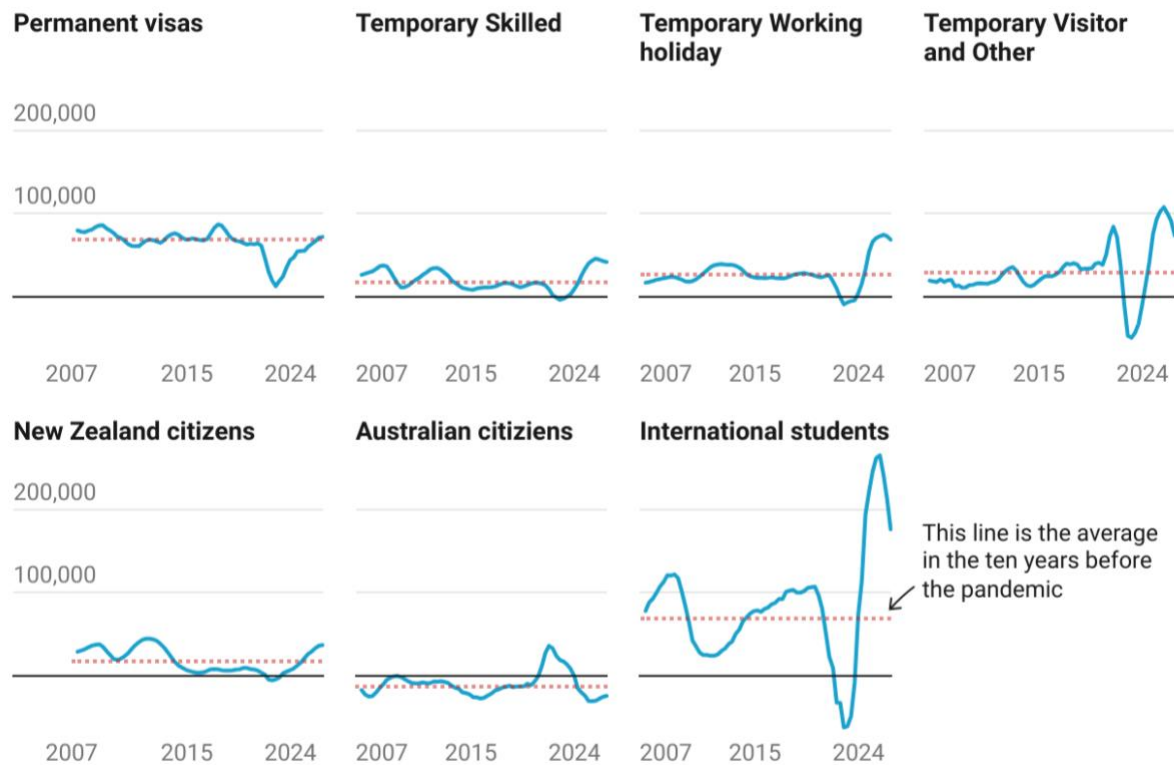
The Albanese Government initially continued with Morrison-era policies designed to encourage international students to return to Australia. However, by June 2023 it became clear that international students were returning in record numbers.

Net overseas migration – the difference between the number of people entering Australia (arrivals) and those leaving (departures) – exploded from about 250,000 people annually before the pandemic to over 530,000 in June 2023. Net overseas migration counts people who are in Australia, or intend to be in Australia, for 12 out of 16 months. This definition captures most international students who have accounted for more than half the increase in net overseas migration between March 2022 and March 2024.

The political pressure to bring this net migration number down drove interventions in the international education sector. The Parkinson Review of the Migration System highlighted the role of international students in the unsustainable increase in the ‘permanently temporary’ migrant population. Political debates also linked the increase in migration to housing and cost-of-living pressures. This has resulted in international education sitting at

the intersection of several of Australia's political flashpoints.

Figure 3: International students have been the biggest contributor to the increase in net overseas migration [9]



Net overseas migration by type (June quarter 2007 to June quarter 2024)

In response, the Albanese Government sought to put the brakes on the number of new international student visas. In December 2023, it issued Ministerial Direction 107, which effectively slowed down the number of visas granted by using integrity measures.

