

6 October 2009

Ms Jeanette Radcliffe
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional
Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Email: rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Radcliffe

Submission to Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Income Support for Students) Bill 2009.

As a university established to provide higher education opportunities for Northern Queensland; James Cook University strongly supports strategies that promote and open up opportunities for students to access tertiary education.

Income support and financial assistance is vital to attract students to higher education, this is of particular importance to regional and rural students who often face financial barriers when accessing tertiary education.

The proposed changes to the income support arrangements for students as contained in the *Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Income Support for Students) Bill 2009*, in conjunction with the Bradley report, aim at increasing students' participation and retention in higher education.

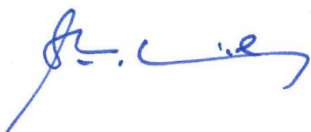
For James Cook University, the significance of these changes lies in our student equity group demographics, the 2007 DEEWR JCU Profile indicates that we have more than the national average of low socio-economic status students (15.65% average compared to 10.75% national average). An increase in, and access to, financial support will make tertiary education more attainable to students in the region.

We acknowledge that efforts are being taken, including the provision of transition measures, to minimise any effects the changes will have on gap year students who needed to move from home to study.

We work in many communities recognised as disadvantaged and with low attainment rates. It is in these places that access to higher education can be most powerfully realised and have outcomes that will positively impact on the lives of the entire community.

We eagerly await the findings of this Inquiry. I would be pleased to further elaborate in writing or in person if this would be of benefit to the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely



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Vice-Chancellor and President

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