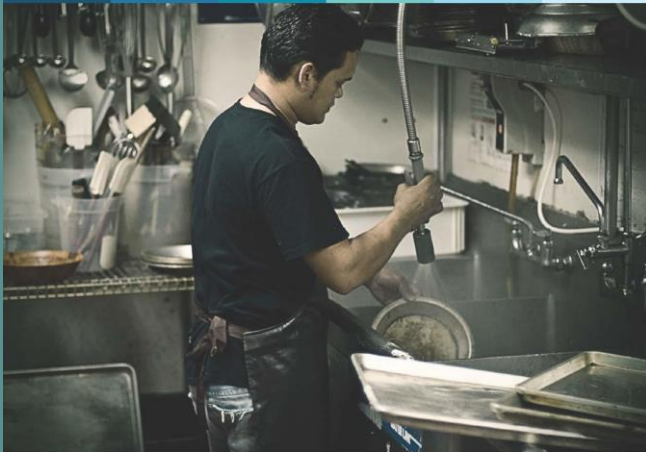


WAGE THEFT IN AUSTRALIA

*Findings of the National
Temporary Migrant Work Survey*

Laurie Berg and Bassina Farbenblum | November 2017



Exploitation of International Students: A Role for the International Education Sector

AIEC

Bassina Farbenblum
UNSW Law

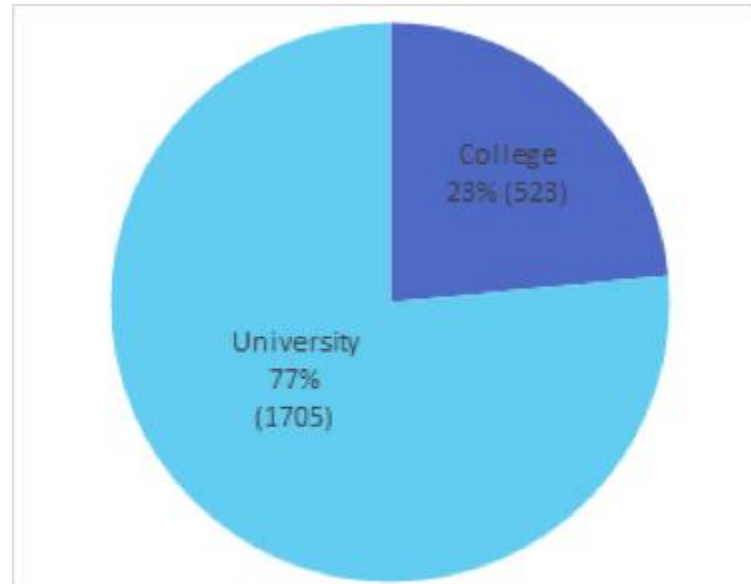
12 October, 2018



Participants on student visas

2,392 survey participants held a student visa during their lowest paid job.

