



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

6 December 2010

Committee Secretary,  
Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

**Re: Inquiry into the Social Security Amendment (Income Support for Regional Students) Bill 2010**

The Australian Catholic University appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Social Security Amendment (Income Support for Regional Students) Bill 2010.

Australian Catholic University (ACU) has six campuses, located in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Canberra and Ballarat. In 2010, ACU had over 20,000 students, with that number projected to continue to grow into the future. While ACU's campuses (other than Ballarat) are located in state/territory capitals, we nevertheless attract students from across the eastern states and the Australian Capital Territory, including many students from the area designated as "Inner Regional Australia".

It is noted that that area covers a wide range of locations, from near city to locations quite distant from ACU campuses and from other university campuses. Many students from these areas would need to relocate in order to attend university. Others would need to expend a considerable amount of time travelling, if they opted to commute to their chosen university campus. The latter, in particular, would severely impact on their capacity to meet criterion (a) for access to the Independent Youth Allowance, viz having "worked part-time for at least 15 hours per week for at least two years since leaving school".

It is further noted that many of the areas falling within the "Inner Regional Australia" descriptor would be low socio-economic regions. These students in particular require every assistance and encouragement to participate in tertiary education. Providing eligibility for the Independent Youth Allowance to students from these areas would assist in the achievement of the government's targets for low SES participation in tertiary education.

For the above reasons, the University wishes to express its support for the proposed Social Security Amendment (Income Support for Regional Students) Bill 2010.

Vice-Chancellor: Professor Greg Craven

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However, it is noted that it is proposed that this development be funded by an appropriation from the Education Investment Fund (EIF). This fund is sorely needed to support the ongoing development of infrastructure in universities, VET and research institutes, and Australian Catholic University would oppose the use of EIF moneys for the purpose of supporting the additional Independent Youth Allowance costs that would arise from passage of this legislation.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Greg Craven  
**Vice-Chancellor**