

3 November 2010

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

Email: newtaxes@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr Hawkins

INQUIRY INTO COMPULSORY STUDENT FEES

I write on behalf of the University of Newcastle in response to your invitation to make a submission to the Inquiry into Compulsory Student Fees.

The University strongly supports the Bill to provide for a student services and amenities fee. Since the abolition of a compulsory student services fee the University has lost in excess of \$6 million annually which had provided support to over 30,000 students through five student bodies: Newcastle University Sport (NUsport); Newcastle University Students' Association (NUSA); Newcastle Postgraduate Students' Association (NUPSA); UoN Services and Campus Central.

These student bodies continue to function with direct financial support from the University to deliver essential services. The level of this support is substantially lower than that afforded in the past by compulsory fees and has been in the order of \$1.8 million annually since 2005.

The student bodies provide a broad range of essential services to students at all campuses, including social and cultural activities, clubs and societies, food and beverage services, sports and recreational facilities and services, welfare and advocacy services and the like.

Necessarily the significant reduction in funding available to support these services and amenities had negative consequences such as:

- Increased costs to students for services. For example, food and beverage costs are no longer subsidised;
- Reduction in services to students. For example, fewer sporting clubs and societies are in existence;
- Delayed maintenance of facilities;
- Loss of on campus employment opportunities for students and
- Limited opening hours for services.

In order to restore, improve and extend services and amenities to students, the University strongly supports the introduction of a services and amenities fee as soon as is practicable. The University strongly supports the involvement of students in determining how such fees would be spent. The University has a long history of student representation in decision making with students being elected to all major decision making bodies. The five aforementioned student bodies of the University are also in support of the bill.

Should you require any further information with regard to the University's position on this matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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