

Post-study work and implications for international education recovery

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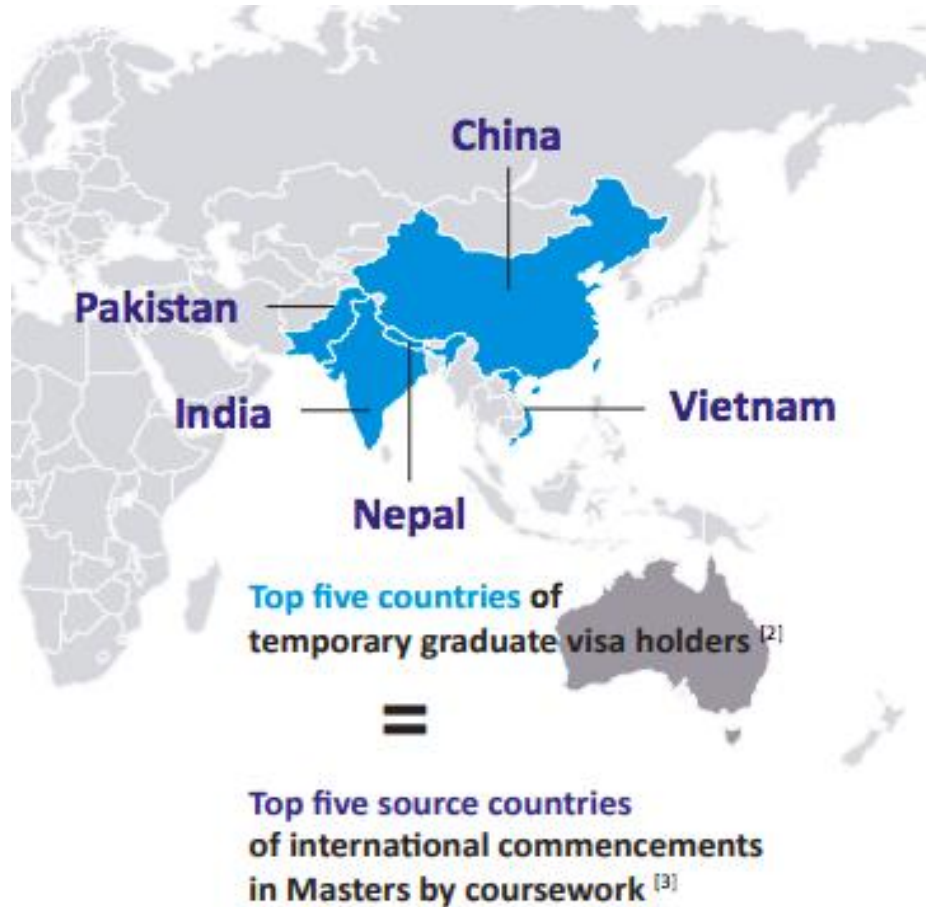
Australia

AAERI Convention
26 August 2020



1. Impacts of post-study work rights policy
2. Employment status
3. Implications for international education recovery

Post-study work: drawcard



- **Almost 90,000** 485 visa holders as of June 2020
- Almost **0.7** of the Australian workforce
- **82%** of Indian students considered the 485 visa an important factor, compared to the average rate of **74%** for non-Indian international students (Tran & Tan, 2020)
- 3rd quarter of 2019, the UK and Australia were equally searched as study destinations from India — at **16.2%** and **16.8%**.
- Immediate impact of UK's PSWR September 2029 announcement: search results increased by **47%** to the UK, & decreased by **15%** to Australia (Australian Government, 2020, 2019a,b – see full references in Report, IDP Connect, 2019)

Project: Impact of post-study work rights in Australia: 2016-2019



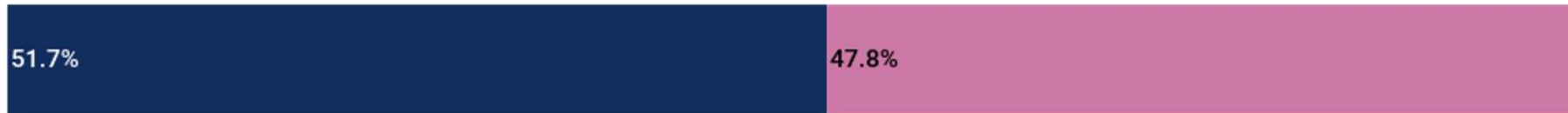
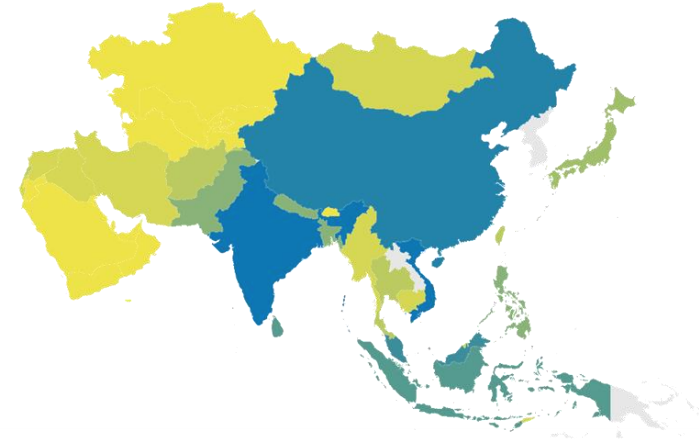
About the research project

