

Submission to Education and Employment Legislation Committee re inquiry into Higher Education Support Amendment (Job-Ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students) Bill 2020

RE: Impact on Criminal Justice Studies students

Thank you for the opportunity for public comment on this proposed Bill. The Coalition Government's plan to double the costs of Humanities and Social Science subjects is just another kick in the teeth to Australia's young people seeking a university education to get a decent job, pay their taxes and live a good life.

The Government's plans cannot be read in any other way than yet another attempt to wind down the proportion of government financial support to universities to educate the next generation of professionals. It is yet another crude attempt to make students pay more, as government invests less in our universities.

I will leave it to the NTEU to provide the usual high level research and cogent argument in their submissions, and take this opportunity just to point again to how short sighted and just ignorant these amendments are. I argued this in an article, "[Government pays less and demands more](#)" in the *Advocate* back in June, just after the initial announcement. Nothing said since has shifted my view, but rather confirmed it.

In this brief comment, I wish to provide an example of the foolishness and bankruptcy of the Government's rationale for increasing fees in Humanities and Social Sciences.

I am the **Course Chair of Criminal Justice Studies at Victoria University**. Along with Youth Work and Community Development students, our students study specially designed and targeted Arts coded units, that prepare them for work in this challenging and rapidly professionalising area of our criminal justice system. Graduates work, for example in Community Corrections and in court services, along with other jobs in agencies supporting the fair administration of our criminal justice system.

Our students at Victoria University hail overwhelmingly from diverse cultures and lower socio-economic backgrounds. Many have experienced challenging lives and are often first in their families to university. They have high aspirations to serve their communities and the broader Victorian and Australian communities. Some are keen to enter, as graduates, the police and other security roles. They have all the characteristics that the criminal justice industry is keen to attract to strengthen and diversify the workforce with well-trained graduates.

These students and their families are very conscious of the costs of their university courses and they do measure the income foregone while studying and then in paying back their HELP loans, as they seek to establish their careers and start a family of their own.

Increased fees, even deferred fees, are a deterrent to these young people. Also deterred will be older people wanting to upgrade qualifications or pursue a career change to areas of current and future labour market demand.

Whilst I have argued elsewhere, that the disciplines studied in Humanities and Arts degrees are critical to finding our way out of the current mess, and should be readily available to more, not fewer potential students, the purpose of this submission is to identify another adverse consequences should the proposed changes be made to the HELP bands.

I strongly recommend that Senators do not endorse this Bill.

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