

## Students find safe haven

MILES KEMP

ADELAIDE'S international students have given the city a ringing endorsement, rating it the safest Australian capital in which to study.

Student placement organisation IDP Education surveyed 6000 students at universities and schools across Australia.

Adelaide was rated as safer, more friendly, cleaner, greener, quieter and more affordable than any other city.

IDP Education chief executive Tony Pollock said: "Sydney and Melbourne may have the big city, multicultural flavour, but international students have ranked Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth highest on affordability, cleanliness and being green."

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TICK OF APPROVAL: International students Jia Ming Low, from Malaysia, and Claudia Fernandez Villasante, from Chile, at the University of Adelaide yesterday.

# International students find safe haven in Adelaide

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Australia's reputation as a host for international students has been battered in overseas media following violent attacks on Indian students in Melbourne earlier this year and claims others were being exploited by dodgy education providers.

Adelaide ranked well, with Brisbane and Perth, on safety, which IDP said would allow the smaller capitals to play to their strengths in the international market.

"It is hard to argue with a finding that says Sydney and Melbourne have the entertainment and big city attractiveness, but a city with a reputation for being affordable, clean, quiet or green can be just as appealing to families overseas," Mr Pollock said.

State Further Education Minister Michael O'Brien welcomed the

survey and said safety was among the top three priorities for international students, along with university rankings and affordability.

"This puts Adelaide in front of a lot of other cities on one of the most important factors," he said.

Adelaide was rated less favourably in some of the remaining 16 categories of the survey, including outdoor activities, multicultural flavour, dining and shopping.

Education Adelaide ambassador and UniSA student Claudia Fernandez Villasante disagreed with the criticisms of the city.

"I would disagree with the study findings because there are so many things going on here. The public transport is not that bad and there are so many things to do outdoors," the Peruvian national said. "I agree it is the safest place and it is affordable, and I don't know anyone who has had

safety problems, which is good." Fewer students living in Sydney rated it as safe, followed by those in Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth.

Mr O'Brien also dismissed student concerns about the lack of entertainment in Adelaide, saying the world's most prominent university cities were not the largest in their respective countries.

"This would also be a big attraction for many parents overseas who have to dig deep into the pockets and want to send their children somewhere where the bright lights will not be a distraction to their study," he said.

Last month, Federal Education Minister Julia Gillard travelled to India to talk down the racism crisis in the \$15.5 billion industry.

The results of the survey will be released today at the Australian International Education Conference in Sydney.