



Australian
National
University

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The Secretary
Senate Select Committee on the Scrutiny of New Taxes
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Professor Ian Chubb AC
Vice-Chancellor and President
Office of the Vice-Chancellor
T +61 2 6125 2510
F +61 2 6257 3292
E vc@anu.edu.au
Canberra ACT 0200 Australia
www.anu.edu.au

Dear Sir,

Re: Inquiry into compulsory student fees

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services and Amenities) Bill.

The Australian National University (ANU) strongly supports the passage of this legislation. The Bill will greatly assist in reinvigorating campus life across Australia, and will help restore essential services that have either operated under greatly reduced funding, or been discontinued completely since the introduction of voluntary student unionism (VSU) in 2005.

The quality of campus life at ANU has been severely compromised by VSU. For example:

- The number of student clubs and societies has declined by 50 percent since VSU because funding grants are no longer available.
- Decreased staff hours for the welfare officer and legal officer in the students' association have led to a severe restriction in the availability of these services.
- The capacity to provide short-term emergency grants for food, petrol, childcare, textbooks or overnight accommodation has been lost.
- The capital stock of the student associations, particularly in regard to sporting and recreational infrastructure, has been run down severely, as funds are no longer readily available to upgrade facilities on a timely basis.

The new Student Services and Amenities fee will greatly assist in improving the assistance and facilities that can be provided to students on campus. The provision of an income contingent loan to cover the fee will protect students from any upfront expenses, and ensure that they re-pay the fee only when they earn substantial income from employment. The Bill also ensures that fees obtained under the legislation will not be used for partisan or party-political purposes.

Without increased levels of funding through the proposed fee, the further deterioration of service provision to students by students will inevitably occur, and the capital overheads for the maintenance of sporting and recreation infrastructure will become prohibitive.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Chubb AC
Vice-Chancellor and President