

House of Representatives Industry, Science and Innovation Committee Inquiry into Research Training and Research Workforce Issues in Australian Universities: Supplementary Submission

This supplementary submission follows from evidence presented by the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA) at public hearings for House of Representatives Industry, Science and Innovation Committee Inquiry into Research Training and Research Workforce Issues in Australian Universities.

The purpose of this submission is to offer a supplementary briefing to the committee on issues considered in the course of the inquiry, and on issues addressed by CAPA in evidence before the committee.

1 Reforms to the Australian Postgraduate Award (APA)

The aims of the APA are to attract, retain and graduate high quality research candidates. The scheme is performing poorly in all of these areas. In this sense the APA scheme currently has *poor fitness for purpose*.

The poor fitness for purpose of the Australian Postgraduate Award featured prominently in submission to the inquiry. Among 105 submissions to the Inquiry:

- **53 called for an increase in the annual rate of the Australian Postgraduate award to a level of at least \$25,000**
- **36 recommended extending the duration of the APA to either 3.5 or 4 years, with the opportunity for an additional 6 months**
- **14 called for greater flexibility for APA recipients to be able to study part-time**
- **8 called for part time awards to be exempt as assessable income for income support or taxation purposes**

Other factors confirmed in the course of the Inquiry include:

- It is well established that many candidates have no access to income support at the critical final stages of their degree.
- Greater flexibility is needed in recognition of the diversity of the RHD cohort.

- Candidates would be able to supplement their income through flexible *collaboration with industry* if given more opportunities to do so.
- Financial hardship and lack of opportunity are significant factors for candidates at completion.
- Financial incentives for completion are largely un-tested, but could be expected to have a significant positive effect.
- Encouraging a stronger sense of “ownership” of the research higher degree process will yield positive results in both quality and completions.

Selected recommendations in support of greater flexibility in the Australian Postgraduate Award are included for the committee’s reference as Appendix I.

1.1 Flexibility for purpose

CAPA believes remuneration comparable to that of full-time postgraduates should be available for those postgraduates who enrol on a part-time basis and who do not have other adequate means of financial support. CAPA supports the provision of flexible scholarships to all postgraduate students in recognition of the diversity among research candidates, and their needs in seeking to sustain their efforts in successfully completing a research degree. The scheme should at least go some way in conforming with candidates’ needs, as opposed simply “selecting” for the students that can make it through to completion.

Two simple amendments to the current conditions of award would support a broad range of positive improvements:

- Remove special considerations requirement to go part time.
- Remit to candidates up to 6 months of the unpaid balance of their award on submission of their thesis.

1.1.1 Removing special consideration requirements to go part time

Despite the significant under-funding of stipend rates, under the current conditions of award, candidates cannot go part time for financial or employment reasons, and scholarship holders must conform to a very narrow set of conditions in order to be able to go part time.¹ Recipients may transfer to a part time APA if they are able to meet the Student Eligibility Requirements under the APA Guidelines. Currently those conditions include being able to demonstrate extenuating carer responsibilities, or require proof of a serious medical condition.

In the course of the Inquiry there have also been numerous calls for greater engagement with industry on the part of research candidates. Where they may have opportunities to do so, through for example part time employment in industry in their field of research, scholarship holders are precluded from going part time by conditions of their award.

¹ Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) (2007). *Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (as amended)*. In Grants made under section 238-10 of the Higher Education Support Act 2003, Commonwealth of Australia: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/ComLaw/Legislation/LegislativeInstrumentCompilation1.nsf/0/DCE5F431ECF760FECA257283007AA041>.

Recommendation S1:

Amend Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines with the effect of removing special consideration requirements for APA recipients moving between full and part time study.

Conversely, non-scholarship holders are very often in full time employment as a matter of necessity. For these candidates, the opportunity to shift to part time employment would be of significant benefit. This would allow them to effectively “buy out” roughly two days per week in order for them to maintain momentum in their research. Consideration should be given to the introduction of awards tailored to those reliant on full time employment, with the facility also for periods of full time enrolment at critical times.

1.1.2 Remit to the student the unpaid balance of the award at the submission of their thesis

The second measure is to remit to the student the unpaid balance of the award at the submission of their thesis.

In effect this proposal is in part a built-in completion award, and in part a means of supporting a bridge between PhD completion and the opportunity to engage in publication and other academic development activities for early career researchers. It also addresses the issue where students complete and, having invested everything in getting over the line, have no income support have likely been out of the workforce for some time with very limited engagement with prospective employers. They are more likely than not to be laden with debt through supporting themselves through their degree. A “bridge” at this point in the form of financial support would address a range of problems and foster opportunities to not only complete on time, but also supports engagement in a range of important professional development activities including conference presentations and publications.

Recommendation S2:

Remit to candidates up to 6 months of the unpaid balance of their award on submission of their thesis.

1.2 Enrolment status on degree conferral

We suggest that HDR students remain nominally enrolled for a period of 6 months after submission of their thesis and that APA and APA-I awards automatically extend past submission of the thesis to completion of the thesis when the period is within the 4.5 year limit.

Submission #25: University of Wollongong (recommendation 3).

[T]he definition of completions [should] be altered so that the date of completion is the date of award of the research degree.

Submission #66: Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA), (recommendation 1).

CAPA endorses recommendation 3 in the University of Wollongong submission to the Inquiry, and recommendation 1 by SUPRA, to the effect that research candidates should be able to remain nominally enrolled on submission of their thesis, at the very least until their degree is conferred.

1.3 Allocation of APA's to institutions

It is important to ensure that any funding mechanisms associated with the introduction of ERA or similar exercises do not act as a disincentive for the growth of institutional HDR activity in areas of emerging strength, national need and HDR engagement in multidisciplinary research.

Submission #32: University of South Australia (recommendation 3).

The report on the Review of Australia's National Innovation System, *Venturous Australia*, was released on September 9th 2008. The review report included the recommendation that Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA's) be distributed based on institutional performance on the Excellence in Research for Australia initiative (ERA). Although CAPA welcomes the majority of the recommendations in *Venturous Australia*, we believe it is important to point out that there are significant shortcomings entailed in recommendation 6.9.

The existing model for allocating awards to institutions, although not perfect, is widely acceptable for the majority of stakeholders in research education. Due to the need to ensure continued development of new and emerging areas of research, CAPA strongly recommends against allocating APA's to institutions based on the ERA performance.

