



Senator Sue Boyce
Queensland

MEDIA RELEASE

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POOR OVERSEAS STUDENTS BEING EXPLOITED

Poor overseas students in Australia are being forced into low-paying jobs that exploited them and even into prostitution, Liberal Senator Sue Boyce said today.

Senator Boyce said these students had been lured to Australia by unscrupulous private colleges which held out the promise that by completing an expensive course, they would qualify for permanent residency and ultimately citizenship.

Speaking in the Senate, Senator Boyce said she had recently met a respected elder of the Brisbane Sikh community and a recently arrived young female student from India.

"This young woman's story is typical of many. She comes from a small rural village in the Punjab. Her parents who are poor farmers borrowed heavily so that they could raise the \$10,000-plus required for her to pass the International English Language Standard Test, to pay for the first six months tuition fee at a private college in Brisbane and to buy her ticket to Brisbane. It was a massive amount of money for this family to raise but attached to it were their dreams of a better life for their daughter and, hopefully, for themselves," Senator Boyce said.

Senator Boyce said the young woman, who had freely admitted that she had enrolled in the private college for the sole purpose of gaining Australian permanent residency, was now in a desperate position.

"She even admitted that she didn't particularly want to study hospitality, which is the course she is doing, but had been told by the college agent that it was the best course to guarantee her permanent residency. She is unable to get a job in the hospitality industry, primarily because of her poor English language speaking skills. She is under a lot of pressure from her parents to find work as she has three more semesters at college at \$6,700 a semester to pay for as well as her current rented accommodation and the basics," Senator Boyce said.

"I was told that even the owners of some Indian restaurants in Queensland exploited hospitality students from their home country, paying them as little as \$2 an hour to wash dishes and the like, knowing that they had to meet the work criteria set down by their courses."

"Students such as this young woman are the innocent victims of their parents' dreams for a better life, and a system that has degenerated so much that it allows those dreams to be exploited. This young woman and her family are now in a desperate position, having committed themselves to a huge debt. Because she cannot get a job, it is unlikely that this young woman will be able to complete her course, which will destroy any chance of permanent residency and, therefore, citizenship."

"What is the future for her and many other students like her? How many of these students trapped in those circumstances are being forced into jobs that exploit them? They are working for \$2 an hour, if they are lucky. In some cases they are even being driven into prostitution. Both the young woman and the Sikh elder who I met said this was happening now in Brisbane and throughout Australia."

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