Methodology

A mixed-methods research: (2016-2019)

- Critical analysis of policy and secondary datasets
- 50 in-depth interviews over three years
- A quantitative survey (Dec 2018 - Jul 2019)

Survey: 1,156 Participants



● Male ● Female ● Other

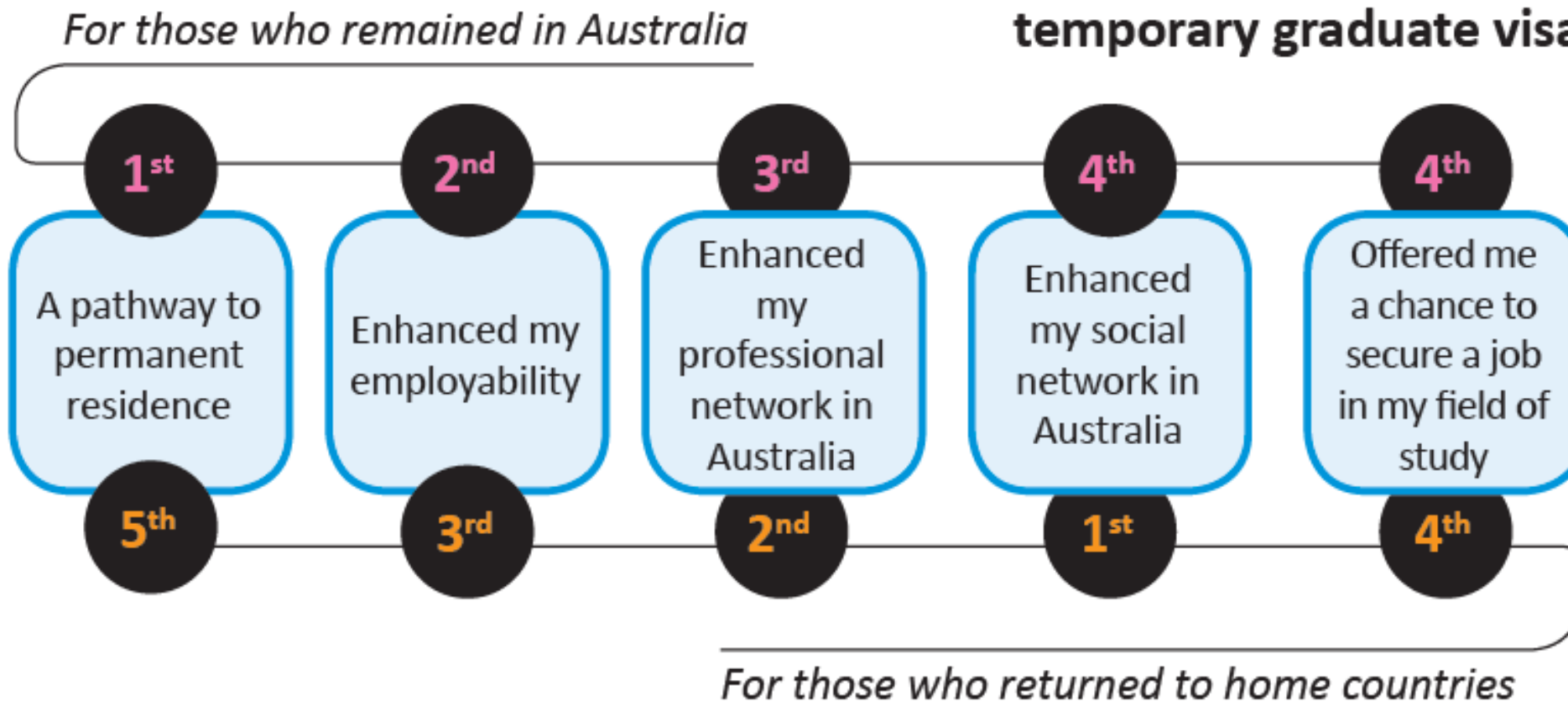


● In Australia ● In their home country ● In another country