2 Income support reform

Included in CAPA's submission the *Review of Australian Higher Education* were estimates that 45,395 coursework students attempting to complete a higher degree in 2006 without access to any form of income support at all. For Research students, that figure is estimated to be around 21,530 (see Table 1 below).² Given their broad distribution across age groups, postgraduates are more likely to be living independently, more likely to have carer responsibilities, and therefore often struggle to meet basic living expenses including rent, electricity, water and phone services, food, clothing and transport.

² See p.13 of CAPA's submission to the *Review of Australian Higher Education*, available at www.capa.edu.au/submission/2008/review-australian-higher-education.

Table 1: Domestic Internal Students by Course Type and Eligibility for Income Support

| capa | 2006 # | YA / Austudy | APA or equiv (Est.) | None |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Doctorate by Research | 29,942 | 28 | 12,284 | 17,630 |
| Masters by Research | 6,645 | 19 | 2,726 | 3,900 |
| Doctorate by Coursework | 822 | - | - | 822 |
| Masters by Coursework | 46,467 | 1,893 | - | 44,574 |
| Graduate Certificate | 11,226 | 11,226 | - | - |
| Graduate Diploma/other PG | 22,538 | 22,538 | - | - |
| Honours/Graduate Entry | 18,740 | 18,740 | - | - |
| Undergrad/other | 428,947 | 428,947 | - | - |
| Total | 565,327 | 483,391 | 15,010 | 66,926 |

Compiled by the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA) based on 2006 *Selected Higher Education Statistics* (DEEWR)

Judging from survey responses to CAPA's *Submission to the Senate Inquiry into Student Income Support Measures*, availability of income support is a key factor in electing to enrol part time, or further, abandoning a course of study completely.³ Half of the seventy-five responses received were from students ineligible to receive any form of income support at all. They reported suffering financial hardship, and frustration in their efforts to be able to continue in their studies. A consistent theme among responses was that the current student income support arrangements for postgraduate students were inflexible, inequitable and, for the purposes of encouraging broad participation in the pursuit of a higher degree, clearly unsustainable.

Lack of income support not only significantly erodes students' ability to participate in higher education; it hampers their capacity to adequately engage in their research. Postgraduates without access to income support fall into two distinct groups; those who have the employment opportunities to adequately support themselves (often at the expense of engagement in their research); and those who are sacrificing their financial security to engage in their studies, and are as a result enduring tough financial circumstances. For both, their capacity to fully participate in research, and successfully complete their degree, is severely compromised in being denied access to income support.

Only an extraordinarily low number of research students are eligible for Austudy or Youth Allowance. Students in receipt of Youth Allowance who are under 21 may apply to receive income support while undertaking a research higher degree. This provision would have affected only 28 PhD students and 19 research masters students under the age of 21 enrolled in 2006.⁴

The Social Security Amendment (2007 Budget Measures for Students) Bill 2007 extended eligibility for Youth Allowance and Austudy to students

³ Bexley, E. (2004). *Submission to the Senate Inquiry into Student Income Support Measures*. Ed. Horton, S. Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA), Carlton, VIC: www.capa.edu.au. Selected survey responses have been included here as appendix IV.

⁴ Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) (2007). *Students 2006 (full year), Selected Higher Education Statistics*. www.deewr.gov.au.

enrolled in a limited number of masters by coursework programs.⁵ Under the terms of the Bill, only students in approved courses are eligible to apply for income support, and universities must apply to have their masters courses approved. Only masters courses required for entry to a profession, or that exist as a result of a course restructure, are considered for eligibility. Course eligibility is at the discretion of the Minister, in accordance with the general guidelines associated with the Bill.⁶

In a 2007 Budget Estimates hearing the (then) Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) estimated that 920 masters students in approved courses would be eligible for income support in 2008, increasing to approximately 1,470 in 2010. There were 74,248 domestic masters by coursework students enrolled in 2006. The DEST estimate, along with the course eligibility guidelines, suggest that these measures in their current form would only allow access to income support to a very small proportion of students in this category, and therefore fail to address the genuine need clearly identified for postgraduates more broadly.

Recent estimates obtained from the new Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) confirm this. Figures on approved courses to date allow projections that around 750 masters by coursework students may now be *eligible* to apply for Austudy, and 1,143 for Youth Allowance.⁷ Combined, these measures open up access to income support to around 2.5% of coursework masters students overall, but still entirely exclude 100% of those enrolled on coursework doctorates, and the 59% of research candidates who do not have access to a scholarship with stipend. These estimates are of course optimistic, as they only describe those who may be eligible to apply for income support, not those who will ultimately have their application approved.

Due to the diverse range of scholarship providers, there is no national-level data available on the number of research students in receipt of a scholarship or award with a living allowance.⁸ Projections based on available evidence suggest that in 2006 there was a total pool of around 15,000 scholarships with living allowances available for domestic research candidates (including both full and part time awards for both masters and PhD).⁹ On these assumptions,

⁵ Chenco, C. (2007). *Submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Social Security Amendment (2007 Budget Measures for Students) Bill 2007*. Ed. Palmer, N. Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA), Carlton, VIC: www.capa.edu.au. See also Smith The Hon Stephen MP (2007). House of Representatives Official Hansard. *House of Representatives*, Sep 19, pp.120-125.

⁶ Bishop The Hon. Ms. Julie (2007). *Social Security Legislation Amendment (2007 Budget Measures for Students) Bill 2007 C2007B00150*. House of Representatives: www.comlaw.gov.au.

⁷ Data on approved courses requested from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations requested by CAPA; May 2008.

⁸ A comprehensive overview of the current range scholarship providers in Australia is available from the *Joint Academic Scholarship Online Network (JASON)*: www.jason.edu.au.

⁹ Assumptions based on available data including overall annual allocation data for APA and APAI scholarships and response ratios from recent surveys including those conducted by Universities Australia (2007) and Pearson et al (2008). Further detail on assumptions and modelling available on request.

there are approximately 20,000 postgraduates (or 59%) attempting a research higher degree without access to any form of student income at all.¹⁰

Access to income support is the most critical factor in supporting participation in higher education. It is a deciding factor for those considering pursuing a higher degree. It is also an enabling factor in supporting adequate student engagement, allowing students to get the most out of their experience in higher education. It is also a critical factor in supporting the quality of the contribution higher degree candidates are able to make through research. It is a major factor in mitigating student attrition. Finally, of course, access to student income support is a critical factor in supporting students to be able to achieve the successful completion of their degree.

Recommendation S3:

That access to Youth Allowance, Abstudy or Austudy be extended to all students enrolled in a tertiary degree, regardless of the nature of the course in which they are enrolled.

It should be emphasised that access to the schemes outlined above does not determine eligibility. Candidates in receipt of a scholarship or other source of income above the assessment threshold would be ineligible.

