

ENGAGING ACROSS SECTORS AND WITH THE COMMUNITY TO MANAGE THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

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The international education sector for practitioners can be complex. International students are not just students in the education institution; they are also tenants, consumers, employees and tourists. Their lives intersect with other members of the community; they have friends across the sector and they live amongst us.

While practitioners in the field will be able to call upon the advice and assistance from colleagues in the institution, this limited field may not be enough. Yet, teachers, advisers and counsellors need not feel that they need do everything nor do they need to re-invent the protocols every time something new comes across their desk.

There are many areas where it is sensible to collaborate and engage across the sector. One area is the management of critical incidents. Critical incidents involving international students affect student communities across institutions, staff and the broader community. Past cases in South Australia showed that a collaborative approach across the sector to critical incident management resulted in an effective use of resources and case management. Collaboration across the sector also facilitated effective engagement with essential agencies and services.

Engagement across the sector and community begins with information on the resources that exist and tapping into established networks. The establishment of a network of resources also includes learning of the committees, key agency contacts and resources. The SA and NT branch of ISANA International Education Association ran a series of Critical Incident management workshops that involved participants from across the education sector in 2009. Participants included Schools, the VET sector, higher education, ELICOS and sponsored student agents. Participants shared issues, strategies and information based on past cases. Over a series of four workshops, participants developed a shared tool of information that included communication strategies, resources and a strong network. Participants also learnt of a number of key cross agency committees and contacts. It is important to have a conduit to decision makers within key agencies such as the local police and Immigration and local councils. This presentation discusses how to go about establishing a resource for all providers to access.