

**SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION INQUIRY ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORT
AMENDMENT (JOB-READY GRADUATES AND SUPPORTING REGIONAL
AND REMOTE STUDENTS) BILL 2020**

As the parents of a Year 12 student who will graduate in 2020 and begin her university education in 2021, we want to register our deep concern about the Government's Higher Education Support Amendment (Job-Ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students) Bill 2020.

We are opposed in general to the Government's decision to more than double fees for humanities courses at universities. It is simply incorrect to claim, by way of justification for this Package, that studying the humanities at university produces graduates who struggle to get a job. The opposite is, in fact, the case. And we question the logic that the punitive measures in the Package will dramatically increase the number of students doing STEM-related degrees: the issue is far more complex than that.

Most importantly, from our point of view, the Government's decision is extremely inequitable for current Year 12 students. Already this year they have had their education significantly disrupted due to Covid-19, with potential impact on their ATARs. And most have already made their degree choices and submitted their university applications for next year. Some Year 12 students have already accepted early offers from universities in their chosen fields, many of which are in the humanities, to commence in 2021.

The 2020 Year 12 cohort made their school subject choices back in Year 10, which means that many could not do a science or maths-based degree now anyway, as they haven't got the Year 12 subject prerequisites these degrees demand. It is deeply unfair either to penalise them for this or expect them to completely reorient at this late stage of their education when their choices were made in good faith and under different circumstances. The young women of Year 12 in 2020 may well be more discriminated against by these measures, with many having chosen to study humanities subjects at school, as a pathway to their degree.

At the very least, couldn't some grandfathering or phasing in be considered so the current Year 12 students (and indeed Year 11s) wanting to study the humanities are not financially penalised at university by subject choices they made two years ago, under an entirely different university fee scheme and indeed domestic economic conditions?

Yours sincerely,

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