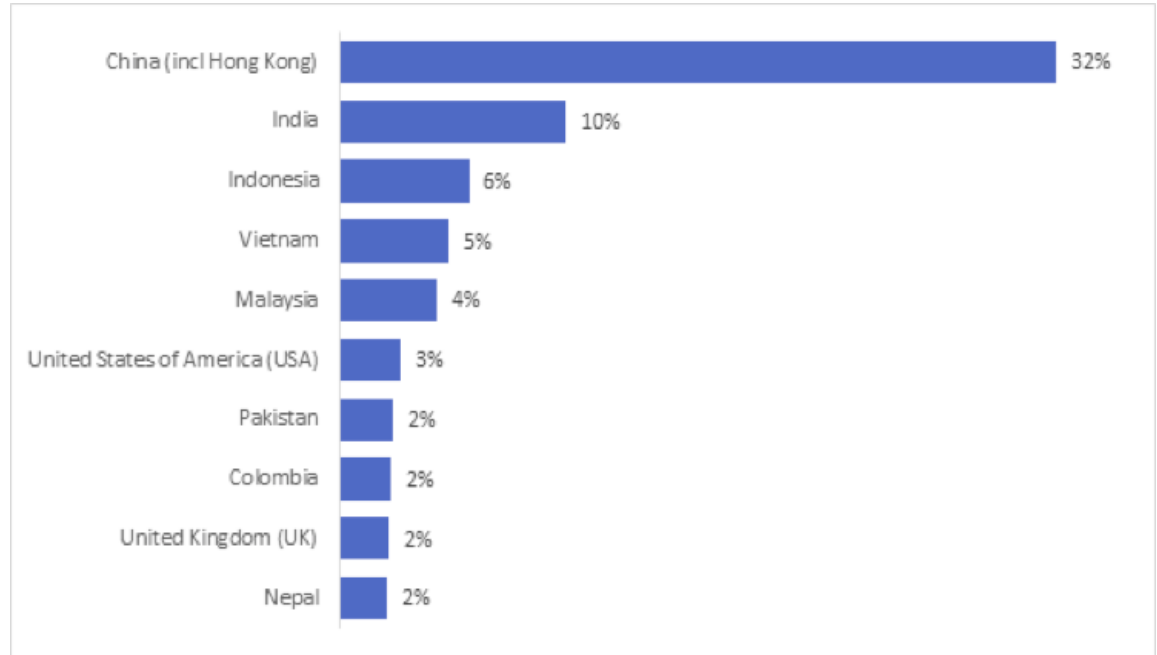
**International student participants'
type of educational institution**





Nationality of student participants: universities

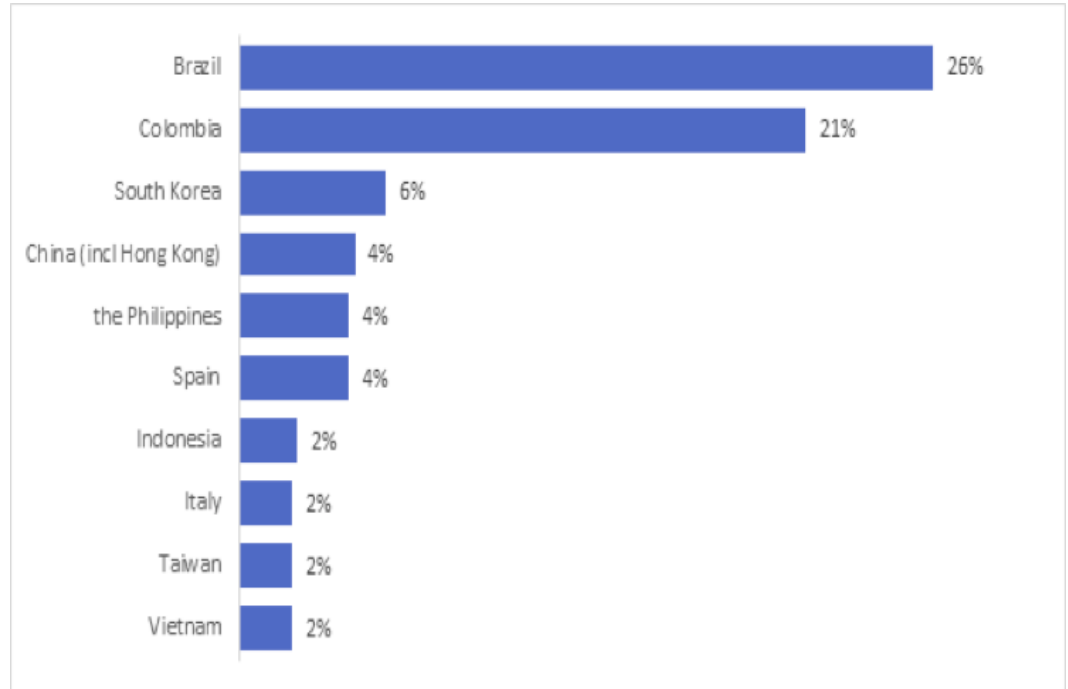
Top 10 nationalities of
international student
participants studying at
a university





