

**Jade Tyrrell**  
**National President**  
**National Union of Students Inc.**  
Suite 64 Trades Hall  
54 Victoria Street  
Carlton South, Victoria 3053

w. [www.unistudent.com.au](http://www.unistudent.com.au)

14 March 2013

By email: [ee.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:ee.reps@aph.gov.au)

To whom it may concern,

**RE: Higher Education Support Amendment (Asian Century) Bill 2013.**

I am writing this brief submission to indicate NUS's support for the *Higher Education Support Amendment (Asian Century) Bill 2013*.

According to the *OECD Education At A Glance 2012* Australia has a relatively low percentage of national tertiary students (1.3%) enrolled abroad compared to the OECD average (2.0%). Notably China has 13.8% of its students studying abroad.

More than half of Australian tertiary students (ie university and VET) are going to the traditional options either in the United Kingdom (28.5%) or the United States (24.8%). In contrast the two most popular Asian destinations are Japan (2.4%) and Korea (0.5%).

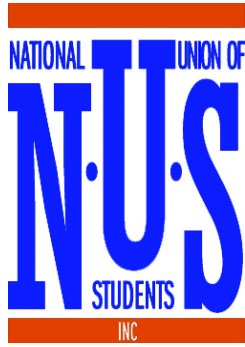
We share the government's view that there are significant benefits for Australia from encouraging students to consider including some study/ placement in Asia as part of their degree(s): Increased cross-cultural understanding and tolerance; increase literacy in Asian languages; graduates gaining experiences and skills that will make them more desirable to employers at a time when Australian is seeking to become more economically and socially integrated with Asia.

The OS-HELP loans program, introduced by the former government, has been a welcome initiative to support students who wouldn't otherwise have the financial means to study abroad unless they had won a scholarship. The removal of the 20% administrative charge on the loan from 2009 was another positive step.

However, as stated in the second reading speech less than 1 in 8 of the OS-HELP university student recipients are studying in Asia. We applaud the measures that will increase eligibility or provide financial incentives to encourage Australian to study or do placements in Asia:

- Extension of OS-HELP eligibility to postgraduates;

*Representing Students since 1987*



**Jade Tyrrell**  
**National President**  
**National Union of Students Inc.**  
Suite 64 Trades Hall  
54 Victoria Street  
Carlton South, Victoria 3053

w. [www.unistudent.com.au](http://www.unistudent.com.au)

- Extension of OS\_-HELP eligibility to clinical placements and internships
- Decrease the amount of study student must have remaining upon completion of their overseas study from 0.5 EFTSL to 0.125 EFTSL;
- Creation of \$1,000 supplementary loan for students who undertake intensive study in Asian languages

Our one specific comment on the proposal is that we expect from our previous experiences with other HELP loans the measures that widen eligibility will be more important in increasing the take-up rate than small incentives through HELP loans.

It will also be important that students are given more information about these OS-HELP options early in their degree so that they can structure their study programs and life plans around pursuing this option.

Nevertheless all four measures in the bill will be welcomed by students considering studying in Asia. We commend this bill.

Yours sincerely,

**Jade Tyrrell**  
**National President**  
**National Union of Students Inc.**

*Representing Students since 1987*