Ranking of usefulness



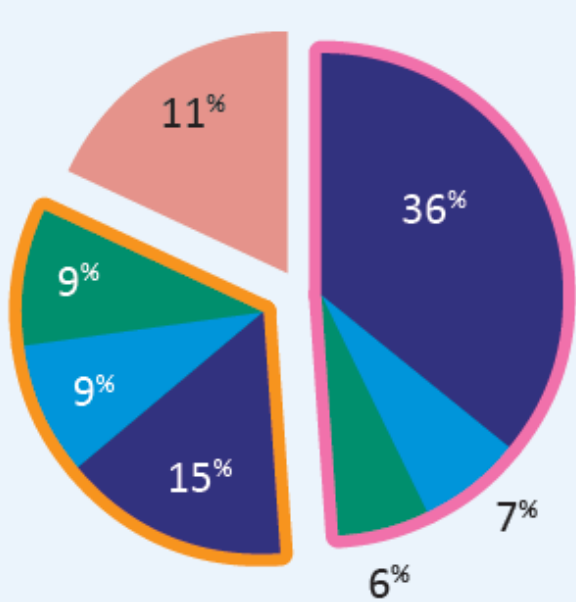
Ranking of usefulness of temporary graduate visa



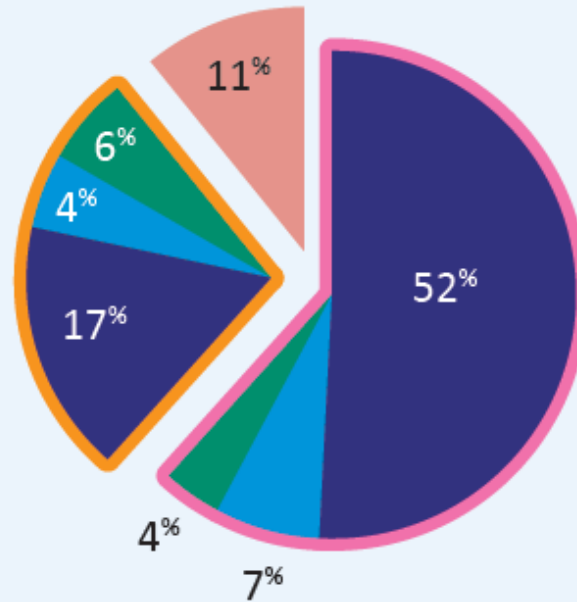
Current employment status for those staying in Australia



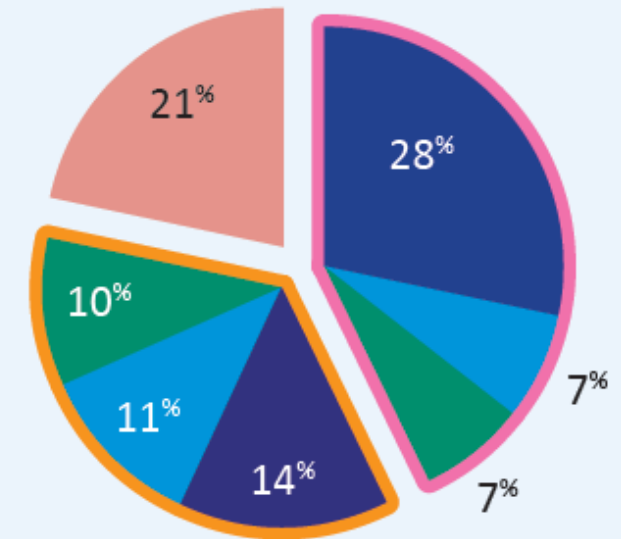
Still looking for a job Working, in field of study Working, not in field of study Full time Part time Casual