It should also be noted that access to Youth Allowance, Abstudy or Austudy should be regarded as a secondary measure in place of access to a scholarship or award with an adequate living stipend for all research candidates.

3 Recognition of and support for postgraduates with carer responsibilities

Introduce a child-care funding system that is flexible in its recognition of provider (e.g. relative, au pair, crèche, etc).

Submission #34: The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research.

Postgraduates should be able to commit to study and family simultaneously, and should not be forced into a position of having to decide between the two. While the welfare of children is ultimately the responsibility of parents, the care of children is also a broader social responsibility. A lack of flexible childcare facilities on campus, and in the wider community constitutes a major obstacle to access to higher education for those with parental responsibilities.

Recommendation S4:

That measures be introduced to support improvements in the availability, accessibility and affordability of childcare facilities for all tertiary students.

4 PhD Graduate Fellowships Program

The *Future Fellowships* funded in the 2008 Federal Budget were well received: Many in higher ed. have commented that they represent “a good start”, and set a positive tone for future, similar improvements.

- Eligibility for *Future Fellowships* is defined as 5-15 years out from completion of the PhD.
- For the purposes of future workforce renewal in higher ed, there remains a gap for PhD graduates 0-5 years out.
- Financial hardship and lack of opportunity are significant factors for candidates at completion.
- PhD completion is one point where many talented individuals who may consider an academic career are lost to industry (or even to low paid menial jobs) through lack of opportunity at the early career level.

Future Fellowship eligibility requirements are very much tailored for mid-career researchers (defined as being five to 15 years out from completion of a PhD). CAPA would like to identify that there remains gap for those people in the nought-to-five-year range. One positive initiative that could be brought to bear on the problem would be a fellowships program for recent PhD graduates which supports those people to stay in a higher education environment, capitalise on the research that they have just completed and gain that mix of teaching and research experience that is necessary for an academic career. Currently there are very limited opportunities for people at the point of completion, and a fellowships program targeted at PhD graduates, in addition to that already administered by the Australian Research Council (ARC) would make a significant difference.¹¹

An additional PhD graduate fellowship program:

- Would run in parallel to the *Future Fellowships* program
- Would provide for a mix of teaching and research
- Could specifically encourage publication, conference travel and overseas research experience

Recommendation S5:

That new Commonwealth initiatives be developed in parallel to the *Future Fellowships* scheme in support of greater academic career opportunities for early career researchers and recent PhD graduates.

¹¹ Selected recommendations from submissions to the Inquiry on the need for improved opportunities for early career researchers and recent PhD graduates are included for the Committee’s reference as Appendix II.

5 Minimum Resource Standards for Postgraduate Research

[M]easures [should] be introduced to require and fully fund a requirement for each institution to have a minimum resources policy based on CAPA's model policy.

Submission #66: Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA), (recommendation 1).

The need for adequate resource standards in support of quality postgraduate research also featured prominently in submissions to the Inquiry. Submissions outlined various measures, including making a fixed amount of funding available to support the costs of generating and disseminating postgraduate research.¹²

CAPA would like to take this opportunity to reiterate recommendations 41 and 42 in its submission in regard to the need for institutions to commit to adequate minimum standards for research support. Without a formal commitment on the part of institutions to ensure adequate resource standards for every research student, and at least a basic level of transparency in what those standards are, additional measures with the aim of improving the adequacy and consistency of resource standards would be of questionable benefit.

CAPA welcomes calls for the availability of mandatory research student maintenance funding (in the order of \$5,000 per year, indexed to CPI), and the recognition of the need to support candidates with the costs of producing and disseminating research. Any such measures must however be supported by an adequate transparency and compliance framework if they are to be effective, and these are entailed in CAPA's recommendations to the Inquiry.¹³

Recommendation S6:

An amount of at least \$5,000 per year (indexed to CPI) be made directly available to research candidates to help cover costs associated with the production and dissemination of their research.

6 Pathways to the PhD

It is worth noting that Honours programs (strictly part of undergraduate training) form the first stage of research training at most Australian universities. The importance of these programs in the recruitment of future HDR students ...must not be underestimated.

¹² Selected recommendations from submissions to the Inquiry on the need for improvements in resource standards for postgraduate research are included for the Committee's reference as Appendix III.

¹³ CAPA's *Statement of Minimum Resources for Postgraduate Study* is attached for the Committee's reference as Appendix V.

Submission #13: Australian Council of Deans of Science (p.1).

Introduce specific scholarships for students undertaking an Honours program of research.

Submission #70: Research Australia (recommendation 3).

Serious consideration should be given to a more comprehensive review of the role of degree programs leading to the PhD. CAPA Recommends that honours programs and coursework programs with a significant research component be recognised and supported under the RTS scheme (or its equivalent). Recognition of the vital role these programs play in research training is long overdue.

Recommendation S7:

Honours degree programs and coursework programs with a significant research component should be recognised and supported under the RTS scheme.

7 Intellectual Property Rights

At a time where it is vital we do everything we can to attract, retain and graduate high quality research graduates, it is highly inappropriate for universities to seek to claim ownership of all student intellectual property by default (as has recently been proposed by a number of institutions). Universities and Government need to employ every incentive at their disposal to encourage candidates to consider employing their talents and skills in pursuit of a research degree, and this extends to ownership of the rights of the fruits of their research.

Recommendation S8:

That students retain intellectual property rights to their research by default, and that informed consent is required on the part of candidates in order to modify or waive those rights.

8 State Obligations in Supporting Postgraduates

That the Australian government work with the States to ensure that all international research students enrolled at Australian universities do not have to pay fees for their children attending government schools in order to increase Australia's competitiveness as international research training destination.

Submission #22: James Cook University (recommendation 2).

State governments to introduce policies to provide full exemption from tuition fees in government primary and secondary schools for dependents of international research students.

Submission #51: Innovative Research Universities Australia recommendation 5, p.14).

State governments also have obligations in support of research candidates, and to date they have fulfilled their responsibilities in this area unevenly.

CAPA supports recommendations in submissions to the Inquiry to the effect that States in the Commonwealth should waive state school tuition fees for the dependents of international students studying in Australia.

CAPA would also like to highlight the uneven nature by which state governments support postgraduates through access to transport concessions.