Nationality of student participants: VET and ELICOS

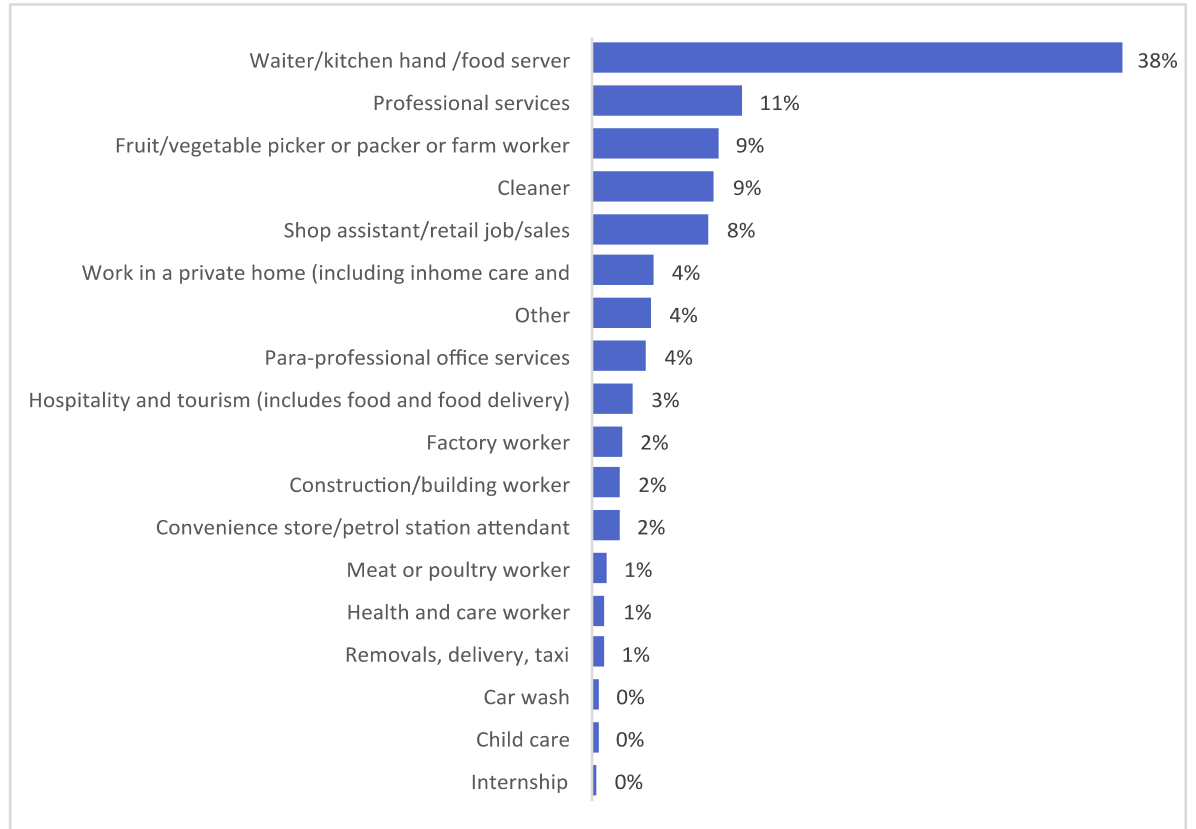
Top 10 nationalities of international student participants studying at a vocational or English-language college