The huge increase in visa refusal rates caused havoc across the international education sector and drew almost universal complaint from universities, vocational colleges, and the international education industry. The Government also hiked visa fees and wound back many of the post-pandemic programs, like increased post-study work rights.

The Treasurer announced in the 2024/2025 Budget speech that “[the government] will limit how many international students can be enrolled by each university based on a formula, including how much housing they build” [10]. This required both a formula and legislative change to give the Minister for Education and the Minister for Skills and Training the power to implement the caps.

The formula to distribute international student numbers across the sector was controversial. After initially backing changes, the Coalition decided not to support the legislation in the Senate and promised to cut international student numbers even further than Labor. The

Greens oppose the introduction of any international student caps and have also opposed the legislation.

After the legislation failed to pass, the Government found a workaround. In December 2024, a new Ministerial Direction means that visa processing times will be used to control total visa approvals. Once an institution hits 80% of its student visa cap, it faces the prospect of a 'go-slow' approach and higher visa refusals.

However, this approach is only temporary. The Government has flagged that the task of closer management of international education in the tertiary education sector will be managed by the proposed Australian Tertiary Education Commission.

Free TAFE and student loan indexation relief

In November 2024, the Albanese Labor Government introduced legislation to establish Fee-Free TAFE as a permanent feature of the national vocational education and training system. This legislation ensures the funding of 100,000 Fee-Free TAFE places annually, starting from 2027. This initiative is meant to alleviate cost-of-living pressures for individuals and also address national skills shortages by equipping Australians with the necessary skills for in-demand jobs.

In late 2024, the Government enacted the Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024, which addressed significant indexation increases in HECS-HELP fees from previous years. The legislation now ties indexation rates to the lower of the Wage Price Index or Consumer Price Index, aiming to alleviate financial burdens on students.

Additionally, the Government has pledged to reduce student debt by 20% by the 1st of June 2025, contingent upon re-election, potentially benefiting around three million Australians.

Jobs and Skills Australia and the Australian Tertiary Education Commission

A feature of the Albanese Government's approach to education policy has been the establishment of statutory bodies to oversee the functioning of different parts of the education system by playing a 'stewardship' role.

The Australian Tertiary Education Commission was one of the key recommendations of the Australian Universities Accord. The Government also established Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), along with sector specific Jobs and Skills Councils tasked with bringing the sector, employers and unions together to better address skills needs. JSA took over many of the functions from the previous National Skills Commission.

National funding agreements

The Albanese Government has also completed stalled negotiations for new funding agreements with the states and territories. The National Skills Agreement is a \$12.6 billion five-year commitment. Unlike some previous agreements relating to the VET sector, the amount of Commonwealth funding is tied to co-investment from states and territories. There

is also a more explicit emphasis on the central role of TAFE in the VET system.

Current issues in tertiary education in Australia

Funding, student debt and the \$50,000 degree

A perennial issue in education is how much it costs and who pays.

