

# First foreign students arrive in Australia since virus closure

November 30 2020

---



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

International students have arrived in Australia for the first time since the country shut its borders to curb coronavirus in March, with a charter flight touching down in Darwin on Monday.

Australian universities have been leaking cash due to the country's indefinite border closure, which has locked out [foreign students](#) who keep the billion-dollar sector afloat.

A plane chartered by Charles Darwin University (CDU) carrying 63 international students arrived in the northern city of Darwin as part of a pilot programme aimed at kickstarting the higher education industry.

The students—from mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan, Vietnam and Indonesia—travelled to Singapore to catch the flight and will now spend 14 days in a government quarantine facility.

The mix of new and continuing students are enrolled across a range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses including law, nursing and engineering.

In a statement, CDU said it was "an important first step in the recovery of the international education sector in Australia".

Education is listed as Australia's fourth-largest export—behind [iron ore](#), coal and natural gas—with more than 500,000 international students enrolled last year, bringing about Aus\$37 billion into the economy.

Lobby group Universities Australia said in June that the sector could lose US\$11 billion as a result of the border closure.

Universities—which as public institutions were omitted from a government coronavirus wage subsidy scheme—have been shedding thousands of jobs.

Similar proposals by universities in Canberra and Adelaide were previously scrapped, as the government came under pressure to reserve places in quarantine facilities for Australians stranded overseas.

Policies limiting the number of returnees have left more than 35,000 Australian citizens stuck abroad, despite government promises to bring them home by Christmas.

Many [international students](#) also remain stuck in Australia, and some are relying on charities for food handouts after they were excluded from support packages.

© 2020 AFP

Citation: First foreign students arrive in Australia since virus closure (2020, November 30)  
retrieved 8 June 2023 from  
<https://phys.org/news/2020-11-foreign-students-australia-virus-closure.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.