Table 2: Access to Transport Concessions by State

| capa | Full time tertiary students | | | | | |
|------|-----------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|----|
| | State / Territory | Undergrad | Postgraduate | | International | |
| | | | Research | | | CW |
| | | | Scholarship | non-scholarship | | |
| SA | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| NT | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| WA | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| NSW | Yes | Yes | No | some | No | |
| QLD | Yes | No | No | some | No | |
| VIC | Yes | No | No | No | No | |
| TAS | No | No | No | No | No | |
| ACT | No | No | No | No | No | |

Recommendation S9:

State and territory governments extend access to transport concessions to all full time students, regardless of type of enrolment or the level of course in which they are enrolled.

9 Conclusion

CAPA is confident that it has invested in a detailed submission and made a broad range of points. We are optimistic that there are a small number of very practical, manageable and affordable measures that would make a significant improvement. Obviously, reform of the Australian Postgraduate Award is central. An innovative approach to how we can support quality research would make a big difference.

There is also a significant gap in terms of concrete measures on how to deal with generational change in the higher education workforce. Efforts to

address this and plan for the future on the part of universities appears to be limited to date, despite warnings about the emerging situation over many years.

Important reforms are needed if we are to stem the flow of talented people out of higher education, and support individuals in making their contribution as world-class teachers and researchers in Australian Universities. CAPA comments the efforts of the Committee in this Inquiry, and thanks the Inquiry Secretariat for the opportunity to submit this supplementary submission.

Appendix I: Flexibility in the Australian Postgraduate Award (APA)

Included below are extracts from submissions to the Inquiry outlining the need for greater flexibility in the Australian Postgraduate Award (APA).

The significant number of mature age students, and those with family responsibilities undertaking research part-time should be permitted to hold part-time APA scholarships tax-free. Part-time scholarships would allow these equity groups to undertake higher degree research programs.

Submission #31: The University of New South Wales (p.10).

We believe that there should be greater provision for more flexible awards, eg. part time awards, as well as awards which positively encourage collaborative partnerships with industry and non-profit groups along the model of the APA (Industry) awards.

Submission #48: La Trobe University (p.3).

AARE recommends Government create a flexible research training scheme that facilitates and encourages:

- inter-university collaboration;
- networks of professionals working part-time on research;
- appropriate support structures, entry and exit points, and
- mechanisms to encourage movement in both directions between Education professions and the academy.

Submission #64: Australian Association for Research in Education (recommendation 2).

As noted in the DDoGS submission there are a number of discipline areas where it is particularly difficult to recruit full-time PhD students in sufficient numbers to cover Australia's future workforce needs. Many of these areas are able to attract part-time students in their late 30s and early 40s with families and mortgages to support. For them, the APA stipend of approximately \$20,000 per annum is too low. Monash would like to suggest a special scholarship that would allow such candidates to switch from being part-time without scholarship to full-time for up to two years with scholarship support of \$35,000 per annum. These special scholarships could be reserved for particular areas of shortage were it is important we fast-track qualified people into the workforce.

Submission #76: Monash University.

It is recommended that the funding period for an RTS place be extended to 4.5 years with an additional six months (i.e. 5 years) possible for students to remain on and write-up articles for journal publication.

Submission #80: Griffith University (recommendation 5).

The current system provides insufficient encouragement for many of our most creative and innovative university graduates to embark on a research career. This situation could be ameliorated by introducing an element of creativity in the schemes providing scholarship support for our best

graduates at a level that is reasonable and attractive and tenable for a flexible duration from three to five years.

Submission #87: Australian Research Council College of Experts (p.2).

Loosening up the rules for eligibility for scholarships so that part-time students could receive them but in a smarter way. For example, a PhD candidate in Education might enrol part-time but after 3 years win a 2-year full-time scholarship at a higher rate than the normal stipend thus completing well under the 8 years maximum. In areas such as Early Childhood Education, a priority area where we need to fast-track qualified people into the higher education workforce in order to also fast track them into the early childhood care and education sectors, the government could provide incentives for research students to do their degrees quickly. ***They might also receive a completion bonus.*** The government should also consider a waiver for any fringe benefit tax incurred by businesses or institutions that employ staff undertaking research degrees.

Submission #88: Australian Council of Deans of Education Inc (p.3)

Currently, full-time domestic candidates are normally supported by government or university scholarships worth about \$70,000 to \$90,000 tax free (over 3.5 years). In our 2005 survey other sources of funding were reported (by 13% of respondents) from various government instrumentalities, industry and philanthropic agencies. Some of these are in the nature of 'top-ups' to scholarships. Sixty-seven percent of those (30%) reporting receiving no such funding were part-time; there is very little, if any, financial recognition for their time investment and financial expenditure during candidature. Part-time candidates reported having already spent between \$3500 and \$7000 of their private funds on their doctorates at the time of the survey. Some employers also assist with costs and/or 'study leave', but this is usually minimal at best; our research shows that time is what part-time candidates crave most.

Given that fully employed self-funding candidates often voluntarily choose research topics that are of benefit to their employers and/or professions, and to Australia more broadly, it is time for a new policy direction.

What is required is what might be called an Industry Research Training Scheme (IRTS). The purpose of which is to provide a framework for Government support for candidates, universities and employers to work together to develop both research capacity and research outcomes of benefit to Australian workplaces and professions ('industry' needs to be interpreted broadly). The IRTS needs to encourage flexible support strategies and services that explicitly identify and accommodate the range of needs, expertise and circumstances of fully employed candidates throughout their (generally) part-time candidature. It should encourage prospective doctoral candidates to negotiate projects with their employers or potential employers that are of explicit benefit; employers need to be given incentives to invest in these projects; and universities need to be rewarded (perhaps with IRTS places attracting a premium) for delivering high quality doctoral supervision and support to workplace-based candidates. Universities should also be able to negotiate to meet part of the candidates' salary costs in order to be able to employ for academic work, thus bolstering the 'real world' expertise in the academy. The IRTS scheme needs to be seen as an Australian Government, university and industry partnership that provides incentives to employers to support candidate-employees with paid doctoral leave, including, for example,

company tax relief for business or equivalent grants to the public and voluntary sector. The IRTS and its strategies should be explicitly directed to include disciplines where such partnerships are uncommon (for example, Education, Nursing and Social Work). While particular circumstances will vary, the critical principle is that all parties involved recognise the investment being made—research work performed by the candidate, the salary and infrastructure provided by the employer or funding agency, the expertise and support from the university, the investment by Government; and value the benefits accrued—increased research output, expanded and sustained national research capacity, greater university-industry relationships, and PhDs for the candidates.

Submission #46: Professor Terry Evans et al (pp.3-4)

Appendix II: Recent PhD Graduates and Early Career Researchers

Included below are extracts from submissions to the Inquiry outlining the need for improved opportunities for recent PhD graduates and early career researchers.

