



Student Guild
Edith Cowan University

**Submission to Employment, Workplace Relations, and Education Legislation
Committee on the Impact of the Abolition of Compulsory Up front Union Fees on
the Edith Cowan University Student Guild**

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To: Committee Secretary
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Submission to Employment, Workplace Relations, and Education Legislation Committee
on the Impact of the Abolition of Compulsory Up front Union Fees on the Edith Cowan
University Student Guild

The fundamental objectives of the Edith Cowan University Student Guild are to:

- Provide services for the students of Edith Cowan University.
- Represent the student body of Edith Cowan University in matter affecting their interests and rights.
- Enrich the education, welfare, social life and culture of the student body of the university by organizing social and educational activities and events that seek to enhance campus life.
- Enhance and promote a 'sense of community' among the students of Edith Cowan University by providing student clubs and societies with funding and resources to conduct events and activities for their members and the student body as a whole.
- Work with the University administration to ensure that all current and future University policy embraces the principles of equal opportunity while recognizing the diverse needs of the student body.

In 2002, the Western Australian Parliament passed legislation that from the first semester of 2003 all four of the State's publicly funded universities would be required to charge all students an Amenities and Services Fee (ANS Fee). Of which a proportion, exceeding more than 50% of the sum total of Amenities and Services fees paid to a particular institution shall be given to that particular institution's student Guild. The ANS fee has allowed the Edith Cowan University Student Guild to rejuvenate itself as the significant amount of revenue that it receives from the ANS fee has meant that the Guild is once again, able to fund social events, student associations, council clubs, and societies; as well as provide vital welfare services to the student body of the University. The Guild currently employs two Education and Welfare Officers (1 part time, across all three metropolitan campuses and 1 part time on the Bunbury campus). Both welfare officers work alongside Guild senators to facilitate and provide the following vital services to the student body of the university:

- Counselling and advice.
- Advocacy for students going through the process of appealing their academic results.
- Helping students to liaise with their respective lecturers and/or respective heads of school to resolve their concerns or grievances.
- Emergency financial assistance.
- Computer loan scheme.
- Unicover (free legal advice, facilitated by Dwyer and Durack law firm).
- Helping students in crisis gain access to short term and emergency accommodation.
- Information and advice on Centrelink, our welfare officers also provide assistance to students who are having difficulties with Centrelink itself.

- Referrals to specialized health and welfare services, our welfare officers are also able to provide international students with a referral to a migration agent to ensure that they receive the best possible advice on their Visas and to ensure that any problems they may have are dealt with correctly.

If the Federal Government passes the Higher Education Support Amendment, (Abolition of Compulsory Up-front Union Fees Bill) 2005 these vital welfare services WILL DISINTEGRATE. As the Guild WILL NO LONGER have the finances to continue to employ it's welfare officers, and although Guild Senators are perfectly capable of advocating for their constituents they are students themselves, and this do not have the time to see the same number of students that the Guild welfare officers see. This Bill therefore places the welfare of students at risk as if these vital services are not made available to students in need of support, those in need may withdraw from the University altogether, or engage in risk activities, or worse still, commit suicide.

The revenue from the ANS fee also enables the Guild to employ two full time Activity Officers to organize and facilitate Guild activities and events on all four campuses of the University. The Guild activity officers also assist students, associations, clubs and societies within the University to organize social events. The passage of this Bill through Federal Parliament **will desecrate campus life** as the Guild simply WILL NOT have the resources or funds to facilitate the running of daily activities. Nor will the Guild be able to sustain its current level of funding to either the Edith Cowan University International Students Council of the Edith Cowan University Postgraduate Association, of other student associations, clubs, or societies.

If this legislation is passed by the Parliament, it WILL DESTROY the Edith Cowan University Student Guild as to sustain its current level of service provision and representation the Guild would have to charge the student body a membership fee, so high, that the majority of students would be unable to afford to join the Guild.