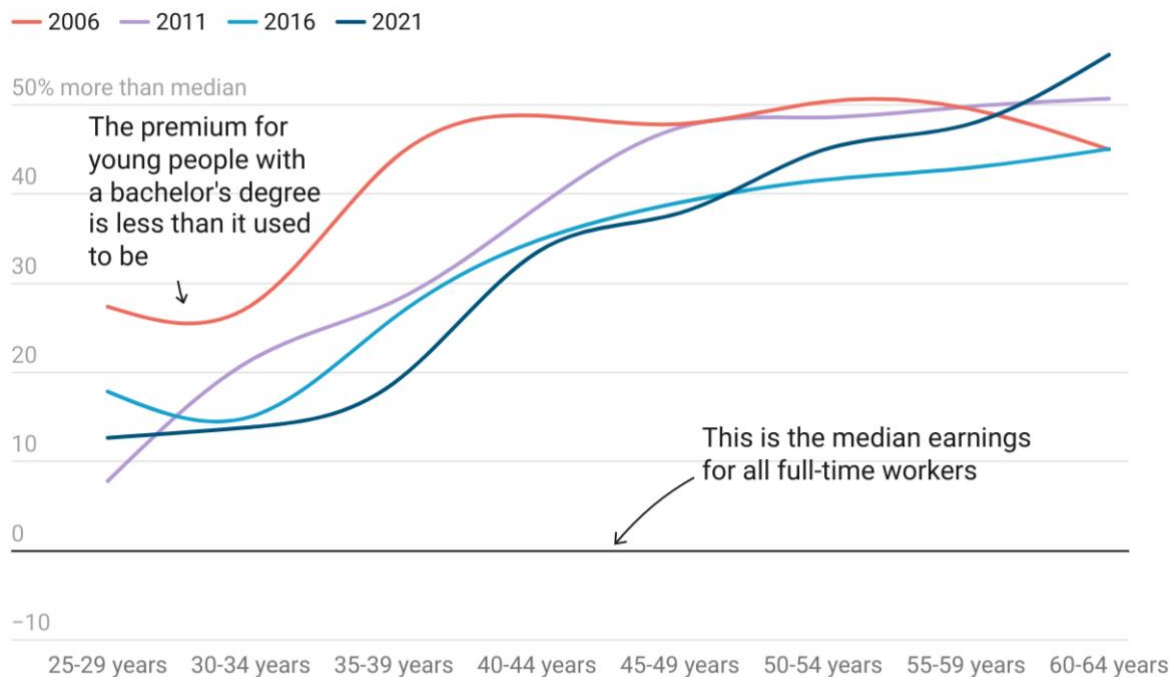
In the higher education sector, this issue has been particularly prominent because the first cohort of students whose fees were set under the Jobs Ready Graduate regime have completed their courses. This resulted in stories about '\$50,000 degrees' for humanities and business graduates and prompted continuing questions about investment, both private and public, in tertiary education.

The Job-ready Graduates Package is widely recognised as a policy failure. The Australian Universities Accord report was direct, saying the package “needs urgent remediation” and “its intended purpose of influencing students’ choice of courses through price signals has failed” [11]. And yet, the package remains. The Albanese Labor Government has flagged that it will task the proposed Australian Tertiary Education Commission with finalising a new funding regime.

It is a difficult problem to solve. A feature of tertiary education funding is the use of income-contingent loans, commonly known as HECS or HELP. Income-contingent loans mean a student is liable for part (or, in some instances, all) of the tuition fees for their course. The student pays this loan back through a higher taxation rate when they earn above a certain threshold. The logic behind income-contingent loans is that graduates receive a ‘private benefit’ from their studies, in the sense that on average they have better jobs and higher wages as a result. As such, they contribute to funding their education when they are in a position to do so.

However, over the past 15 years, the strength of this benefit has weakened. The average time it takes to pay back a higher education student loan has increased from 7.3 years in 2006 to 9.9 years in 2024. The Mitchell Institute examined census data to estimate the bachelor’s degree ‘premium’, which is how much extra a bachelor’s degree holder can expect to earn compared to all full-time workers in the labour market. As Figure 4 shows, we found that the wage premium has fallen since 2006. This means that a bachelor’s degree does not buy what it used to.

Figure 4: A bachelor's degree does not buy what it used to



Median earnings data estimated using ABS census data for weekly earnings and full-time workers

Difference in full-time median earnings (%) for bachelor's degree holders compared to all full-time workers by age group

One of the biggest election promises in education is Labor's proposal to forgive 20% of all existing student debt.

The reach of this promise is large. There are nearly three million people with a higher education loan debt, with an average debt of \$27,600. A 20% reduction would mean about \$16 billion in student loans is cut at an average of \$5,500 per person.

The Mitchell Institute estimated the number of people in each electorate who would benefit from this policy using tax return data at postcode level. We found that there are thousands of people in every electorate with higher education loan debts. Overall, the closer an electorate is to a capital city centre, the higher the debts and the greater the concentration of debtors.

Table 1 shows the number of people with a higher education debt, along with the average amount that will be reduced under Labor's 20% debt reduction promise, in seats with a two-party preferred margin of less than 2%. At the last election, a couple of thousand votes, and usually less, decided the outcome in these seats.