Commonwealth Postdoctoral Research Fellowships should be extended to support greater numbers of PhD graduates.

Submission #11: University of Southern Queensland.

[T]hat the Federal Government investigate a funding scheme targeted at post-doctoral positions [recognising] the need for depth in postgraduate training, which can be supplied by a better-funded two-step process (PhD followed by post-doc); sufficient supervisors with the freedom and incentives to conduct appropriate and dedicated supervision; and support for research networks.

Submission #12: Southern Cross University (recommendation 5, p.4).

[T]hat the opportunities available to early-career researchers through Australian Postdoctoral Fellowships and similar schemes be reviewed, with a view to increasing the number of awards and the benefits provided by them.

Submission #20: Edith Cowan University (recommendation 4).

That the number of ARC postdoctoral fellowships be doubled to address the burgeoning academic and research skills shortage in Australia, and the increased challenge of universities attracting appropriately qualified staff and that universities be encouraged to co-invest in such fellowships to provide fellows with the opportunities to gain academic teaching experience" ..."The anecdotal evidence suggests that the success of Australian programs designed to encourage students to work with industry is mixed. Thus JCU endorses the DDOGS recommendation that a comprehensive review should be conducted of the mechanisms for enhancing industry links with PhD programs.

Submission #22: James Cook University (recommendation 4, pp.9-10).

Reward and promotion systems must be put in place to encourage a new generation of research trainees to engage productively with a range of

external stakeholders outside academia, eg: through an 'innovation catalyst' scheme on graduation.

Submission#32: University of South Australia (recommendation 4).

ADBED would urge the Commonwealth to develop and implement a national and internationally competitive program of post-doctoral and research fellowship schemes targeted at HDR graduates and early career researchers.

Submission #39: Australian Deans of Built Environment and Design.

Review and scale up the current suite of government funded programs which provide support for research student and recent graduate linkages with the broader innovation system.

Submission #51: Innovative Research Universities Australia (recommendation 7; part b, p.18).

Support a number of short-term 'Transition Fellowships', either through the National Health and Medical Research Council or universities, to tide the best candidates over for 6 months. These would support the preliminary activities leading up to post-doctoral research.

Submission # 70: Research Australia (recommendation 6).

There is a need for better defined and funded postdoctoral positions that may transit to the ARC/NHMRC Fellowship program, to a University academic career or to a career in industry.

Submission #89: Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand.

Appendix III: Minimum Resource Standards

Included below are extracts from submissions to the Inquiry outlining the need for improved measures in support of adequate resource standards for postgraduate research.

We recommend that funding should reflect the full costs of HDR student support.

Submission #12: Southern Cross University (p.2).

A separate form of financial support (in addition to APA scholarships) is also needed to cover costs associated with the research projects being undertaken by HDR candidates.

Submission #13: Australian Council of Deans of Science (p.3).

"There are however two main areas of affirmations and recommendations that run broadly across the Australian university sector: supervision; and resources for research students." (p.3)

"Some but not all universities have a policy on resources for research students but even those that do are not always implementing their own policy consistently. At least fifteen individual audit reports made affirmations and recommendations on the adequacy of resources for research students. Examples are:

AUQA affirms the need for [the University] to implement a statement of minimum resources for research higher degree students as soon as possible

AUQA affirms [the University's] recognition of the need to consistently provide adequate resources and support for postgraduate research students across all discipline areas, and in line with the University's Support Guidelines for Postgraduate Students
AUQA recommends that [the University] review the minimum standards of support for postgraduate students, including induction, and that it implement effective systems for monitoring the equitable and reasonable implementation of these in a transparent way by Schools AUQA
recommends that [the University] ensure that its policy on the minimum resources to be provided to higher degree by research students is consistently implemented across all academic units
AUQA recommends that [the University] finalise its review of the minimum standards of support for HDR students and that it ensure that the resulting policy requirements are met throughout the University
AUQA recommends that [the University] review the adequacy of its resourcing of higher degree research students
AUQA recommends that [the University] ensure that its policy on the minimum resources to be provided to research by higher degree students be implemented by academic elements across all campuses." (p.4)
"AUQA urges the inquiry to consider incentives for universities to limit the enrolment of research students to areas of accepted research strength and adequate supervisory resources, as has been done already by some institutions."

Submission #14: Australian Universities Quality Agency (pp.3-5).

We recommend that research support funds be attached to all APA Scholarships. We suggest an amount of \$5k/year is appropriate.

Submission #25: University of Wollongong (recommendation 4, p.2).

[T]hat associated research support funds need also to be tripled, at least, to provide reasonable assistance towards the costs of the research and research training.

Submission #57: Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture
(Recommendation 3, p.1).

Appendix IV: Selected Responses to CAPAs' Student Income Support Survey (2004)

For the committee's reference, selected responses to CAPAs' *Student Income Support Survey* (2004) are included below.

Response 5

I am writing to disclose the hardships faced by myself and most of my postgraduate peers who are fortunate enough to be accepted into higher degree research but not financially supported.

I did not receive a scholarship to undertake my research masters in computer science at La Trobe University and as such I have had to take on tutoring work, promotional work and security work to feed, cloth and house myself while undertaking the most demanding academic pursuit of my career thus far. The impact/consequence has been loss of research time due to continual interruptions to study blocks as a consequence of having to teach, attend related meetings, marking and travelling from job to job in order to meet financial obligations. There is very little continuity of thought and very limited opportunity to thoroughly investigate any question for a sufficient period of time which leads to substandard research and emotional frustration.

Even though I am enrolled full time, I get part time research done. Most of my peers not on scholarships have managed to timetable two clear days dedicated to research, these are the ones that are single and do not have family considerations. In general there is a choice, research or work. As a full time research student I am ineligible for Austudy and ineligible for the Dole, it is a horrible limbo which requires me to decide between outstanding research results and poverty OR less outstanding research results and less poverty. Is this the value that the Australian people place on higher research learning?

Response 11

I am doing a PhD (Clinical Psychology). Unlike a 'regular' PhD, the PhD (Clin. Psych) incorporates all of the coursework and field placements of a two-year Master of Clinical Psychology as well as a full PhD research project. The specified length of the course is 4 years (as distinct from 3 years for a normal PhD) which means that all students have to continue on for at least a year beyond the end of the scholarship, or at least 6 months beyond the end of the 6 month extension.

The Masters component of the course is necessary in order to gain the training and experience in the assessment, diagnoses and treatment of mental health disorders required to complete the PhD research in clinical psychology.

The financial constraints mean that practically all students end up going part-time, which often extends the program out to 6 or 7 years.

