

## Submission to Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) Senate Committee

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Jessica Mobbs, I am a Bachelor of Arts student at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) as well as the Chair of the Board of Arc@UNSW, the student organisation formed following the *Higher Education Support Amendment (Abolition of Compulsory Up-Front Student Union Fees)* Act 2005. Together with my fellow Board Director, Luke Parkitny, the Honorary Treasurer, we submit for your consideration the views of Arc@UNSW on the proposed *Higher Education Amendment (Student Services and Amenities) Bill*.

Arc@UNSW Ltd is the student organisation at the University of NSW. It is a voluntary membership organisation funded by its commercial activities and only in part by the University. We are the only student-led and student-run organisation at UNSW that provides services to the student community of UNSW. We provide and facilitate vital aspects of campus life for students with the express aim of enriching the student experience and promoting future career and personal goals. This includes social activities, clubs and societies through the Student Development Committee, training, mentoring and Australian renowned volunteer programs, career development programs, legal advice and advocacy, the Student Representative Council, the Postgraduate Council, and various student publications.

Arc@UNSW welcomes the re-introduction of the *Higher Education Amendment (Student Services and Amenities) Bill* in 2010. The introduction of Voluntary Student Unionism through the *Higher Education Support Amendment (Abolition of Compulsory Up-Front Student Union Fees)* Act 2005 resulted in the necessary resources to deliver vital student services and support.

We stand in agreement with the Greens Senators regarding the issue of the SSAF. Namely, the control and administration of funds raised by the SSAF should be directly and expressly provided to the student organisations. These student-led organisations are the most qualified and suitably equipped to access and act upon the views of students. It is essential that there is substantial input by students into the allocation of the fees they pay.

## Student consultation

The Minister's Second Reading speech for this bill, dated 29 September 2010, stated: "Universities that choose to levy a fee will be expected to consult with students on the nature of the services and amenities and enhanced advocacy that the fee would support". The Minister's statement is a paraphrase of the wording in the Amenities, Advocacy and Representation Guidelines. Neither the bill nor the guidelines currently specify how the student body is to be consulted on the nature of services and amenities, nor how the obligation to consult will be satisfied.

Arc@UNSW suggests that consultation with the student body would be most practically and efficiently achieved directly through the student organisation that represents those students rather than via the more distanced student-university relationship. The proposal by the Greens Senators to direct SSAF funds to student associations (who directly provide the majority of SSAF-related services) guarantees that students decide how their own money is spent.

On behalf of the students of the University of New South Wales, and Arc@UNSW, we strongly recommend that the committee consider the importance of extensive student involvement in decisions about how SSAF funds are allocated, and suggests the views of the Greens senators represents the best way to achieve this aim.

Yours sincerely,

Jessica Mobbs  
Arc Chair

Luke Parkitny  
Honorary Treasurer