Past and present 485 visa holders

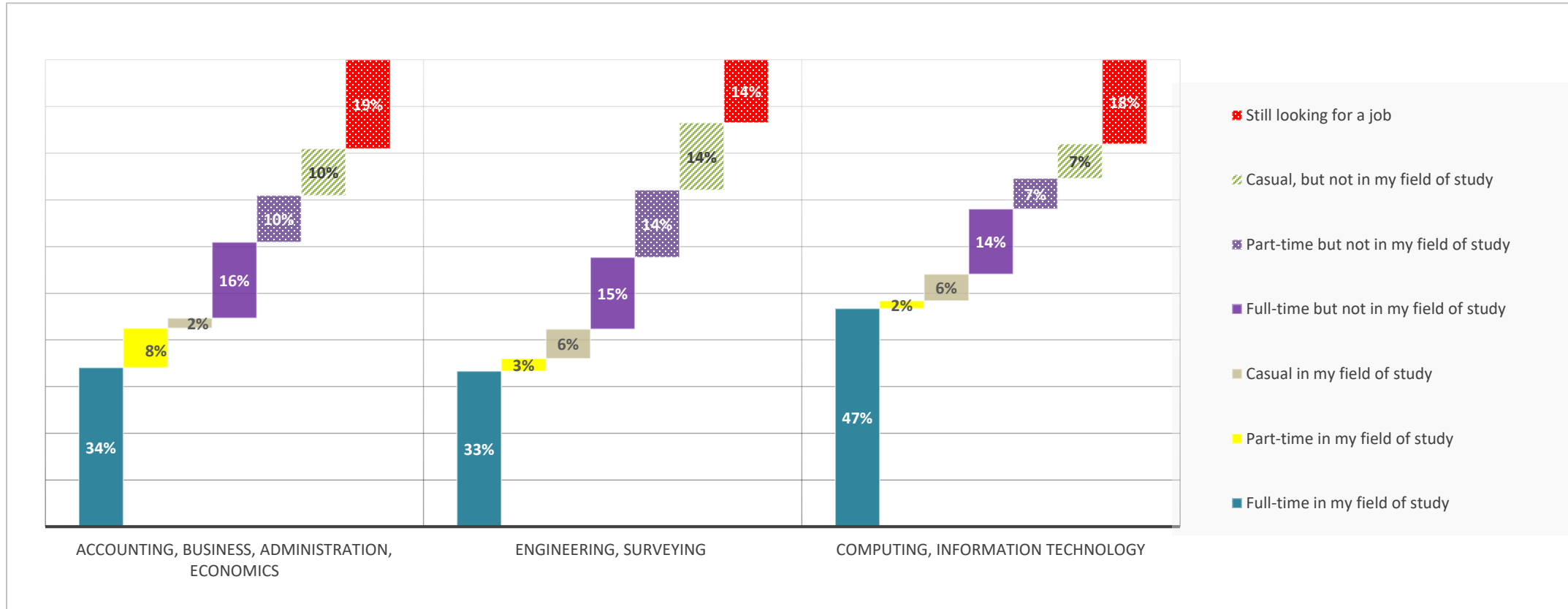


Past holders of 485 visa

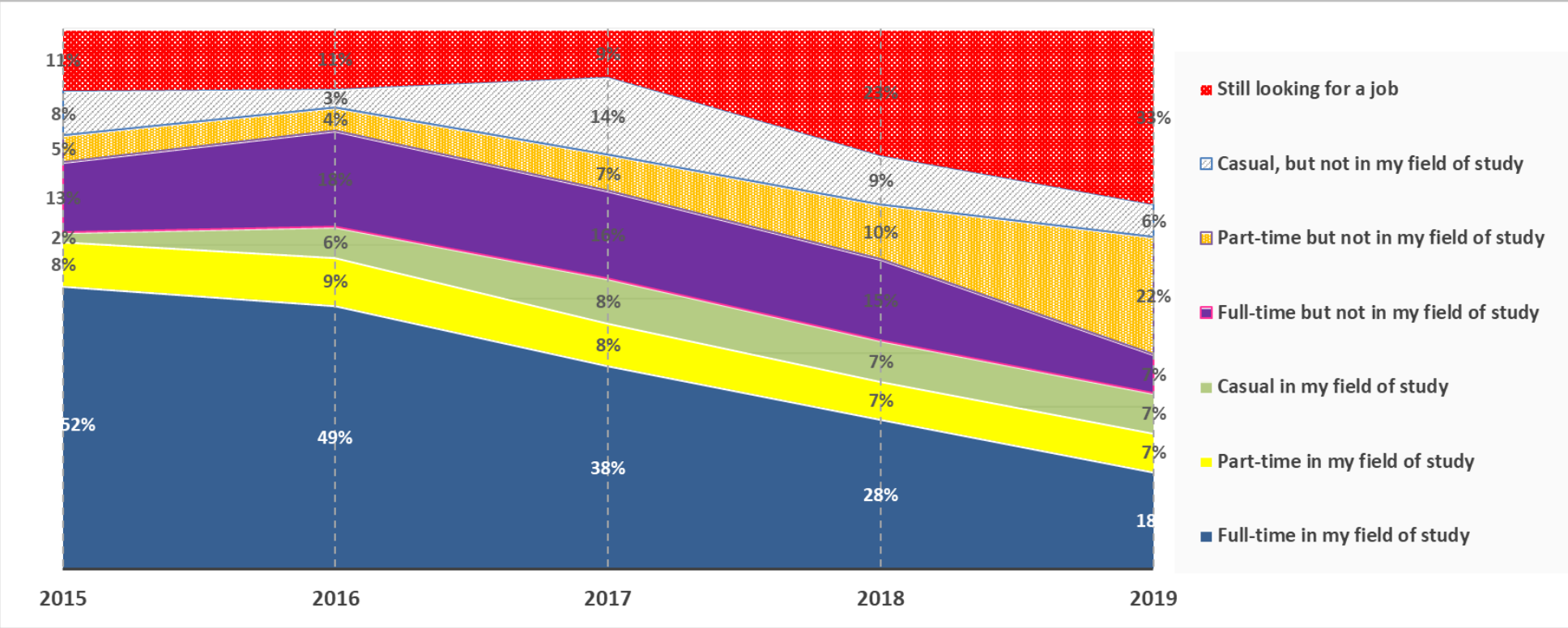


Current holders of 485 visa

Participants' employment status in three fields of Accounting, Engineering and IT



