

I am a student at a reputed university who was hoping to apply for an Australian PR after completing all the requirements as stated by the Federal Government. However, due to the introduction of the new SOL list, I am now in an unforeseen position that would make all my hard study and diligent work go to waste.

Let me give you a bit of a background first. I came to Australia in July 2008, and enrolled in a Masters of Communication (majored in Journalism & Public Relations) which is a 1.5 years course. However, I enjoyed the Australian experience so much that I decided to stay here after completion of my course by filing for a Permanent Residency (PR). This meant completing 2 years of Australian qualifications and gaining an employment in my own field (which is Public Relations) and working consistently for about 20 hrs a week as a student.

Once my 1.5 years Masters was completed in October 2009, I then enrolled in a Grad Dip. of Media and Communication (for which I got an advanced standing). I shall be finishing in June/ July this trimester. I now fulfil all requirements of filing for a PR, including having landed a job in my field while as student, maintaining my 20 hours and starting in the job full-time in June. As an international student, I have worked extremely hard, trying to maintain a balance between work and studies and scoring a Distinction average throughout my Masters degree. With hardly any family or financial support on my side, I have worked hard to get where I am.

The issue now is that because of the introduction of the new SOL, I am at a stage where all my hard work would come to nothing. I fulfil all other requirements as outlined by the Government but will be missing out on filing for a PR just because my nominated occupation does not exist in the new SOL. All this despite me having landed a decent job in my own field!! It's incredible.

After striving for so long, I am falling at the last hurdle because of this glitch. How unfair is it that I although I can file for a TR, I know that I would after 18 months have to sacrifice my job, for the simple reason that I am not an Australian!! My merit is not being taken into consideration. This situation has caused me extreme stress and a depression-like state. Students like me who are meritorious and who have landed a job in their field with a reputed company will have to leave the country only because our occupations have been removed. My occupation is not on the SOL but I am passionate about the field I am in and have already landed a job in it. Why should I have to leave a permanent job, a job that I enjoy and like, that I have given my 100% to, that I have landed through all my hard work to another person whose only merit will be that he/she is an Australian citizen?

It is extremely unfair that candidates who have already landed jobs (but don't have their occupations on the SOL) will be forced to leave because of this legislation. I have adjusted myself so well to the Australian atmosphere, have cultivated great friendships, love the place and my new job. But most importantly, I do believe that I have a lot to contribute to the country. Being an international student, I have a broader perspective and straddle the knowledge of two separate cultures. I believe that I would be enriching the country with my talent and skills.

So why can't the government give me a fair chance? Why discriminate against me just because I was born in a different country, just because I am not a cook or a hairdresser or an accountant? I am passionate about my field and truly believe that I should be given a fair chance. All my hard work will come to nothing if I have to be forced to leave the country

after 18 months.

Although my employer won't sponsor me, yet they have offered me a permanent job since they found me to be the best candidate for it. Therefore, I propose that the government give a serious thought to cases like mine where meritorious students will have to sacrifice their well-deserving jobs and return to their countries simply because their occupation is not in the new SOL. A special concession should be made for students like me and we should be granted PR based on our permanent job offers.