Lowest paid job types for participants overall

Participants' lowest paid job

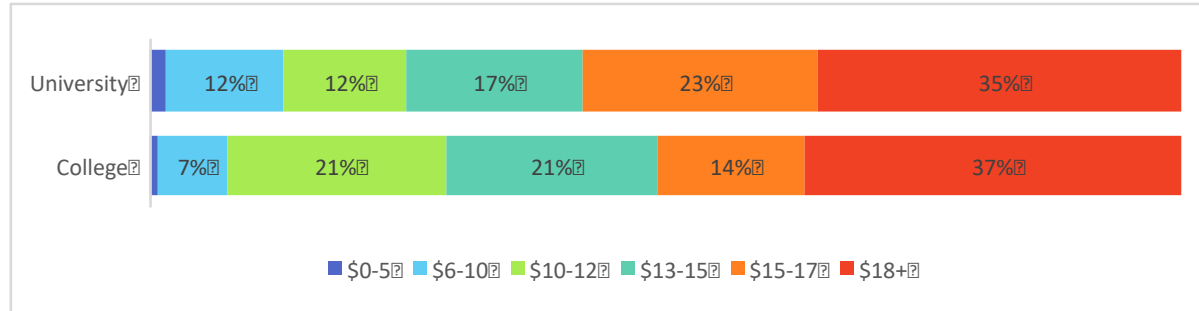




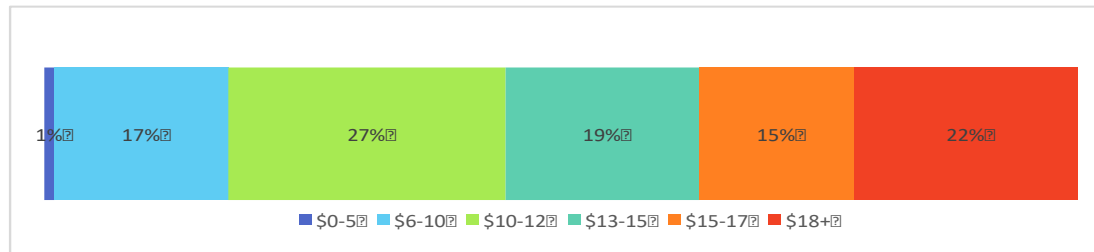
Students' hourly wages

A quarter (25%) of international students earned \$12/hr or less; 43% earned \$15 or less.

Hourly wage rates in lowest paid job, comparing university and college students



Hourly wage rates in participants' lowest paid job for students working 21 hours + per week





Key findings on wage rates by nationality for all participants

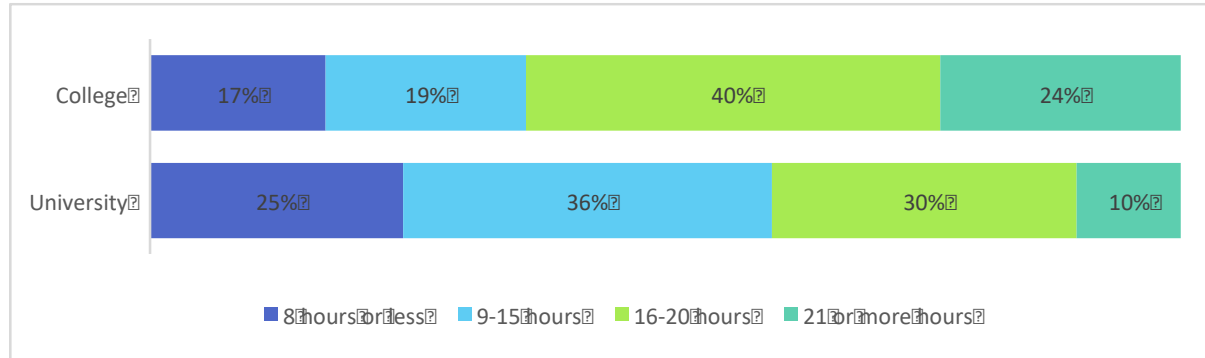
- Wage rates of \$12 per hour or less were reported by at least a fifth of temporary migrants from every major nationality
- Participants from China, Germany and Vietnam had the largest proportions of nationals earning \$10 per hour or less
- Around three quarters (75-81%) of Chinese, Taiwanese and Vietnamese participants earned \$17 per hour or less, compared with 35-41% of American, Irish and British participants



Weekly hours

Two thirds (64%) of international students reported that they worked between 9 and 20 hours each week, and 13% reported that they worked 21 hours per week or more.

