

## Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024

### Questions on notices to witnesses

#### GO8, UA, IRU, RUN

#### **Commonwealth Prac Payment**

1. Universities will both apply for the Commonwealth Prac Payment on behalf of the student as well as distribute the payment to the student.

- a. Were you consulted on the establishment of this payment and did you confirm that universities were willing to undertake the administrative operation of this payment?

No.

- b. Are you aware if your member universities were consulted directly and indicated they would be willing to administer this payment.

RUN is not aware that our member universities were consulted. The institutions have indicated that they were not consulted.

- c. In applying for a payment, for example with Centrelink, individuals are required to provide substantial personal information. In the case of this payment, students would be required at a minimum to provide proof of their ID, evidence they are in receipt of a Centrelink payment, at least 4 weeks of payslips to evidence the 'need to work' test and their bank details. Do universities have the right privacy protections and systems in place to safeguard this private and sensitive student information?

Universities are committed to protecting personal information and have established systems in place to securely manage the storage of personal and sensitive information required for the payments they administer. However, safely storing additional personal information required for administering the Commonwealth Prac Payment would necessitate significant systems upgrades. This process is resource and time intensive, making it unlikely to be completed before the payment program begins.

- d. In the instance of an ICT or security breach, what safeguards are in place and what recourse would be available to the students?

Universities have robust ICT security systems to deal with security issues, which are continuously updated to counter evolving threats. These adhere to various legislative and good-practice documents, including the *Information Infrastructure and Services Rule 2020*, the *Commonwealth Information Security Manual* and guidance from the Australian Signals Directorate and other agencies.

- e. Have you discussed with the department how compliance of the program will be managed and what universities role will be in managing compliance? If so, please provide details of the role universities will be required to undertake to manage compliance by students and for the overall program.

Conversations with the Department of Education have been informal. Conversations have indicated that compliance will be light touch and risk based, however specifics have not been discussed.