

The proposed student tax is a grossly unfair and unnecessary burden on students. As a student at university, I work two jobs to fund my study needs, and ensure that I have some money for other needs. The \$250 compulsory fee being proposed is nothing more than a tax on students, a group in the community who can least afford to pay for it. Student services at Melbourne University, where I attend, are still exemplary and have not been harmed by the introduction of Voluntary Student Unionism – if you look for services, ask for help, and know where to go, there is access to what you need. The majority of students only attend university for their education, not the services and activities that would be funded by such a tax. Furthermore, giving more money to student unions will do nothing for the average student, as more often than not the unions are run by student politicians who have no actual interest in helping other students, but only use the resources to give themselves pay raises and fund overtly political campaigns that do not affect students.

The Melbourne University Student Union over the last year, in conjunction with NUS, used large sums of student money to fund an anti-Abbott campaign that was aimed specifically at females and to help the ALP in the Federal election. It should be recognised that the union and its student Office Bearers chose to spend money on a political campaign, as opposed to improving student services – students on campus should have their money spent on students. In reality, this does not happen. In addition to this, the government's student tax is regressive by nature, because it will be levied regardless of a student's income and their ability to pay. While it is argued that it will help to improve student services for those that most need it, it is the poorer students who will suffer the most. This is because work pressures mean they don't have time to hang around at uni to enjoy subsidised activity like more wealthy students do. Finally, the government's student tax is unpopular with the normally silent majority of university students because it is coercive. Students like a bargain, and as a student, I can safely say that I and all of my friend's know that our student unions only serve to help those with political agendas. Compulsory Student Unionism, which let's not lie, is what the 'Amenities Fee' would be, punishes those who can't afford it and those who have no desire to use their university for anything other than to receive a good education. If joining the student union was worthwhile, everyone would have done so after the introduction of Voluntary Student Unionism – the fact that hardly anyone did, speaks volumes for how our higher education institutions are run.