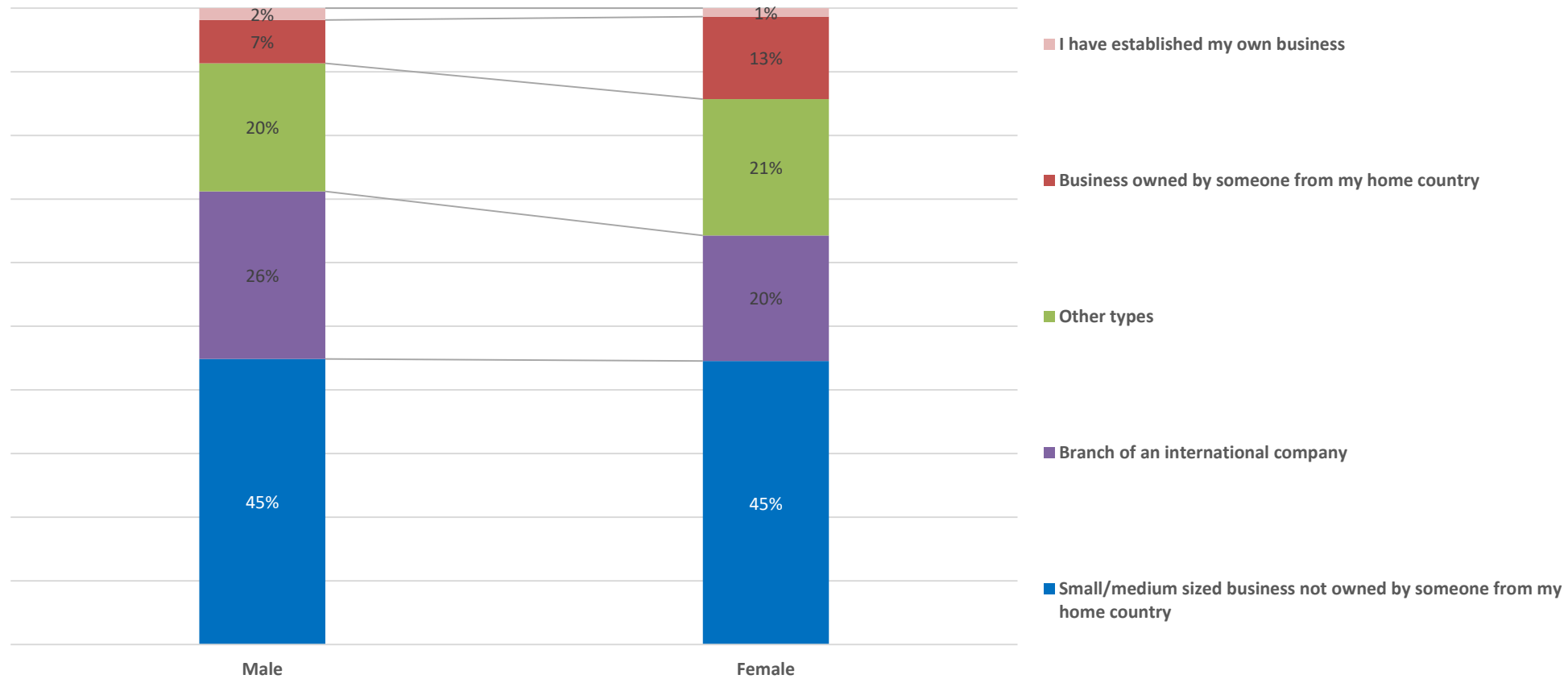
Time lapse between Post-graduation and Employment in Australia



