

**Social Media: Impact on international students in adaption to Australian culture**

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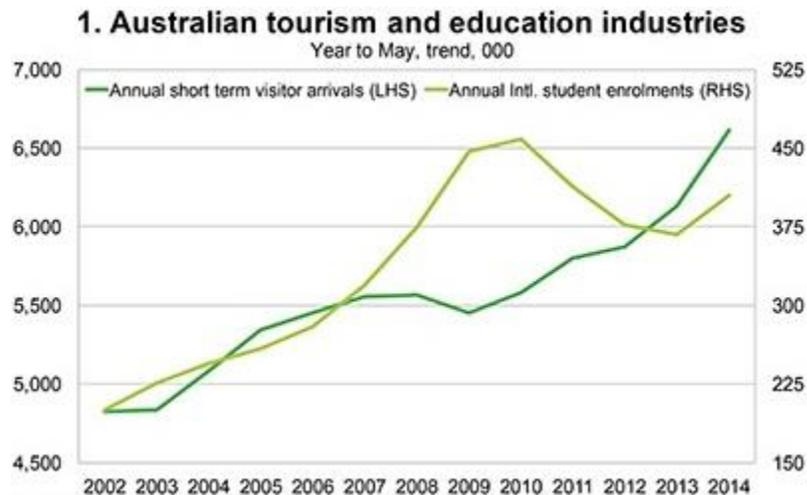
## 1. Introduction

It will not be an exaggeration to state that globalization has affected every aspect of human life including education. With international boundaries becoming increasingly porous, there is today a greater exchange between countries which is altering learning systems and structures, redefining the roles of teachers and students and creating a shift within societies from industrialization to being more information based (Chinnammai 2005). The increasing internationalization of higher education is also an impact of globalization and increasing mobility of students is a reality. Educational export is an important aspect of a country's foreign trade and is more lucrative in financial terms than many of the established sectors. And Australia seems to be no exception. The inflow of foreign students into leading Australian universities has not only impacted the country's exchequer but has also transformed the country into a leading international centre for pursuing higher education.

While internationalization of education is a reality, the associated problems are also getting magnified consistently. Students travelling to foreign countries in pursuit of educational excellence are often faced with problems and dilemmas which are unique to such relocation. Finding appropriate resources to help them adjust to a new culture, societal norms and nonexistent network is not always easy. Hence students increasingly turn to social media to find ways and means to integrate themselves with the norms of their host countries. But how effective is social media in such scenarios? This paper tries to unravel this aspect and in doing so the paper discusses the importance of educational exports for the Australian economy, the problems that international students face in the country and to what extent social media helps in mitigation of such problems.

## 2. Importance of educational export

Over the years Australia has transformed into a major centre of education and students willing to pursue quality higher education make a beeline for leading Australian Universities. Education export, which contributes annual revenues of nearly \$15 billion, is the fourth largest and is preceded by iron ore, coal and gold.

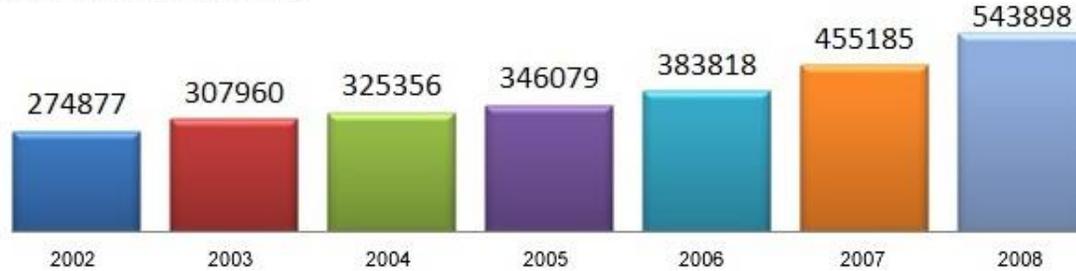


Source: ABS 2011

The significance of contribution of international students can be judged from the fact that over the last five years, Australian universities earned nearly \$18.5 billion from such intake (GEA 2014). Every year approximately 300,000 students enroll into the various Australian universities for pursuing their higher education. The country is the third most popular destination for students seeking international admission and nearly seven percent of the global international students come to Australia. Over the last sixty years of providing international education, the country has generated over 2.5 million alumni (GEA 2014).

### Number of International Students in Australia

Source: Australian Education International



Source: ACPET 2013

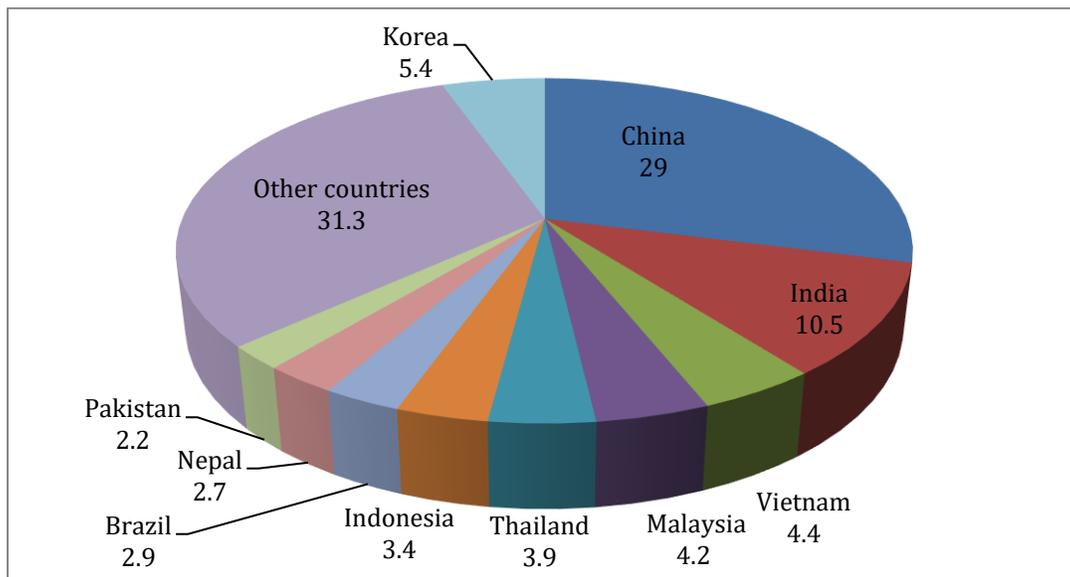
In 2011 over 550,000 students took admission in the different universities and generated over \$16 billion dollars in annual export earnings (GEA 2014). Not only in terms of revenue generation, international education offerings by the various universities have contributed to the prosperity of the country and also the region. It has also transformed the way Australia is perceived throughout the world and has also lead to expansion of the country's intellectual capital and international influence (GEA 2014).

Therefore it can be concluded that international students coming into Australia for pursuing higher studies is important not only from the economic perspective but also in terms of Australia's relations with other nations. Given the significance of their contribution it seems a fair expectation that they be provided an environ in which they can fulfill the purpose of their migration in the most fruitful way. But international students find it difficult to adjust to the ways of the host country and much of this never came to light before the spate of incidents involving Asian students around 2008 and 2009 (Marginson 2010).

### 3. Literature Review

#### 3.1. Composition of International Students

While discussing about the difficulties faced by international students in Australia it is pertinent to discuss the composition of the group. It has been observed in media report that four out of every five international students belong to Asian origin (Marginson 2010).



Source: AG 2012

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