Average hours worked per week in international students' lowest paid job, comparing college and university students





Cash payments and non-provision of pay slips

- 50% of participants rarely or never received a pay slip in their lowest paid job
- 49% of international students were paid in cash in their lowest paid job
- 70% of participants earning \$12 per hour or less were paid in cash
- Cash payments were most prevalent among Chinese (65%), Korean (55%) and Colombian (46%) participants



Knowledge of minimum wages in Australia

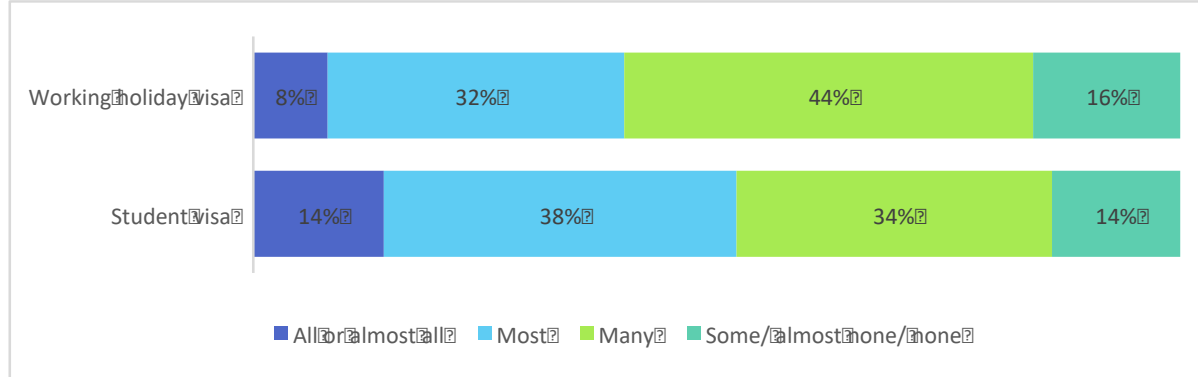
Proportion of college and university student participants earning \$15 per hour or less who knew the minimum wage in Australia is \$16 per hour or more





Perception of the prevailing wage among migrants on the same visa

Responses of international student and Working Holiday Maker participants earning less than \$15/hour to the question: 'What proportion of temporary visa holders on your visa do you think are paid less than \$17.70/hour?'





Wage Theft in Silence: Why temporary migrants do not recover unpaid wages in Australia

(forthcoming, October 2018)

- Very few underpaid international students try to recover unpaid wages
- Among international students who tried to recover unpaid wages, the institution from which they most commonly sought help was their education provider; very few went to the Fair Work Ombudsman
- A substantial proportion of international students are open to recovering unpaid wages in the future



The role of the international education sector

The FWO and government agencies have critical roles to play.
So do education providers and their agents.

How can education providers better support international students to avoid and address exploitation?

Better information

- Pre-departure
- Onshore

Better support services

- Legal advice and assistance
- Other forms of support



Information for Impact: Enabling education providers to address exploitation of international students in accommodation and at work

- New sector-wide collaboration funded by StudyNSW's Partner Projects scheme
- Objective: Provide universities, VET and ELICOS institutions, and education agents with evidence that enables collective development and delivery of information to more effectively assist international students to avoid and address workplace and accommodation-related exploitation
- Partners: English Australia, ISANA NSW, Fair Work Ombudsman, CISA, Redfern Legal Centre, education agents, UNSW, UTS
- Advisors: ATO, Commonwealth Education Department



How to support the project and be involved

1. Distribute online survey to international students onshore and pre-departure (early 2019)
2. Distribute call for international student participants in focus groups onshore (early 2019)
3. Share your views (now):
 - What information do students receive from your institution in relation to accommodation and work?
 - What information do students need and how and when should they receive it?

www.mwji.org/contact

WAGE THEFT IN AUSTRALIA

*Findings of the National
Temporary Migrant Work Survey*

Laurie Berg and Bassina Farbenblum | November 2017



Contact:

Bassina Farbenblum

b.farbenblum@unsw.edu.au

Laurie Berg

laurie.berg@uts.edu.au

Migrant Worker Justice Initiative

www.mwji.org