

## LEADING PTE CALLS FOR CAUTION OVER IMMIGRATION CHANGES

Leading Private Tertiary Education (PTE) provider, Aspire2 International CEO Clare Bradley today called for caution over the Government's confirmation in the weekend that it will significantly cut immigration.

"International education is a significant export earner for the New Zealand economy, contributing \$4.5b to GDP in 2015 alone. PTE providers contribute nearly 25% of that amount – around \$1.1b in total. Policy changes which impact the ability of students to study and work in New Zealand need to be developed in consultation with the sector, and treated separately to other immigration policy."

"Any reduction in student visa numbers will directly and significantly impact on the sustainability of quality PTE providers, and the contribution the sector makes to the economy. Aspire2 would also be extremely concerned if there was any move to limit the ability of students to work while they are studying. Without exception, students need to work to support themselves – any changes to this rule would mean students could simply not afford to come here."

"Similarly, any changes to the ability of students to work for 12 months post-graduation on an open work visa, and their ability to then apply for a further 2 year employer assisted visa would have a serious and negative impact on the sector – it would effectively shut the door to the majority of students", she said.

"New Zealand faces a highly competitive market to attract students, and is not a top of mind study destination for students considering overseas study. Our main competitors are Canada and Australia who work very hard to position themselves as easy to deal with and 'open for business.'"

"Aspire2 is committed to working constructively with Government and its coalition partners to enable it to meet its public policy objectives for the sector in a way which enhances New Zealand's reputation as a desirable place to study. But we need to work together – sudden and dramatic policy changes have a negative impact on the perception of New Zealand as a desirable place to study and work, and position us as a tough and unpredictable market."

"International education provides New Zealand with many benefits over and above the dollar value to the economy. New Zealand is a small country, dependent on trade, and international education provides links and business relationships into markets that are strategically important to our economy."

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### Aspire2 International

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“International students are keen to work in many jobs that New Zealand businesses struggle to find staff to fill, including the health and aged care, hospitality, tourism, and primary industry sectors – fruit picking and food delivery for example. They add a rich diversity to our learning institutions, to our communities and work places.”

Aspire2 International is New Zealand’s largest provider of international education, with 3500 students recruited from over 26 markets, and employing around 430 staff.

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