In 2012, Australian Education International (AEI) commissioned research into the overall satisfaction of international students studying in Australia. The research used the International Student Barometer survey instrument and was conducted in collaboration with Universities Australia, English Australia, TAFE Directors Australia (TDA), and the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET). The survey sought responses from international students studying on-shore in the Higher Education (HE), Vocational Education and Training (VET), and English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) sectors. A separate survey instrument was used to seek responses from international students aged 16 years or over studying in Australian secondary schools in years 11 and 12. (p.iii)

The Schools survey conducted using a different survey instrument in which a large proportion of students chose the option ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’.

The Schools sector survey sought participation of international students aged 16 years or over, in Years 11 and 12, studying in Australian secondary schools on a student visa. All CRICOS registered government and non-government secondary schools with five or more international student enrolments were invited to participate in the survey. (p.2)

The Schools sector survey received 2,262 (1,143 Year 11 and 1,119 Year 12) student responses from 278 participating schools. This survey response rate was 39% which is calculated by dividing the total number of completed returns received (2,336) by the total number of students for whom a survey ID had been created (5,926). (p.11)

The Schools sector had a five (5) point ‘satisfaction’ scale which included the option ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’. For reasons such as this direct comparison between Schools with other sector data presented in this report cannot be made. (p.2)

The Schools sector survey was conducted in 5 different languages. (p.3)

The 2012 survey questionnaire for school students closely followed that used in the 2010 ISS for schools and was made available both online and in hardcopy. (p.3)

At a national level, 74% of all respondents in the Schools sector (both Years 11 and 12) were satisfied with their overall school experience in Australia. Seventy-two per cent indicated that they were satisfied with their living experience while 69% considered the teaching at their school to be either good or very good. Sixty-eight per cent were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with the support services provided to them. Survey findings in 2012 were similar to the survey conducted in 2010. For example, 75% of Year 12 respondents to the 2012 ISS reported that they were satisfied with their overall school experience which was slightly down on the 76% reported by students in 2010. The Schools survey was conducted using a different survey instrument in which a large proportion of students chose the option ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’. The survey responses from the Schools sector are hence not directly comparable with survey responses from other education sectors. (p.v)
KEY FINDINGS

Overall satisfaction: Secondary Schools (p.4)

Seventy-two per cent of Year 12 respondents to the Schools sector component of the 2012 ISS reported that they were satisfied with their living experience in Australia (down from 74% in 2010). Seventy-one per cent rated the teaching at their school as either good or very good (72% in 2010).

Satisfaction with support on arrival (p.5)

The overwhelming majority of respondents in the Schools sector who had used arrival support services found the services useful or very useful - including Airport pick-up (97% - up from 93% in 2010), and Orientation program (91% - up from 89% in 2010). It should be noted however that, as was the case in 2010, only around a third of respondents were aware of the Airport pick-up service and just over a half were aware of the Orientation program.

Satisfaction with living in Australia (p.6)

Seventy-two per cent of all Schools sector respondents indicated that they were satisfied with living in Australia. Just over 69% were satisfied with Safety, while only about one third were satisfied with Living cost and less than half with Ease of getting around.

Eighty-six per cent of all Schools sector respondents indicated that they would like to have more Australian students as friends. While 64% of all Schools sector respondents indicated that they had made an effort to make friends with Australian students, 40% felt that Australian students were not interested in interacting more with international students. Forty-six per cent thought that their English ability was a barrier to making friends with Australian students.

Satisfaction with learning in Australia (p.7)

Sixty-nine per cent of all respondents from the Schools sector indicated that the teaching they had received was either good or very good with a further 25% rating their experience as average.

Prior to coming to Australia and starting their studies, about one in five Schools sector respondents considered their spoken and written English to be either good or very good (23% and 21% respectively). The proportion of students reporting their spoken and written English to be good or very good at the time of the survey had increased to 56% and 48% respectively.

Satisfaction with support services (p.8)

Sixty-eight per cent of all Schools sector respondents reported that they were satisfied with the support services available at their schools (with a further 26% indicating that that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied). Library (88%) and English classes (68%) were the two support services which most students were aware of, followed by Extra-curricular activities organised by the school (58%). The services that were least well known were Religious support services (21%), Airport pick-up service (32%), and Clubs/ societies (33%). All other services had an awareness level of between 49% and 55%).
Airport pick-up service (96% of all Schools sector respondents), Library, English classes, and International student coordinators (all 94%) were considered the most useful services available with Religious support services (65%) considered the least useful. All other support services that were used scored a usefulness rating of between 85% and 93%.

Factors influencing the choice of where to study \(\text{(p.9-10)}\)

The five most important factors influencing decisions of all respondents in the Schools sector (both Years 11 and 12) in choosing to study overseas were to:

- improve English (72%);
- gain experience living and studying in another country and/or culture (71%);
- improve overall studies (56%);
- improve chances of entering a good university in Australia (50%); and
- obtain a better quality education than is available at home (50%).

Around 6 in 10 of all Schools sector respondents indicated that Australia was their first choice for overseas schooling. The top four factors that influenced the choice of country were: High quality of education (57%), Beautiful, natural environment (51%), Safe place to live (45%), and Friends living in Australia (43%).

About half of all Schools sector respondents were influenced in their choice of school by Education Agents with a further 40% indicating that they had been influenced by the recommendation of a friend or relative.