

18 September 2026

MGA Statement on the changes to Student Visa Policy

The Federal Government has announced its decision to increase restrictions on student visa holders.

What we know so far: The Australian Government is looking to restrict secondary applicants (including families) on most student visas moving forward. According to an [ABC report](#), this will not affect existing families already in Australia and there will be some exceptions for people from Pacific and ASEAN countries and for students engaging in PhD-level study.

Meanwhile, students who want to change course will likely need to apply for a new visa, and any move between courses will likely only be allowed to a higher qualification level, not sideways or downward.

With so much still unconfirmed, it's understandable that confusion (and misinformation) is spreading fast – and that uncertainty takes a toll.

MGA stands with the international students who bring immense social, cultural and economic value to Australia. This isn't the first time we've raised concerns about how international student policy gets made. This year, we have been advocating for the Federal Government to recognise these important contributions and repeal the 125% increase added to the Temporary Graduate Visa, which serves as the primary pathway for talented and Australian-trained graduate students to join the local workforce.

We have previously warned that decisions about international students that occur without consulting both the higher education sector and student communities have serious consequences. These concerns include:

- Locking talented students out of contributing to Australia's economy and society.
- Screening graduates by wealth, rather than the skills and expertise they possess.
- Discouraging prospective international students from choosing Australia for their studies.
- Downstream consequences on university revenue, sector employment, and the skilled worker pipeline for essential industries in Australia including healthcare, education and STEM.

These concerns still apply with these new migration policy announcements from Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke. MGA will continue to advocate on behalf of Monash's international graduate students for greater support and inclusion as essential members of our community.

Monash Graduate Association