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**International education is critical to Australia's future prosperity.**

The Australian Government's commitment to expanding the role of international education in the post COVID-19 world will boost economic growth, foster foreign diplomacy and contribute to Australia's national security, said Group of Eight Chief Executive Vicki Thomson.

Go8 universities look forward to collaborating with the government to develop the new International Education Strategy for 2021 to 2030, announced today by the Minister for Education Alan Tudge.

"The impact of COVID-19 has forced universities to rethink business models and with large numbers of international student arrivals not anticipated until Semester 1 2022, it is critical that the government and higher education sector work together to develop a model that maintains our competitive advantage in international education and research, while ensuring Australia has the skills and expertise required to meet our national priorities," said Ms Thomson.

Go8 universities have long recognised and are proud of the multi-faceted contribution our international students make to Australian society.

"In addition to the positive financial impact international education has on the broader Australian economy - every three international students studying at a Go8 university generates \$1million in economic impact - international students bring diversity and enhance the learning experience of domestic students.

"International education fosters strong ties between nations, boosting trade and cooperation. The research expertise and workforce skills provided by international students is vital to Australia's continued economic growth.

"Currently around 30,000 international students enrolled at Go8 universities are still studying offshore and have stuck by Australia through the pandemic. In an increasingly competitive digital environment, we need to develop models that deliver Australia's world class education to the international community.

"The world has changed and as the world's third largest provider of international education, Australia urgently needs a comprehensive international education plan with the flexibility to provide both onshore and offshore experiences for our international students."

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