Table 1: There are thousands of voters in electorates who will benefit from Labor’s proposed 20% reduction in student loan debt

Electorate (State/Territory)	Member (Party)	Margin	No. of people with debt	Average debt saved
Bennelong (NSW)	Jerome Laxale (ALP)	-0.04%	20,395	\$6,190
Deakin (VIC)	Michael Sukkar (LIB)	0.02%	19,653	\$5,340
Gilmore (NSW)	Fiona Phillips (ALP)	0.20%	13,742	\$4,270
Menzies (VIC)	Keith Wolahan (LIB)	0.40%	20,470	\$5,760
Sturt (SA)	James Stevens (LIB)	0.50%	21,550	\$5,260
Lyons (TAS)	Brian Mitchell (ALP) (Retiring)	0.90%	7,079	\$3,950
Moore (WA)	Ian Goodenough (LIB)	0.90%	15,756	\$4,710
Fowler (NSW)	Dai Le (IND)	1.10%	17,462	\$5,730
Canning (WA)	Andrew Hastie (LIB)	1.20%	9,669	\$3,960
Curtin (WA)	Kate Chaney (IND)	1.30%	19,238	\$5,440
Bass (TAS)	Bridget Archer (LIB)	1.40%	8,452	\$4,150
Casey (VIC)	Aaron Violi (LIB)	1.40%	16,022	\$4,670
Lingiari (NT)	Marion Scrymgour (ALP)	1.70%	6,963	\$4,160
Dickson (QLD)	Peter Dutton (LIB)	1.70%	18,143	\$4,670

Student loan debt for electorates with less than 2% two-party preferred margin (post-2025 distribution). Note: Margin is two-party preferred following redistribution as calculated by the ABC.

The Labor promise to cut 20% of student debt has been criticised by the Coalition who argue that the \$16 billion promise “reeks of unfairness and elitism” as it largely benefits those with higher wages. The Coalition also argue that the policy is “grossly unfair to the millions of Australians who have, in good faith, worked hard to pay off their HELP debt with no discount” [12].

The 20% cut to student debt does provide a political response to the Job-ready Graduates cohort with large student debt, but the proposal is not a long-term solution.

The wider issue of sustainable university funding is unresolved and the changing value of degrees in the labour market means the hard task of deciding how much universities should receive, and who pays for it, remains.

International student caps and migration

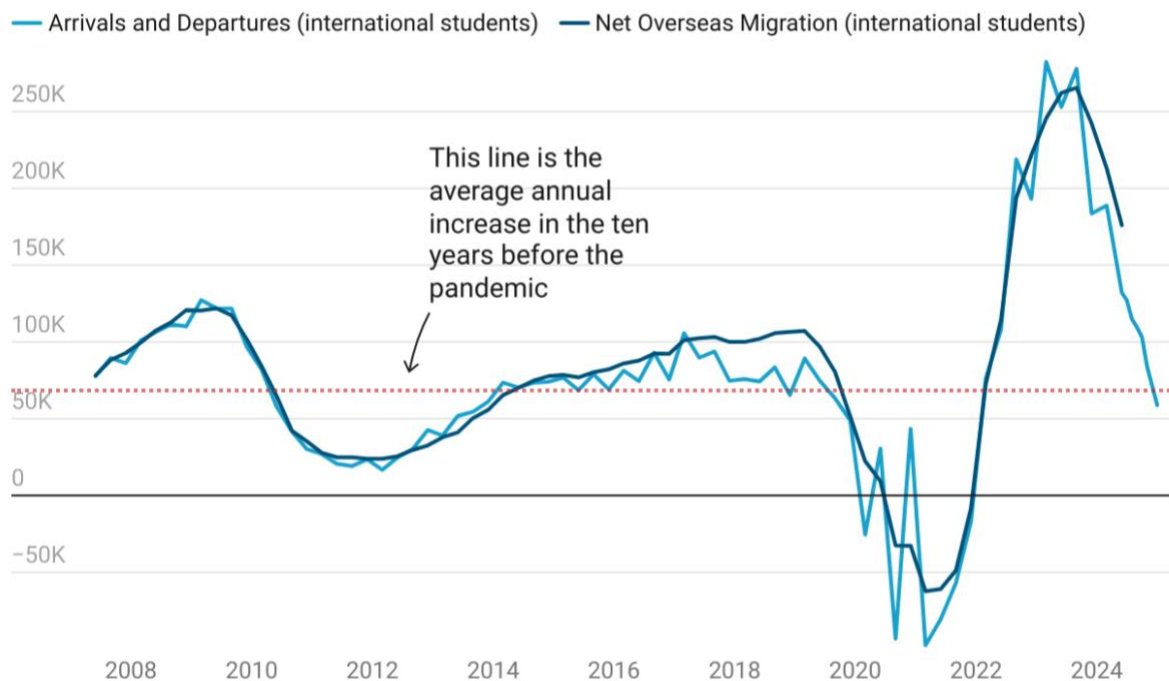
At over 800,000 in number, current and former international students are a significant population cohort in Australia. However, international students do not vote, and the politics of international students are subsumed into wider debates on cost-of-living, housing, and migration.