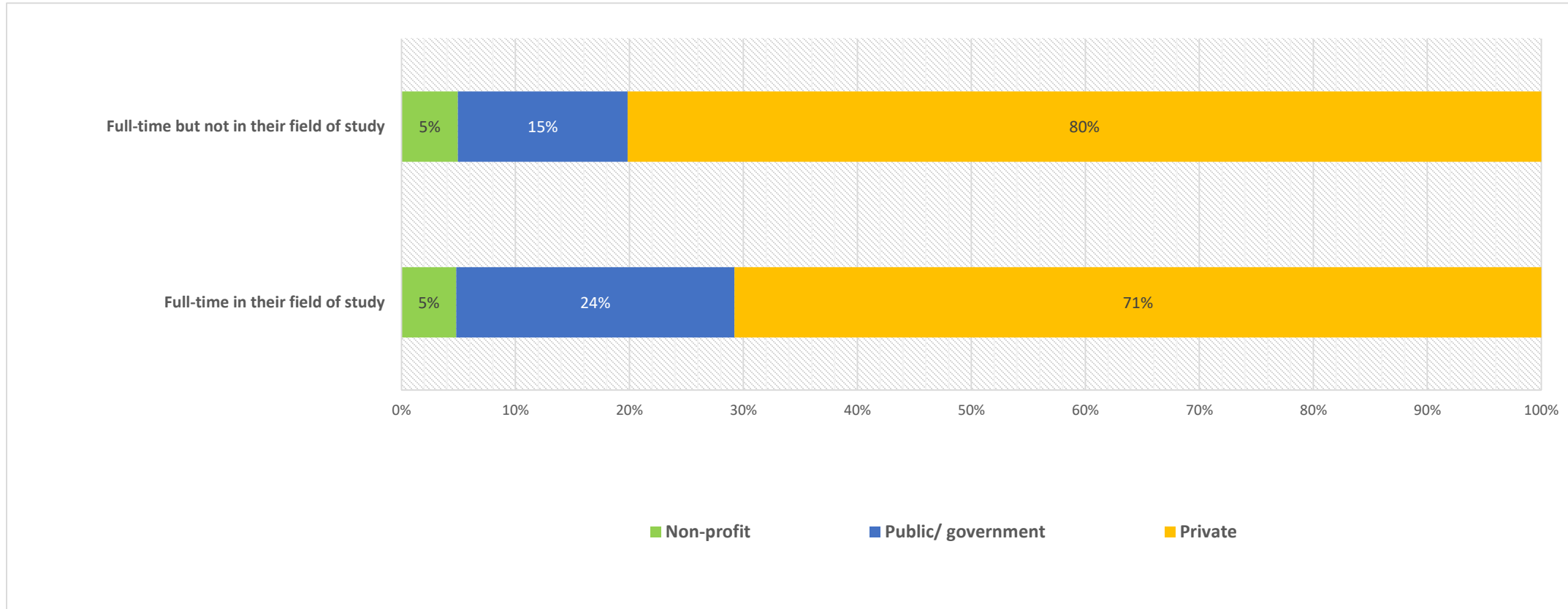
Some visa holders see 485 as a pathway to PR, but many switched to use it as a conduit to PR (not their original intent) due to a growing recognition of employer preference for PR. Many others attach different purposes to 485.

(n=814)

Where do international graduates work?



