



HIGH COMMISSIONER

AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION  
COLOMBO

5 April 2020

## **Dear Parents of Sri Lankan students currently in Australia**

As Australia's Minister for Education Dan Tehan has tweeted below, international students are our friends, our classmates, our colleagues and members of our community.

The Australian Government is making a number of changes to temporary visa holder arrangements during the coronavirus crisis in order to protect the health and livelihoods of the community, support critical industries, and assist with the rapid recovery post the virus.

The Australian Government knows the impact of COVID-19 is affecting international students in Australia. Accordingly, these changes include increased flexibility of a number of regulations to make it easier for international students to continue their studies in Australia should they wish to do so.

The Government will be flexible in cases where Coronavirus has prevented international students meeting their visa conditions (such as not being able attend classes).

Students are encouraged to rely on family support, part-time work where available and their own savings to sustain themselves in Australia. As part of their visa application, international students have had to demonstrate that they can support themselves completely in their first year.

There has always been an understanding that temporary visa holders are able to support themselves while in Australia. The recently announced changes will help facilitate this for those who may be stood down or lose work hours as a result of the coronavirus.

Students who have been here longer than 12 months who find themselves in financial hardship will be able to access their Australian superannuation.

International students are able to work up to 40 hours per fortnight. International students working in aged care and as nurses have had these hours extended to support these critical sectors. International students working in the major supermarkets had also had these hours extended to help get stock on shelves during the high demand. From 1 May, their hours will return to the maximum 40 hours a fortnight as more Australians are being recruited into these roles. Further information is available on the Department of Home Affairs website at <https://covid19.homeaffairs.gov.au/> or by calling their Global Service Centre on 131 881.

The Government continues to work with universities and the international education sector to minimise the impact of COVID-19, and that includes finding innovative ways to support our international students.

We recommend international students contact their education provider for assistance and information regarding their studies. In addition they may refer to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment's website [www.dese.gov.au](http://www.dese.gov.au) for regularly updated factsheets as well as factsheets.

Students may also wish to visit Study Australia's website [www.studyinaustralia.gov.au](http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au) for more information on support services available to them.

Updates on measures specifically supporting international student visa holders, will be available on the Department of Home Affairs website: [www.homeaffairs.gov.au/news-media/current-alerts/novel-coronavirus](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/news-media/current-alerts/novel-coronavirus).

Yours sincerely

(signed)

David Holly  
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Australian High Commission to Sri Lanka