A largely missed element of commentary on proposed international student caps is that a 'cap' does not necessarily mean a cut to the total number of international students. Instead, it is a cut to the rate of growth.

Labor's net overseas migration forecasts are similar to pre-pandemic levels of about 260,000 (although forecasts for the current financial year were revised upwards in December 2024 to 340,000 due to lower-than-expected departures [13]). As Figure 3 shows, international students are only one component of net overseas migration, so there a lot of factors that influence whether the Government will meet its net overseas migration targets.

If trend figures for the ten years before the pandemic are used, the annual increase in the number of international students should be around 70,000 per year. Figure 5 shows that the annual change in international student arrivals and departures has fallen to below pre-pandemic trend levels for the first time since borders re-opened. Arrivals and departures are not the same as net overseas migration, though Figure 5 highlights the close relationship. This suggests that the Government is on track to meet its target.

Figure 5: The increase in international students is starting to slow



Changes in international students (12 month rolling period) by arrivals and departures and net overseas migration

As Table 2 highlights, the total student visas granted has also fallen to pre-pandemic levels, largely at the expense of the vocational sector, although the number of visas granted for students located overseas remains higher than pre-pandemic levels. This suggests the effort to slow the growth in international students is having the desired effect.

Table 2: The number of student visas granted has returned to pre-pandemic levels

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total student visas granted	260,810	284,481	314,568	346,207	365,467	220,975	173,692	396,051	425,177	322,360
Higher education	132,217	145,962	161,527	181,583	192,602	123,344	105,441	204,481	241,544	209,060
Vocational sector	54,991	63,895	67,818	85,792	91,275	68,987	55,479	109,446	89,226	45,371

Number of primary international student visas granted by calendar year

Coalition caps policy

The Coalition had previously signalled it would introduce “a cap which will go further to reduce student numbers than Labor, specifically at major metropolitan unis to relieve stress on rental markets in our major cities” [14].

On April 6, the party announced its plan to impose a 25% cap on international student enrolments at public universities, a measure targeting large institutions like the University of Sydney and the University of Melbourne. The policy, which also includes a new \$5,000 student visa fee (more than triple the current cost), is pitched as a way to rein in migration and prioritise domestic students.