These are not people who have failed to complete on time. The longer duration is an artefact of additionally education required to do the research in the first place.

I think their needs to be a second tier of funding for PhD's such as these in order to promote quality research in the respective disciplines and to increase the overall level of education of relevant professionals capable of doing the research and future training.

Response 13

I was accepted by Victoria University as a full time Master of Arts by research candidate in 2000. At the time, I also held a full-time job. Study and work were proving difficult to combine. I applied for a scholarship but, to the shock of even the Head of the Department, who assured me that I had a good chance, I was unsuccessful. The admin. position I held then was through a temp agency so I was not entitled to sick leave, annual leave etc. although I worked full-time hours. I gave the company a month's notice about an interstate conference that I had to attend in March 2002 (after I worked there for two years) and that I would not be able to work for three days. When I returned from this conference, I received a call the following day and was told that my 'contract' had expired.

I went to Centrelink and was told that I was not entitled to any benefits as I was a fulltime post-graduate research student. Austudy was also not available to me for the same reason. Luckily, I had some meagre savings that I had to live on before my candidature change to part-time was approved. Then, I had to wait for a further six weeks after this for unemployment benefits. Consequently, a vast majority of what I had saved over 12 years of working has gone. My plans for eventually purchasing a home have also died.

I completed my Masters degree in December last year (after a six-month stint in a workfor-the-dole program that made me feel like my study was a completely invalid occupation - a 'hobby' they called it) and have recently been awarded a pass. Strangely, now I am having more difficulty than I have ever had in my life in securing employment of any type. Surely undertaking further study is of some benefit to the community however my experiences have clearly shown me that higher education is not valued at all. I am stuck now without a job, several qualifications and massive debt.

Response 17

Hi - I am a prospective PhD student with 3 children and a large mortgage who would like to be able to study part time with income support - I currently work 4 days per week and need all that income to pay bills and put food on the table, - the lack of tax-free part time scholarships has meant I have continued to put-off enrolling as I just cant see how I could manage financially. In addition the full time scholarships - which I would much rather have so as to complete my studies in a more timely manner, are pretty much designed to support the single, no (or small) mortgage student, not 'mature-with family and- mortgage' post-graduate student. Thanks for taking this up.

Response 18

I am a mature age student 57 years old who is attending University for the first time. I have enough resources to pay for my studies even though I do have children who are dependant on me. I am working full time.

However, I am happy to add my name to the concerns of younger students who do not have resources. I would be very distressed if the current available economic support was cut back any further. Scholarships are an avenue for students who are committed to learning and education but who do not have access to resources themselves. This is very important to maintain.

I don't know whether my comments are helpful to advance this cause. I offer them anyway.

Response 27

I am a 33 year old financially independent postgraduate student completing my Doctorate of Clinical Psychology at LaTrobe University, Bundoora campus, Victoria.

I am writing specifically about the plight of Doctoral Psychology students. Even though both Research PhD students and Doctoral Psychology students must both produce a PhD equivalent thesis, PhD students are more likely to receive scholarships even though the Doctoral enrolled students must also complete coursework and practicum during the same time-frame.

Doctoral (and Masters) Psychology student are only entitled to receive Austudy for the first 4 years of the 6 years training required by the Psychologist Registration Board of Victoria. There are rumours that Austudy may be available to Masters students in future, however Doctoral students will not be eligible. Medical student however receive Austudy for the full six years of their training.

Members of my faculty have told me that Postgraduate Psychology students really need to be supported by a partner or their family, however this option is not available to some (including myself). I commenced this course full-time in 2002 and the stress of the course load, the research load, preparation for practicum in addition to supporting myself financially directly contributed to the onset of a major depressive episode. This experience was devastating and while faculty members were supportive they were not able to offer any solution other than to defer for a year, recommence part-time the following year and extend my doctorate from 3.5 years to 7 years.

I also have personal knowledge of at least six fellow students (who also need to work), who have become very depressed, extremely anxious or have dropped out of the course altogether as they were not able to complete the research, coursework and practicum in addition to providing basic elements of self care (i.e., sleeping 8 hours a night, eating properly, having time to exercise or seek social support). These students also went without basic elements of clothing such as winter coats and shoes, even though they are expected to be well groomed when seeing clients.

It also concerns me a great deal that this inequity is directly contributing to producing a profession in which only a narrow margin of the community are represented (ie higher socio-economic status). However psychology, more so than most professions, needs to be represented by a cross-section of the community, in order to provide professionals who are able to relate to and understand the psychological hardship that accompanies financial difficulty. I am heartbroken to see that this profession is really only available to young affluent students.

Response 29

I just wanted to quickly respond to the email we were sent about the unavailability of student income support. Can you please keep my name confidential. I am currently studying my Masters of Health Psychology (coursework) and am really struggling to cope because of lack of income. I was originally offered places in my doctorate at more than one University, however, I had to turn these down because I could not afford to do them and Centrelink had advised me that there was absolutely no allowances given to students studying their doctorate. Since I am studying psychology, you can not get a job after completing your undergraduate degree and honours, you have to complete either your Masters or Doctorate. There is also an option of supervised experience, but this is not looked upon favourably and at the time I was enrolling, this option was being phased out. They have since changed their

minds about this. The course is extremely demanding and I have had to give up my casual employment in order to complete it. I am currently putting in seven days a week towards my study and for 5 of these I work from 8am till 10 or 11pm. The option was either giving up uni, or giving up my casual job, but I didn't feel like I really had an option, or all the years I'd spent studying would have been wasted. I applied to centrelink to get help while completing my Masters and it was the worst experience of my life. I have always been against getting government help and chose to work during my undergraduate degree. The only reason I even approached them in the first place was because I had no other option. Centrelink denied my claim and I spent over 12 months waiting and struggling to find time to write the letters I had to write and go to the appeals etc. The worst part was that even though I really thought I was right, I kept losing. It was a very emotional time. It was also emotional because I didn't really want to have to ask for money, but I had no other option and was made to feel like scum. I really hope that something can be worked out for postgrad students. It would definitely save a lot of unnecessary stress and hardship. I wouldn't want anyone to have to go through what I've been through. I have also just been offered to upgrade from my Masters to my Doctorate which would add an extra year onto my course, but improve my job prospects when applying for work. If I could get just some assistance, even just enough to cover petrol expenses, it would be better than nothing. Could luck CAPA, I really hope your work pays off!