Share of private/public/non-profit sectors

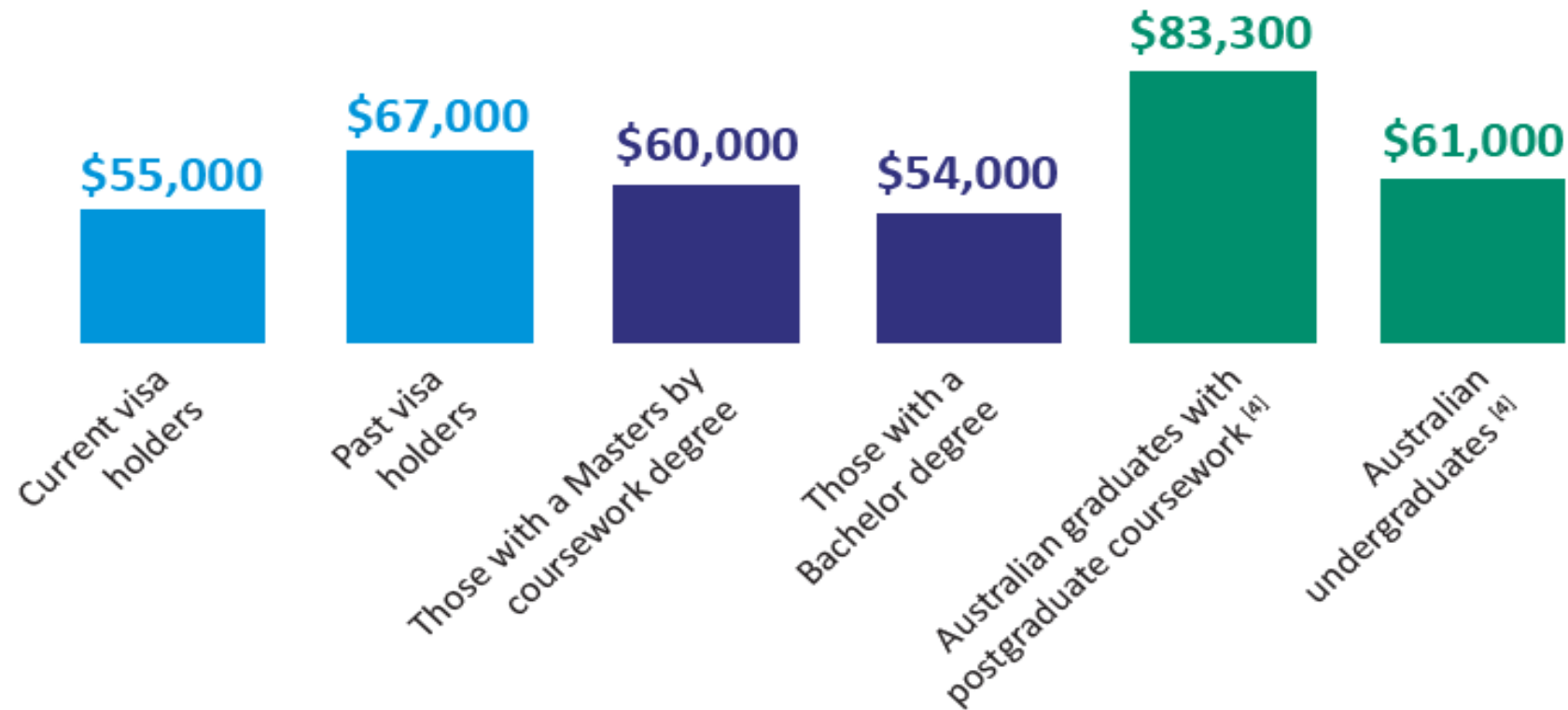


Median annual income



Median annual income

For those who work full-time in Australia



Key factors impacting employment status



 *impact positively*  *impact negatively*



68%  | 6% 
English proficiency level

49%  | 23% 
Work experience
in Australia



54%  | 23% 
Job seeking skills

43%  | 21% 
Professional networks
in Australia

43%  | 13% 
Networks of friends

47%  | 18% 
Familiarity with the
Australian market

23%  | 21% 
Cultural background

28%  | 49% 
Visa status

Constraints



- Employers are unclear about 485 visa or prefer PR/citizenship
- Employers' misconceptions
- Using visa label to filter: "restricted work visa", "unrestricted work visa"
- Visible and invisible exclusion: Job ads "PR or citizenship only" "Full-time Permanent" "Full-time Ongoing";
- Temporary status of the visa
- Lack of flexibility for renewal or extension of the visa
- Lack of continuing support from institutions and key stakeholders
- Illusion that the temporary graduate visa is an easy pathway to PR

The 485 visa does provide a potential pathway to employment with local companies. Yet, successfully securing one appears to be a slim chance in reality. As local companies are not well educated or aware of the visa, they are often not prepared to employ the holder. In fact, some even exclude 485 visa holders from the initial hiring process implicitly. *(International graduate)*

- any policy shifts in Australia need to go beyond simply matching what is already on offer in leading study destinations.
 - Canada: in place in March 2020
 - UK: in place in June 2020
 - Australia: 20 July 2020
- The recovery of Australia's international education will need to address issues relating (among others):
 - post-study work visa arrangements
 - employment outcomes
 - support for alumni stranded onshore, who may have been working here on their graduate visa but lost their job

Recommendations:



➤ Policy Recommendations

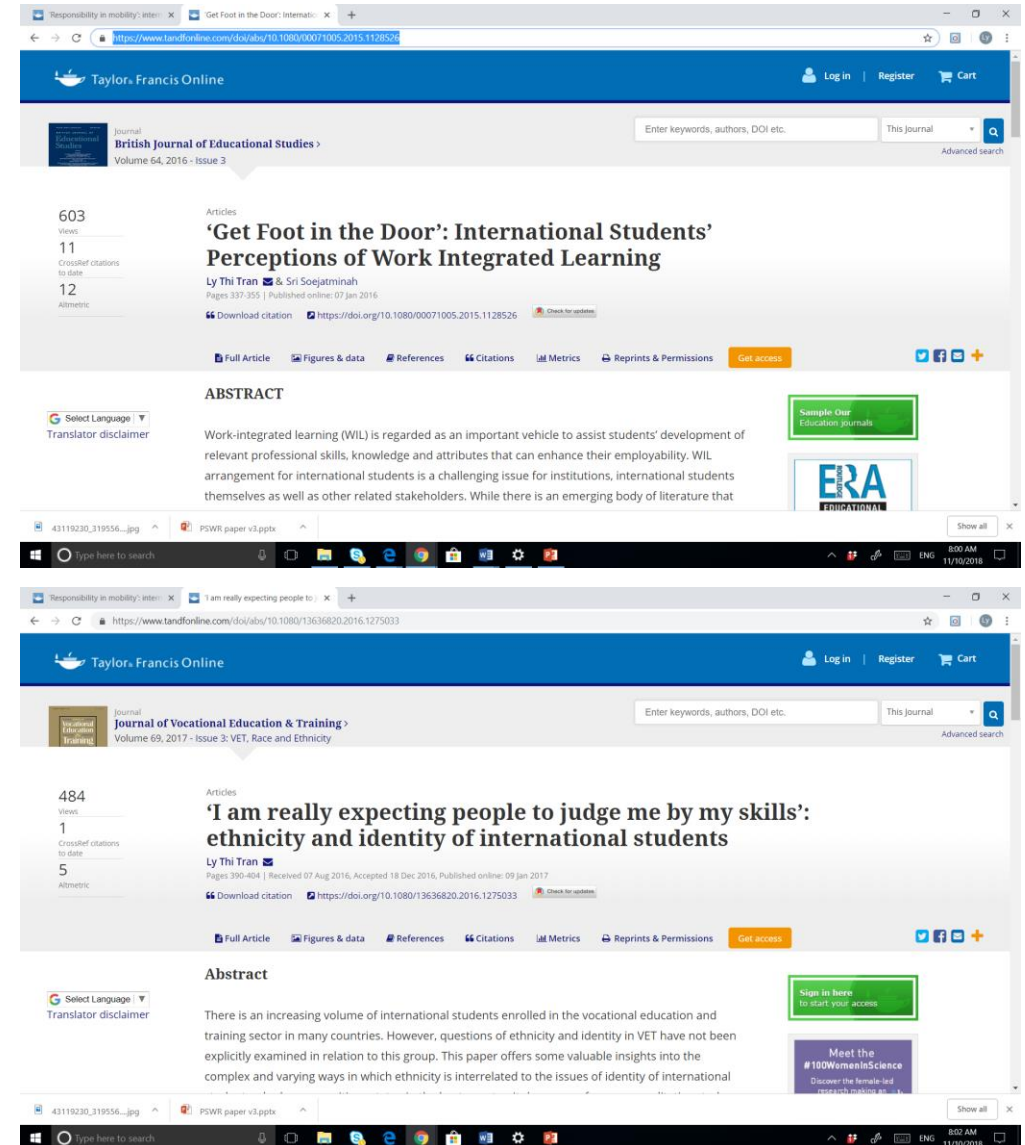
- ✓ Option to extend the visa: (1) job status (2) level of income (3) for those who got the visa right before and during the pandemic/lost jobs due to COVID-19
- ✓ Regulation around scope of advice universities can provide



Recommendations: Working with employers



- ✓ Educate employers/raise awareness
- ✓ Refine job ads: remove 'PR/citizenship only' or "Must be PR or citizens"
- ✓ Flexible and practical approaches to aligning employers' needs and strengths of international graduates/students
- ✓ 'Benefit' or 'burden': Reciprocal benefits need to be communicated in explicit and meaningful way
- ✓ Creative and flexible approaches and partnerships with Employers at a systemic level
- Coordinated approach involving different key stakeholders



Flow-on effects: Federal gov policy, post-study work, employability, and IE



- While IS and international graduates contribute to Australian tax revenues, they are not entitled to subsidised government services. This means they bring net income to the Australian economy (Tran & Tan, 2020).
- JobKeeper subsidy is to support both employees and organisations. Why penalising employers and organisations that legitimately employ IS and temporary workers?
- Likely lead to employers' further hesitation and refusal to recruit IS and international graduates
- adversely affect their employability & employment during and post COVID-19
- Employability and employment outcomes are increasingly used by universities as indicators of destination attraction
- No access to university COVID-19 support



- Of the of **30,952** 485 visa holders who transitioned to other visas in the 2018-19 financial year: **45.3%** became skilled migrants and **34.9%** became international students again (Australian Government, 2019)
- **66%** satisfaction rate for the temporary visa

- ✓ Young, highly qualified and global competent workforce
- ✓ Educated in Australian Universities
- ✓ Multilingual capabilities
- ✓ Transnational knowledge and skills
- ✓ International experience
- ✓ Transnational or lifetime in-country networks
- ✓ Has Australia **really tapped on** this pool of talent to deliver benefits to its economy and key stakeholders?
- **Employers who have prior experience in recruiting IS are willing to do so again.**

Thank you for supporting our research. We acknowledge the valuable insights shared by international graduates and stakeholders participating in the project.



Resources:

Infographic: <http://bit.ly/2kNoqS1>

Report: <http://bit.ly/2kYkLRg>

Article on the Conversation: <http://bit.ly/2m9vfhj>

Article on University World News: <https://lnkd.in/gwsf35a>

Contact: Ly.tran@Deakin.edu.au

thank you

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