

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you today to express my thoughts regarding the proposed reintroduction of compulsory student union fees.

At present I am studying my first undergraduate degree, which I greatly enjoy. On top of my studies I have two jobs, which I also greatly enjoy and I believe that the experience I am able to gain in my roles will help me both during and after completion of my degree.

Attending university however is for me both time consuming and costly, my concern for this new tax stems from here.

Whilst I like the time I spend in campus having two jobs means I am not on campus everyday. This proposed fee would mean that I would be disadvantaged by this. I do not have the capacity to utilise all of campus services/facilities yet I will now be forced to pay for them.

Part of what they teach you at university is decision making, the opportunity to make your own decisions is important. If there is a campus facility that I can use and I believe has value for the students I will most happily invest in it. Yet I fail to see the benefit of forcing all students to join a union in order to find activities that a large proportion of students do not even have the opportunity to use.

Not all my friends at my university and other universities study full time, some even by correspondence, even they will be forced to pay an additional fee each year and in some cases they do not even attend campus!!

I think this new tax does not give due credit to students in making their own choices!

Another concern is the political agenda that seems to be a priority for student unions, I am unhappy that I will be forced to fund campaigns that I may not even believe in.

Just as in any other situation in life, if I see merit in an organisation or campaign I will invest my time/money or both, if I do not then I should not be forced to do so.

We need to make sure that we provide incentives for students to want to further their studies. Students already pay a great deal for parking/travel/textbooks and of course fees, and now potentially another few hundred dollars a year for facilities many do not have the capacity to use. This makes a difference for those students who are paying their own way through University. It will make a difference for me and many of my friends.

I strongly urge the committee to take in to account the issues raised.

Let Australian students make their own decision about funding the facilities they will use, they will make the right decision!

Regards,

Jonathan Richards