Response 43

I have not been fortunate enough to fall into the above categories but would like to make a comment anyhow. I would be interested to know what consideration and support there is for full time working parents trying to gain PhD qualifications to keep their jobs/contribute to the community etc. I do not seem to be able to get a scholarship since I work in the university, yet the university will only give me six months leave late in the PhD process. As I am in a discipline with few academics as yet in the field, there is enormous pressure to have massive teaching loads (we can be employed on our extensive industry experience and the student and industry demand is huge), working nights etc, yet can't get financial support to study. I am not the only one I know in this situation, but I also have three children and a mortgage to support. Maybe there is an expectation that somehow we will get the qualifications done anyhow. If you could hear the stories of the impact on families of working parents trying to get PhDs it would be astounding. Example: there was a line up for the printer in our area on Easter Sunday as we madly try to fit all the above in! And of course we work and study in universities with principles of equity and family friendly policies.

Response 45

I would like to say something on behalf of the over 20% of international students who make up the post grad contingent. I am here with my family while I complete a 3 year degree. My wife works full time paying full taxes on every wage she earns. Yet, we are not eligible for centrelink kindy funding like any other tax payer. Nor are we eligible for any health benefits like any other tax payer. We pay full fees to keep our child in school which amounts to over \$5000 a year and also pay international health insurance on top of that which is spendy as well.

However, I work and the school benefits from my being here. I contribute to the academic community and represent QUT at national and international conferences. I teach as part of my contribution to the school and to earn some wages. Through this participation, I keep teaching and learning levels high while allowing the school to NOT employ a lecturer or part/full time employee.

Yet, there are only 7 scholarships that are available per year to support what must be 100s of post grad international students providing similar support to QUT.

Now, I must, due to this hardship, leave the school and finish my studies from abroad. I will still be paying my full international tuition to Australia, and QUT will not need to supply a desk for me from which to do my work...mostly they will be losing. They will be losing an instructor who spent more than 10 contact hours a week with over 200 students and helped develop and internationalise the Film and Television Curriculum in the new CI precinct. They lose the 20+years experience which I brought to the department planning. They lose the perspective of an international student who moved here to collaborate with colleagues, but must leave because of the cost involved in living here.

If one weighs the benefits, it would assist QUT greatly to keep me on and somehow financially allow me to continue to contribute to the academic community, teach courses and co-mingle with other PhD. students. However, no such support is in place. This is a tragedy.

Response 47

I am VERY pleased to see this issue being taken up. Just this morning I submitted my progress report to my faculty. This included a request for a 6 month extension. One of the reasons is because I have to work to support myself while doing my Phd in sports psychology.

I was unlucky enough to come out of my honours year with 69% (1% off being a real consideration for a scholarship) but was fortunate that my thesis was sports psych based so secured my position for further research in the field (Phd in sports psych). In the first year I went to a lot of effort to obtain financial support. I went to meetings with centrelink who fobbed me off with talk of the government funded scholarships. So I applied for many scholarship but this was taking up time I needed to spend on my Phd and getting me no where.

Initially I was doing casual work using my dip ed doing emergency teaching but have managed to secure a 2 day a week job at uni now. I scrape by on this money but if I am sick on one of my 'work' days I do not get paid (I am a sessional) so it is VERY difficult for me. I am also conducting interviews for my research and having 2 out of the 5 working days excluded makes appointments difficult (not to mention writing up etc).

Last year my local member (city of Yarra - Lindsey Tanner) sent out a brief 'questionnaire' about issues affecting those living in the City of Yarra. I cited the lack of Austudy for ALL Phd students as an issue. He did not respond to this despite my indication that I would await a reply.

You should also be aware that in my field of study postgraduate studies are needed to register as a Psychologist in Australia (although you can register just in Victoria after doing 2 years of supervision after your honours). So I see this issue as especially significant to psychology students.

It has DEFINETLY effected my studies. I find it an act of discrimination to not have Austudy available to ALL students. I come from a low socio-economic background and am not able to be supported by my parents (or a partner). I have gained good marks through out education (despite my overall 69% I did not receive under 70% at any time during my honours studies) and DO NOT see why I should be made to struggle through my studies worrying about my research AND whether I can pay the bills and eat this week. It is disgraceful that only those with family able to support them financially or those lucky enough to secure a scholarships get to devote themselves to their postgraduate studies. The government should recognise this as a major problem.

Although with its recent changes I feel that educating the poor, even at an undergraduate level, is not a priority. Scholarships should be provided by private bodies and money from the government be available to ALL students in the form of Austudy. Maybe a means test that includes scholarships is needed (although with exclusion I believe comes segregation and resentment from those who do not meet the criteria). It is time ALL students where given the opportunity to devote themselves to their studies and not have to worry about how they are going to obtain their basic human rights (food, shelter) if they continue to study. As you can see I have brought up this issue with centrelink and my local member and would have loved to go with it further but lack the time. So thank you for taking this further.

Response 51

I did a research masters degree in electrochemistry at QUT. If I had known what I would have had to go through financially I would not have done it. I lived for two years on a casual wage of about \$100 as I had to work to support myself. If I had not lived with my girl friend at the time I would not have been able to study at all. When I broke up with the girl friend in question I was forced to give up full time study to get a job. I was laid off from my job and I now am unemployed and cannot hand in my thesis as I cannot afford the upfront fees that I have to pay to hand it in. All in all the fact that I did a research masters seems like a waste of time.

I wanted to do a PHD but was told that honours students are given scholarships in preference to masters degree holders. Therefore I have decided that I cannot financially afford to do a PHD and I cannot do an industry sponsored PHD because I have not handed in my thesis.

All in all doing a masters was the worse thing I ever decided to do. There is not the industry out there to support graduates with higher degrees and I am having trouble getting work due

to my education and lack of experience. I started a masters because I was having difficulty getting work with just a bachelor and a lack of experience. I would have been better off doing a business postgrad degree at least then the general skills developed during a business degree could be transferred to other industries.

You need a post graduate degree to do research in most of the sciences and it is ridiculous that there is not support. We have a high western level of education but you cannot do post grad unless you are one of these people that get a scholarship to cover your living expenses or you have a family with money.

I am financially ruined at the moment due to several factors the big one being living for so long on next to no money. It is a tragedy when you have to have nothing just to improve your chances of getting a better job.

I have written my thesis and I am seriously considering not handing it in because I don't see the point. I love doing research but I don't think that I am willing to suffer any more just to try and make a difference.

Response 55

At the time I commenced my Masters I had not been in full-time employment for 14 years but part-time employment for approx. 3 out of the 14 due to child-rearing and returning to study to gain a BA. In February of this year my marriage ended and I found myself without income and with debts to pay off, having just returned from 3 months non-award study overseas. I applied for Centrelink assistance but the only assistance I could qualify for was a Newstart allowance and ONLY if I dropped to part-time study (which I did).

