ATTN:

The Hon. Clare O’Neil MP
Minister for Home Affairs,
Minister for Cyber Security

The Hon. Andrew Giles MP
Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and
Multicultural Affairs

JOINT OPEN LETTER

Student Representative Bodies from the Group of Eight (Go8) Universities Call for the Reconsideration of Changes to the Temporary Graduate Visa Policy

Dear Ministers,

The undersigned student representative bodies from the Go8 universities of Australia, call for urgent reconsideration of proposed reforms to the Temporary Graduate Visa (TGV) or 485 visa, announced by the Federal Government.

Whilst welcoming many of the reforms which are part of the government’s new Migration Strategy, we oppose the reduction of the age limit for the TGV from 50 to 35, and we advocate for the grandfathering of these changes to ensure the fair and respectful consideration of current international students.

This cap will disproportionally affect Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students, who tend to begin their HDR candidatures at a later age. HDR students contribute substantially to Australia’s research output and this proposed cap risks a substantial loss of current and future research talent, skills and output. This is a direct blow to the vibrancy and diversity of Australia’s research community.

Some preliminary research also indicates that these changes will negatively and disproportionally affect HDRs studying in fields of critical shortage, as well as women, who tend to undertake HDR candidatures later in life.

We also call on the government to adopt a grandfathering approach to the implementation of these changes. Any reforms to the TGV should be applied prospectively, and should not retrospectively impact current student visa holders. Students who commenced their studies under the current policy should not be subjected to these sudden and drastic changes.

We strongly urge the authorities to reconsider these changes, recognising the detrimental impact they will have on the international student community and Australia’s standing as a leading destination for higher education and research.
Yours faithfully,

Weihong Liang  
President  
Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association

Richard Lee  
President (Higher Degree by Research)  
Association of Postgraduate Students, The University of Queensland

Yash Koppula  
President (Coursework)  
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Tony Le  
President  
The University of New South Wales Postgraduate Council

Sahampath Hettiarachachi  
President  
Monash Graduate Association

Jesse Gardner Russell  
President  
The University of Melbourne Graduate Student Association

Merlin Wang  
President  
Adelaide University Union (YouX)

Lashhanth Dhevaraju  
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University of Adelaide Council

Christopher-John Daudu  
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