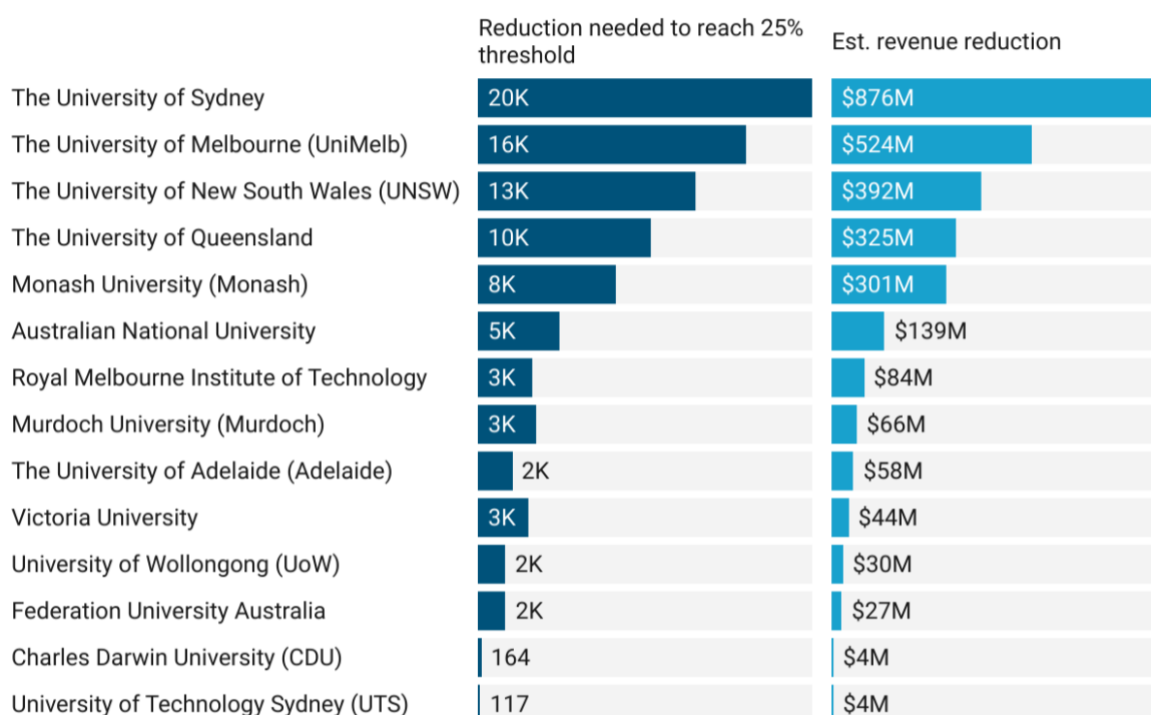
The Coalition plans to cut 30,000 international student commencements relative to Labor’s policy, with 20,000 of these reductions to come from universities. A 25% cap would significantly affect universities with high international enrolments - fourteen public universities would exceed the cap based on 2023 figures. Collectively, these universities would need to reduce their international student enrolments by about 85,000 to fall under the limit.

As Figure 6 shows, the Coalition’s approach could see some individual institutions taking a big hit. For example, the University of Sydney had 38,745 domestic students and 32,430 international students in 2023. The 25% cap would mean a limit of 12,915 international students. This would see a drop of nearly 20,000 or 60% of international students.

If this reduction was applied evenly to the A\$1.45 billion in international student revenue reported by the University of Sydney, this suggests a loss of more than \$800 million in annual revenue.

Figure 6: A 25% international student enrolment threshold would be a significant reduction in students and revenue for some universities

Reduction in international students needed to reach 25 per cent enrolment threshold and estimated revenue reduction



Data based in 2023 enrolment data and university finance reports. Data for universities that have more than 25 per cent of onshore enrolments as international students

Chart: Mitchell Institute • Created with Datawrapper

This figure also shows that large reductions in international student enrolments would also be required at:

- ◆ The University of Melbourne, with a 52% reduction costing about \$520 million
- ◆ University of New South Wales, with a 47% reduction costing about \$390 million
- ◆ University of Queensland, with a 47% reduction costing about \$325 million
- ◆ Monash University, with a 33% reduction costing about \$300 million.

These institutions also educate large numbers of domestic students. In 2023, about 380,000 domestic students (or 40%), were enrolled in institutions that exceeded the 25% international student threshold. A sudden loss of revenue at this scale could lead to course cuts, reduced student services, and increased class sizes.

It's important to note, these numbers are indicative only. This analysis does not take into account the growth many universities experienced during 2024. Estimates suggest new international students were at a record 160,000 last year.

Controlled growth here to stay

Education institutions and sector representatives remain strongly opposed to the introduction

of any measures to limit international students and are lobbying hard on the issue. University and business groups have described the proposed cuts as ‘taking a sledgehammer to one of the nation’s biggest income generators.’ The Group of Eight, representing the largest and most prestigious universities with the greatest number of international students, have vehemently opposed both Labor and Coalition policies.

