

UNSW SRC discourages new working restrictions but welcomes the changes to the post-study work rights for international students

UNSW Student Representative Council welcomes the latest joint announcement by the Departments of Home Affairs and Education on 2nd September following the Jobs and Skills Summit 2020 on the changes to the post-study work rights for select degrees in areas of verified skill shortages. The announcement states that in select degrees, post-study work rights will be increased from two to four years for select Bachelor's degrees, three years to five years for select Master's degrees and four years to six years for select PhDs. This is a positive step for all international students to find work after graduation and contribute to the Australian workforce.

In the same announcement, the government states that the number of hours international students can work will be capped again in June 2023. This will reverse the relaxation of restrictions in January of this year. We strongly believe that the cap on work hours should remain uncapped and the freedom to choose their working hours should be given to each individual international student. Moreover, work experiences during the study provide valuable work-related skills and experiences for international students, but they also contribute hugely to the Australian economy. UNSW Students Representative Council calls for the permanent removal of the working hour caps for international students. The UNSW SRC will continue working with the National Union of Students Australia to push for removing this work hour cap.

International students have been the backbone of this country and supported the economy when Australia was going through an uncertain period of lockdowns and border closures through the early years of the COVID-19 pandemic. To give them the opportunities to secure meaningful work opportunities and to be treated with dignity as members who are taxed as citizens and treated like second-class occupants is a moral injustice. Although the changes to the post-study work rights are a positive step, there is also still a long way forward for equal work rights and combating discrimination that exists in different Australian industries toward recruiting international students. If you would like to continue to be involved and push for the permanent removal of the working hour caps for international students working hours, please consider signing this petition below so we can continue to lobby for change:

<https://www.megaphone.org.au/petitions/remove-the-cap-on-international-student-working-hours>

We lastly call on all student union guilds, councils, unions, and associations across Australia to pass motions in support of this and call for a change in support with the National Union of Students Australia. We also call on the Council of International Students Australia and Council of Postgraduate Students Australia to support this call for change.

Nayonika Bhattacharya
President, 2022
UNSW Student Representative Council

Si Thu Zin
International Students' Officer, 2022
UNSW Student Representative Council