After waiting approx 8 weeks for a payment, I finally received a Newstart allowance for the three weeks between separating and finding a job (18 Feb-9 March). Thanks to financial assistance from my elderly parents I did have a roof over my head during this time! Having finally received the Centrelink payment, I swapped back to full-time study (although Centrelink insisted I study part-time, I never received a cent extra from them after that initial payment!) as well as working 25 hours/week since March, but have since had to reduce that to 20 hours because of the demands of study. I currently earn approx \$320/week from which I am still need to repay \$2000- of credit card debts, support myself and save money to return to Indonesia for 12 months of fieldwork (plus a \$1100 airfare). If my visa is approved I am due to go in approx August/early Sept. Obviously there simply isn't enough income to fund all of this so I am in the process of selling off my few personally-owned possessions. I was advised by my University it was pointless trying for scholarships, funding etc as there are just none available to Masters students.

The hardest part of this is the fact that I have been forced to return to live in the same house as my ex-husband because I simply do not have enough money to pay for accommodation elsewhere. As you can imagine this has resulted in a rather tense living environment, not exactly conducive to study nor ideal for the children (two teenage boys who wish to remain with their father). I am possibly in a better position than some other students however, in that my ex has paid for a laptop computer for my research and agreed to pay me \$250 per month for the time I am in Indonesia, the costs which will eventually come out of my share of the financial settlement (years down the track when the kids leave home and the family house can be sold). There is no doubt that it is my decision to return to study, I certainly could have an easier time by opting to work fulltime.

But since I was awarded the Chancellors Medal and the Dean's Award for High Academic Achievement at graduation, and since I have a passion for my research it seems a waste not to take up post-grad study. As I am already 43 years of age, have already sacrificed one very promising career in science administration because of marriage and children, I do not intend to let mere finances deter me from this opportunity to follow my dream!

Hope you can use this information to make life easier for all postgrads!

Response 56

I am a teacher at a secondary school full time. Over the last 8 years I have completed 2 Masters Degrees, part time while I worked, while at the same time accruing a larger HECS debt. I have often been asked by others "Do you get paid more money by the Sate Gov't for being better qualified as a teacher, or can you claim it (HECS) as a tax deduction?" Of course we both know the answer to this. These people always ask "Why do you do it then?" Of course I have often asked myself the same question, along with other questions such as:

- What kind of education system does not encourage or reward (and I don't only mean financially) better educated educators?
- What kind of system hangs massive debts around those who wish to be better educated? These people will probably have lower levels of unemployment, better health (often associated with better

education) pay more tax. I am not advocating for fee free university, however will any one be surprised if Australians become less educated over the next few years?

I currently am attempting a PhD for the second time. Last time I dropped out due to the pressure of trying to work and study. The only assistance I can get from the Education department is 5 days off without pay. I even asked my principal if I can maybe have a reduced load (2 or 3 spares off per week) and he told me that "A PhD is a personal thing and has nothing do do/benefit the school' As my studies was in Physical Education and I am a P.E. teacher I found this difficult to comprehend.

I firmly believe that some system or policies need to be established that value and encourage individuals to study or become better qualified in their profession. It firmly believe that the nation as a whole benefits from better educated individuals, not just the individual themselves. It will be to our own detriment if we do not address some of these current situations which only give lip service to education as a valuable asset.

I would love to be able to study full time (probably not totally true, more of a necessity) in the next few years with my PhD. I will have to take a pay cut (even if I do get a scholarship) to do this and off course long term, see no financial gain, only penalty. I am not saying I want to gain, but definitely not go backwards. I would like to think that the Government would rectify such situations, not just for me, but for the nation as a whole.

Response 57

Information for the inquiry: Re tax on part time scholarships As a PhD student with two small children, both born during my candidature, I would have liked to undertake some of my PhD on a part time basis. However as it seems to be presumed if you are going part time you must be working and therefore your scholarship should be taxed. This actively prevented me from taking this option. The cost to me of going part time in terms of financial loss both through the taxation of the scholarship but also in terms of childcare rebates etc., made this option impossible. I think it is important that the reasons for undertaking study part time are taken into consideration before assuming scholarships should become taxable.

Thank you for the opportunity to raise this important issue. I believe many women with young children at home have the same concern

Response 59

My PhD program commenced on 10 Oct. 2001 in the research area of mechanical engineering. I hold QUT postgraduate Research Award (QUTPRA) covering my three years' study. Theoretically, I should finish my program by the early of October of this year. But the reality is that my research needs a lot of experiments. After finish of one of my two experiments, my supervisor can't find the proper machine to do another experiment. So, in the normal condition, I should write my thesis right now, but I am still waiting for the machine. It is obvious that I have to extend my program. But I was told that currently extension is very difficult. I think it is unfair for me if this is true because this situation is not caused by myself. If I can not extend the scholarship for a reasonable period I absolutely will change my research to part time no matter if my supervisor, my school and the faculty approve it.

Response 68

I would just like to make a comment on the taxation of part time scholarships, that is if this is not too late.

I can only assume that these scholarships are taxed as it is presumed that holders either have a full time or part time job and therefore their scholarship is considered a second income.

I'm sure that I'm not the only student who is part time due to illness and as such cannot also hold down a job. If I could I would be doing my degree fulltime.

So, yes I think tax on a part time scholarship is yet another problem that I could do without.

Response 72

After completing my BSc and honours year, I began my PhD in physics with an APA scholarship. When my scholarship ran out I had to make the decision whether to continue my thesis with no funding or to leave my Ph.D. and pursue a career outside of academia. My decision was made easier by being offered a job in IT at the same time. With the prospect of at least another two years study without funding, I chose to leave my research. While others could live at home with their parents and use them to subsidise their studies, this was not an option for me. Although I do not regret my decision, I do feel the long term consequences of students like myself leaving university studies due to financial constraints is a great loss for Australia and restricts our potential on the world stage. The intelligence being drained from our universities into the workforce or overseas is a great shame and if possible we should seek ways to stop this happening. For myself, my

undergraduate grades were excellent, obtaining a high distinction average, I consistently won awards for my performance and my honours was rated as class one level one. If the APA scholarship had covered the time it took for me to finish my thesis there is no doubt in my mind I would have continued in academia and finished my physics research.

Appendix V: CAPA's Statement of Minimum Resources for Postgraduate Study

CAPA's *Statement of Minimum Resources for Postgraduate Study* is attached for the committee's reference.