Ultimately though, the closer management of international student numbers is likely to continue. Both major parties are proposing changes that require some form of legislative change to implement. Government control over the size and composition of temporary residents living in Australia – including international students – is a legitimate feature of migration policy.

The biggest issue will be the formula that is used to determine the distribution of international student places among institutions, whichever party wins the election.

The current approach is a stopgap measure and is riddled with inconsistencies. For instance, there are different formulas used for the vocational and higher education sectors and allocations are based on the more volatile ‘flow’ measures (the number of new students commencing) rather than the more stable ‘stock’ measures (the total number of students enrolled).

The formula used to distribute places is technical and one that is not likely to feature in election debates. However, for many tertiary education providers, it is one of the most consequential issues due to its outsized impact on resourcing and revenue.

Academic freedom and campus protests

Protests on Australian university campuses have been a longstanding tradition. In recent years, these have intensified around issues like higher education funding, climate change, workplace rights and current international conflicts [15].

Both major parties have weighed in on the politics of these protests, raising concerns about student and broader community safety. Labor has attempted to balance combating antisemitism while considering free speech implications. The Coalition advocates for more stringent measures against perceived antisemitic activities, criticising Labor’s responses as inadequate [16].

Universities are caught in a complex balancing act between upholding free speech, ensuring student safety, and addressing external political interventions. Most have academic freedom policies which allow freedom of speech on campuses, but Australian public universities are established under federal and state legislation so their power to intervene when non-student protestors are on-campus protests is limited [15].

The politicisation of international conflicts on Australian university campuses has highlighted divisions between the major parties, raising questions about university governance, the right to protest and the role of universities in this context.

What are the parties offering?

As we head into the 2025 election, the difference in tertiary education policy comes down to approach. Labor emphasises equity, increased public investment and student debt relief to improve access and affordability, while the Coalition prioritises a market-driven model with a focus on cost efficiency and sector-specific funding structures.

The Albanese Government has made much of its 'big picture' approach to reform through the Australian Universities Accord review. But beyond recent legislation on student debt and indexation, there has been little real sector-wide change. It has not scrapped the Job-ready Graduates Package or delivered a viable funding alternative. Announcements on Fee-Free TAFE and apprenticeship support signal an ongoing commitment to make vocational education more accessible and address skill shortages in critical industries. Labor has moved on implementing measures to limit international student numbers, given the political nexus with population and infrastructure pressures.

The Coalition has expressed concerns regarding the Government's approach to international students, advocating instead for a more equitable distribution of international student numbers and funding across the sector. Its policy also claims to address housing shortages by releasing accommodation it says is taken by temporary migrants.

When it comes to dollars and cents, the Labor Party is actively pursuing reforms to reduce student debt and adjust fee structures through legislative measures and the establishment of advisory bodies. In contrast, the Coalition has favoured maintaining or increasing fees for certain courses and has resisted some of Labor's recent initiatives aimed at overhauling university funding and fee policies.

The Greens are sticking with their more radical and long-held promise to guarantee a free place at university or TAFE (or an apprenticeship or traineeship) with a focus on debt forgiveness and the abolition or limiting of fees for marginalised groups. Their commitment is to a tertiary education system that is accessible to all Australians, not just those who can afford it.

Finally, the major parties bring equally underdeveloped policy approaches to the VET sector and how far it should operate in harmony with higher education. The Accord review proposed reforms to improve credit recognition and regulatory approaches between VET and higher education, but it did not do much to progress the cause of tertiary harmonisation. Many who still hold out hope for a more integrated and cohesive tertiary education sector continue to be disappointed, with little change on this front.

The future of these reforms and the regulatory body responsible for their development, Australian Tertiary Education Commission, has recently come into sharp focus with Labor appointing Professor Mary O'Kane AC as interim Chief Commissioner. Across the floor, the Coalition has promised to block its establishment, because "it adds another layer of administration at significant cost without delivering meaningful progress for our universities"

[17].

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