



Connecting with stakeholders to
improve the student experience

Improving the student experience

- We restore the student experience by resolving individual complaints from international students
- We help private education providers make improvements through our recommendations and best practice complaints handling training
- We inform government and the sector of systemic issues and trends as well as opportunities for improvements

Connecting with stakeholders

- We are part of a wider network of external, independent complaint handlers:
 - Australian Capital Territory Ombudsman
 - New South Wales Ombudsman
 - Northern Territory Ombudsman
 - Queensland Ombudsman
 - South Australian Ombudsman
 - Tasmanian Ombudsman
 - Victorian Ombudsman
 - Western Australian Ombudsman
 - Office of the Training Advocate, South Australia

Complaint handlers

Private

Public

**International
students**

Overseas Students
Ombudsman +

SA Training Advocate

State/Territory
Ombudsman +

SA Training Advocate

**Domestic
students**

SA Training Advocate +
Senate Inquiry has
recommended a VET
Training Ombudsman be
created

State/Territory
Ombudsman +

SA Training Advocate

Complaint handlers network

- We established the network and hold regular teleconferences to share information and encourage a consistent approach to international student complaints handling
- We have organised a panel of complaint handlers to speak to students at previous CISA conferences (Council of International Students Australia)
- We have held two annual forums with a wider group of complaint handlers and other stakeholders to discuss systemic issues and ways forward

External complaints avenues

- In June 2016, we distributed a consultation paper on external complaints avenues for international students
- We asked – is the current system meeting the needs of international students and the sector?
- Are there any gaps? If so, what is the best way to address these?
- We received most submissions in late August

Interim results

- Stakeholder responses indicated:
 - Some support for a single international students ombudsman or a single intake point for international student complaints
 - A need for education providers and external complaint handlers to increase their marketing and promotion of their complaint processes to international students
 - Some external complaint handlers to better explain their role in handling international student complaints on their website

Interim results (continued)

- Stakeholder responses indicated:
 - The need for all external complaint handlers to better explain how they relate to other complaint handlers
 - More consistent complaints data and reporting on complaints trends, particularly from the public sector, similar to what the OSO currently does
 - Calls for more training on best practice complaints handling for education providers, similar to what the OSO does
 - The need to consider 18 year olds ability to access complaints processes, possible need for further research

Other improvements we are collaborating on

- We are working with CISA and other complaint handlers to develop a webpage listing all external complaint handlers & who to contact
- We are collaborating with Study Melbourne who is organising this year's complaints handling forum to discuss ways we can help providers improve their own complaints handling
- We have collaborated with English Australia, ACPET and ISANA to deliver best practice complaints handling training to providers

Frequently investigated education providers project

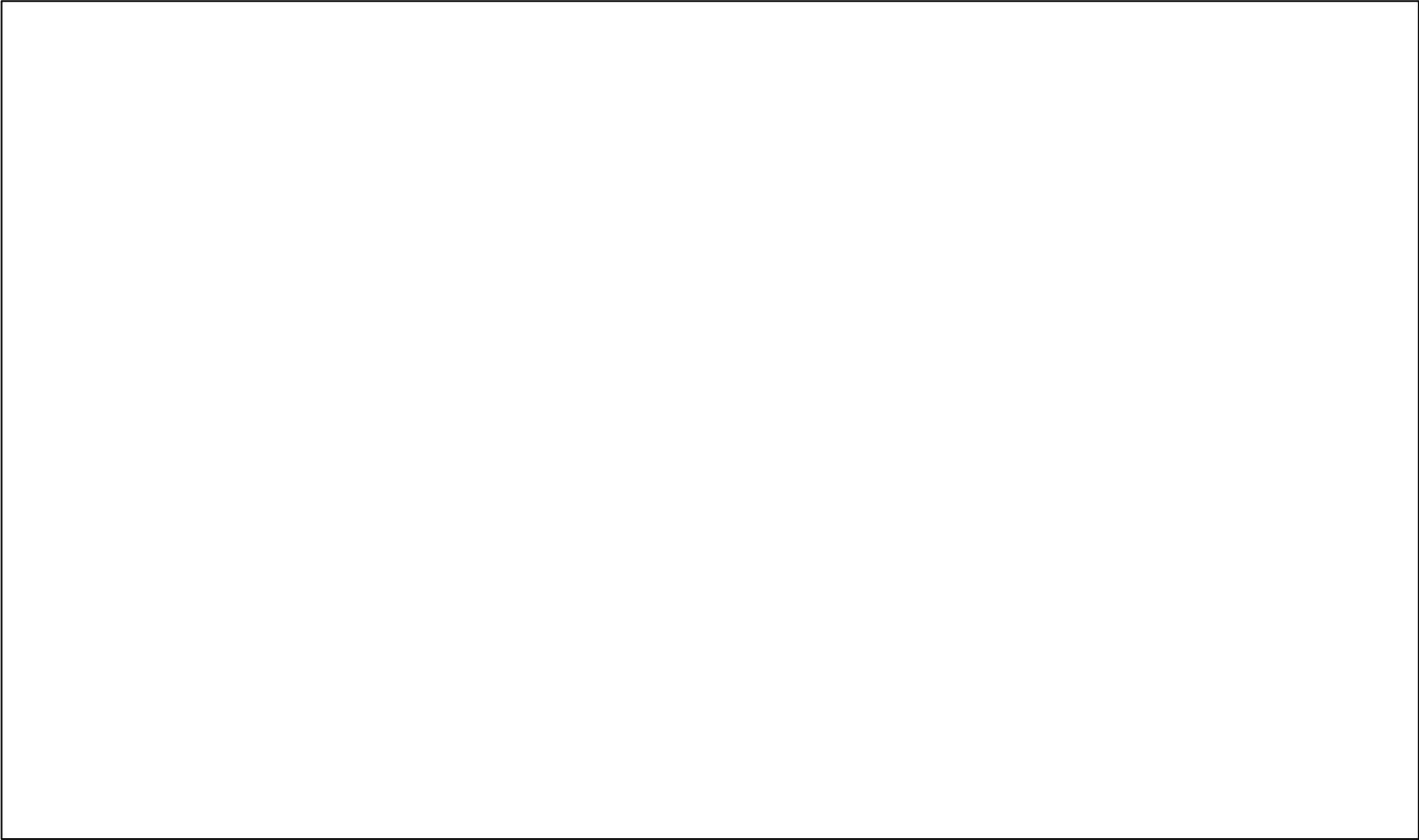
- OSO is analysing complaint trends for the most frequently investigated providers over first five years
- Aim is to determine if providers have maintained our recommendations over time
- Also help providers harness the valuable information these complaints contain
- Compare individual provider trends with overall trends & brief providers on results

Frequently investigated education providers (cont'd 2)

- First two providers we have analysed have high number of appeals because they are doing the right thing in telling students of their appeal rights
- For both providers, we identified multiple systemic issues the providers had missed in their own internal complaints and appeals process
- Both providers responded positively to our recommendations, made improvements and have maintained these over time

Frequently investigated education providers (cont'd 3)

- One provider made comments that helped us improve our approach to a particular issue too
- Once the providers fixed the systemic issues we identified, we were able to increasingly decide cases in their favour, while still considering the student's individual circumstances
- Overall, providers have improved the student experience for current and future students as a result of our investigations and recommendations



Questions?



OVERSEAS STUDENTS OMBUDSMAN 

COMMONWEALTH
OMBUDSMAN 