

## Post-study work rights key to enhancing Australia's productivity

***Temporary graduates in Australia are young, highly educated and globally competent, but employers are yet to realise the full benefits to the labour market, according to the latest research from IEAA.***

Almost three-quarters of temporary graduate visa (subclass 485) holders are in full-time (44%) or part-time (30%) employment, according to a new report commissioned by IEAA on 'Economic opportunities and outcomes of post-study work rights in Australia'.

Despite being young, highly educated and demonstrating strong English language skills, temporary graduate visa holders are more likely to be working in low-skilled occupations after they transition from study into the workforce. A large proportion (17%) work in low skilled jobs in retail, wholesale and hospitality. More than 1 in 5 are unemployed and looking for work (10%), or are not participating in the labour market (12%).

"Temporary graduates have real potential to enhance Australia's productivity, provided they are able to secure relevant jobs in which they can apply their skills," said IEAA CEO, Phil Honeywood.

### **A rich new source of temporary graduate data**

The report presents some of the most detailed research of its kind, drawing on the [Australian Census and Temporary Entrants Integrated Dataset \(ACTEID\) 2016](#), a rich new data source that combines visa holder information from the Department of Home Affairs and insights from the Australian Census.

"This report adds to the growing research on post-study work rights," said IEAA President, Melissa Banks. "Recent research has given us great insights into student perceptions and the economic impact of temporary migration, but until now there has been a dearth of data on graduate outcomes."

"Post-study work rights are crucial for Australia to remain competitive in the global education market. The more we can enhance graduate outcomes, the better for all – students, education providers, employers and the broader Australian community," added Ms Banks.

The temporary graduate visa was introduced by Australia in 2008 (and updated in 2013) as an important mechanism for international students to gain workplace experience and for Australia to remain competitive in the education market. The length of visa is between 2–4 years, dependent on a student's level of study.

### **Calls for a formal policy evaluation**

IEAA is calling for further interrogation of the ACTEID dataset, as well as publication of international data from the Australian Government's Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS). The 2018 survey includes almost 28,000 international student respondents, but these results are yet to be published.

"It's also time for a formal evaluation of the temporary graduate visa program against its stated policy objectives," said Mr Honeywood. "Graduates with a bachelor or master degree by coursework are only eligible for a two-year work visa. Is this really enough time to gain meaningful, course-related experience in the Australian workplace?"

The report will be released at IEAA's Research Summit on Tuesday 15 October, which is held in conjunction with the [Australian International Education Conference \(AIEC\)](#) in Perth. The full report and accompanying infographic will be available at [www.ieaa.org.au/pswr](http://www.ieaa.org.au/pswr)

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