

Foreign student boom for city

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TOWNSVILLE is luring more international students to the region than ever before with revenue increasing by 30 per cent in a year.

The region's export revenue grew to \$84 million in 2017 and employment also increased by 31 per cent to 353 jobs, according to new data from Deloitte Access Economics.

James Cook University pro vice-chancellor, international, Melissa Bank, said the university was seeing significant growth in "full degree" numbers.

"Full degree numbers means we're attracting students who are staying with us for a longer time and who are also paying higher full course fees," she said.

"This is good as they're staying in Townsville for two to three or possibly four years, so these students attend class for two 13-week semesters and are then living and spending money here for the other 26 weeks of the year."

Ms Banks said a growing number of students were interested in science areas including environmental subjects related to the Great Barrier Reef and more traditional medical subjects such as nursing and dentistry.

"We're also looking at growing our engineering and technology in the future through a number of initiatives," she said.

Townsville MP Scott Stewart said the increase in the international education sector benefited the local economy in a number of ways.

"More students than ever before want to come to Townsville to get an education," he said. "That's why we're working hard to capitalise on the growth of this emerging sector to lure more students to our city."

Ministerial Champion for International Education Kate Jones said the data released yesterday showed Queensland's international education sector had grown throughout the state.

"Statewide export revenue from the international education sector rose to \$4.37 billion – that's a 13.8 per cent increase on 2016 and shows the Government's \$25.3 million strategy to grow this industry is paying big dividends," she said.

"The data released today shows not only are we luring more students to Queensland, we're creating new jobs for Queenslanders through our investment in international education."

Ms Jones said applications for the fourth round of funding from the \$6 million International Education and Training (IET) Partnership Fund were now open.