



Charles Sturt
University

THE SENATE EDUCATION AND
EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO THE EDUCATION
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
2019, THE VET STUDENT LOANS
BILL 2019 AND THE HIGHER
EDUCATION SUPPORT BILL 2019
(PROVISIONS)

Submission 30 October 2019

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Charles Sturt University



Office of the Vice-Chancellor

30 October 2019

The Hon James McGrath
Chair
The Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator

INQUIRY INTO THE EDUCATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (TUITION PROTECTION AND OTHER MEASURES) BILL 2019, THE VET STUDENT LOANS (VSL TUITION PROTECTION LEVY) BILL 2019 AND THE HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORT (HELP TUITION PROTECTION LEVY) BILL 2019 [PROVISIONS]

Thank you for the correspondence from the Committee Secretary of 21 October 2019 inviting Charles Sturt University to review, consider and provide a submission to The Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee on the *Education Legislation Amendment (Tuition Protection and Other Measures) Bill 2019*

(refer, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bld=r6415), the *VET Student Loans (VSL Tuition Protection Levy) Bill 2019* (refer, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bld=r6416) and the *Higher Education Support (HELP Tuition Protection Levy) Bill 2019* (refer, <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2019B00179>).

Charles Sturt University is Australia's largest regional university, with more than 43,000 students and approximately 2,000 full time equivalent staff. We are a unique multi-campus institution with campuses at Albury-Wodonga, Bathurst, Canberra, Dubbo, Goulburn, Manly, Orange, Parramatta, Port Macquarie and Wagga Wagga, as well as various study centres located throughout south-eastern Australia.

In response to the Secretary's request, I am pleased to provide this submission to the Committee on the Bills on behalf of Charles Sturt University. Charles Sturt University has prepared this submission for consideration by the Committee in accordance with the terms of reference provided for the Committee's inquiry into the three Bills, refer

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Education_and_Employment/TuitionProtectionBill.

With our first-hand experience of higher education in regional, rural and remote Australia the University welcomes any opportunity to build, grow and improve pathways for the participation of regional, rural and remote Australians in post-secondary education and training. Taken together, the intent of the reforms intend by the Bills will strengthen post-secondary study options for Australian students, and in particular Australians living in our regional cities, rural towns and remote communities.

Charles Sturt University commends the purpose of the *Education Legislation Amendment (Tuition Protection and Other Measures) Bill 2019* is to amend the *VET Student Loans Act 2016* and the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* to implement a new tuition protection model for students accessing VET Student Loans, FEE-HELP or HECS-HELP at a private education provider or TAFE. Based on the content of the Bills and the information provided in the Explanatory Information for the Bills

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(refer, <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2019B00181/Explanatory%20Memorandum/Text>) the contemplated reforms will provide greater tuition protection for students.

Further, Charles Sturt University notes that the proposed tuition protection arrangements are modelled on the successful Tuition Protection Scheme arrangements for international students under the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS Act). For many years now, the Tuition Protection Scheme arrangements for international students mandated in the Act have positioned Australia as the world leader in supporting international students studying in-country if their provider closes or can no longer deliver the course, or equivalent course of study in which the student has enrolled. The University welcomes this reform.

Charles Sturt University agrees that the expansion of the successful ESOS Tuition Protection Scheme model to the VET Student Loans program and students in receipt of FEE-HELP and HECS-HELP at private education providers and TAFEs will safeguard the integrity and reputation of the Government's Australian income contingent loan programs. Expanding the ESOS Tuition Protection Scheme to Australian students in receipt of these loans at private and TAFE providers will positively contribute to the standing of tertiary education and training in Australia, including the global reputation of Australia's universities.

Charles Sturt University understands that consistent with previous tuition assurance arrangements the proposed arrangements do not apply to Table A providers, that is public universities, and that students enrolled with Table A providers are not included in the scope of the tuition protection model, since universities are assessed to have a low risk of default. This approach is appropriate. The University welcomes that the reforms contemplated by the Bills do not prevent Table A providers from enrolling displaced students as replacement providers. Further, the University welcomes, that subject to passing both houses of Parliament and receiving Royal Assent, the Tuition Protection Scheme would commence as of January 2020.

I would be very pleased to provide further information to the Committee and would be available to provide evidence at any proposed hearings that that Committee may undertake in relation to intent and nature of the reforms contemplated in the Education Legislation Amendment (Tuition Protection and Other Measures), VET Student Loans (VSL Tuition Protection Levy) and Higher Education Support (HELP Tuition Protection Levy) Bills.

Yours sincerely

Professor Andrew Vann
Vice-Chancellor

