

To the Senate Education and Employment Committees,

My name is Madeleine Chia and I am the Education Officer at the Australian National University Students' Association. As Education Officer I represent the interests of all undergraduate students at ANU and advocate on issues on their behalf such as the proposed workplace changes to the Omnibus bill.

As a student representative I think it is extremely important to note that many undergraduate students are casual workers themselves and thus, this bill will directly affect the welfare of students who live pay-check to pay-check. The proposed changes by the Morrison government to workplace laws will put more power in the hands of employers and make young workers worse off now and into the future. Moreover, if these changes are passed, there will be cuts to working conditions and pay. Many students will lose their protections of the minimum safety nets and more jobs will be made casual and insecure. Is this the future we want for students?

These proposed changes state that if the status 'casual' is marked in your contract, you will not be entitled to leave and other benefits such as a notice of termination or redundancy. This loophole will mean provide an incentive for businesses to make more jobs casual in the future. That means that permanent ongoing jobs in many industries will disappear making casual work the default of the future. The Government's proposed changes give employers the power to force through Workplace Agreements that may contain lower rates of pay, cut penalty rates and cut conditions like guaranteed minimum shift hours. Students are being taken advantage of, with the ANU Postgraduate Research Students' Association (PARSA) in 2019 finding that 51% of international students don't receive payslips and 24% of respondents didn't understand what superannuation is.

These proposed changes by the Morrison Government's version of criminalising wage theft will make it harder to prove wage theft and hold wage thieves accountable as well as making it harder to recover stolen wages. In a survey by the ANU Postgraduate Research Students' Association (PARSA) in 2019 found that out of the 435 respondents, 89.2% reported some form of illegal behaviour by their employer.

Is this the future you want for your children and grandchildren?

Kind Regards,

Madeleine Chia
Education Officer
ANU Students' Association

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I acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which ANUSA operates. I recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters, and communities of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I pay my respect to Elders, past and present, and commit to standing with our first nations people.