



**Government  
of South Australia**

Department of Further  
Education, Employment,  
Science and Technology

## **Higher Education Support Amendment (Asian Century) Bill 2013**

### **South Australian Government Submission March 2013**

#### **Introduction**

The South Australian Government welcomes in principle the proposed OS-Help assistance amendments to the Higher Education Support Act 2000. In line with commitments made in the Asian Century White Paper, such amendments will stimulate interest in and enable Australian domestic university students to gain Asian experience through student exchanges, study abroad programs, internships and work placements.

The South Australia-China Engagement Strategy launched in December 2012, commits to growing, engaging and leveraging South Australia's local and expatriate community in order to develop long-term partnerships with China and increase the China-literacy of industry in South Australia. The focus of OS-HELP on Asia supports this objective.

Equally, the South Australia-India Engagement Strategy launched in October 2012 recognises the value of people-to-people relationships, created in part through inbound and outbound exchange of university students.

The South Australian Government supports all of the amendments, but requests minor changes be considered, as outlined below. Such changes will have a practical impact in achieving the objectives of the Asian Century White Paper.

#### **Proposed Amendments**

##### **OS-HELP Entitlement: Undergraduate and postgraduate students (*support with amendment*)**

South Australia supports the broadened entitlement to OS-HELP assistance of postgraduate students in addition to undergraduate students. However, Department of Industry,

Innovation, Science and Research Tertiary Education 2011 data (Higher Education Statistics Cube) highlights that by limiting the entitlement to postgraduate students in Commonwealth Supported Places, 58% of postgraduate coursework students will not be eligible.

The South Australian Government requests that consideration be given to extending OS-HELP to all Commonwealth assisted students and not only those in Commonwealth Supported Places.

#### **Removal of overseas enrolment requirement (*support*)**

The South Australian Government supports the removal of the requirement for a student to be enrolled in an overseas higher education institution or at an overseas campus of a higher education provider in full time study to enable recipients to receive OS-HELP for clinical placements and internships.

Practical work experience gained through clinical placements and internships have increasing importance within Australian degrees and the opportunity for students to gain such work experience overseas is welcomed.

#### **Amount of remaining study (*support*)**

The South Australian Government supports the reduction of the required Equivalent Full Time Student Load (EFTSL) from 0.5 to 0.125 in recognition that students increasingly do not follow traditional study patterns or paths. Whilst it is understood that the requirement to have 0.125 EFTSL remaining encourages students to return to Australia and thus increases the potential that they will re-pay their OS-HELP loan; this does not provide students on non-traditional paths with full flexibility.

#### **Increased assistance to overseas study undertaken in Asia (*support*)**

The South Australian Government supports the focus on Asia in terms of the increased loan amount; as this aligns with objectives of the South Australia-China Engagement Strategy and South-Australian India Engagement Strategy. It is pleasing to note however that OS-HELP at the current rate (indexed) will still be available to students wishing to undertake a course of study in a non-Asian country.

#### **Asian language assistance (*support*)**

Language is a recognized barrier for students wishing to have an overseas experience and thus additional financial support targeted at increasing Asian language skills prior to an overseas experience is welcomed.