

Submission for the senate inquiry into the VSL legislation:  
By David Pearson

I am a fourth year International Studies and Media Student. I moved to Adelaide to study from Alice Springs, and receive little to no financial support from my parents. The services provided by the student organizations on my campus I believe are vital, and the potential effects of VSU will be devastating on them, and students like me.

There is a good chance that if it wasn't for the services and support that I have received from the Student Union at Adelaide Uni I may have already dropped out of university.

I have received numerous small, one off jobs to supplement the part time job I have. All of which I got through the employment service at the Adelaide University Union. On top of this they helped me with my resume, which helped me secure some of these jobs. They also helped me receive a scholarship from the University in my first year, and subsequent one's from the Union in my second and third years. These scholarships allowed me to survive financially at uni, by ensuring that the education I received was not hampered by my financial constraints.

The scholarships I received in my second and third years were distributed by the Education and Welfare officers who are part of the Adelaide University Union. They also provide advice on pretty much everything, dealing with the incredible bureaucracy that is Centrelink, and with rent agreements, personal problems, everything.

These scholarships helped me so much as I had to move from Alice Springs to study, which was incredibly expensive, along with having to travel home all the time, which was not cheap in my first few years and Ansett had just collapsed.

As well as this, I made friends, and found flat mates thanks to the activities put on by the Students' Association. The orientation program that they put on helped me make so many friends, and I know helped many of them stay at Uni when the times were tough.

The support structures that these student organizations provide often can't be quantified, but they are so valuable and it would be disastrous for them to be lost if this legislation is implemented.

I agree that there are many problems with some student organisation, but I think the people best placed to reform these organizations are the students themselves. I recognise that the government has concerns with student organizations, but so do the students. Please, do not take away the opportunity students currently have of being part of a community in which everyone pays so that we can support each other. At the very least give the students the choice and allow us to decide whether we have a universal fee of an optional one. I urge the senate to reject this legislation, and to find ways to help students provide better, fairer and more relevant services and representation on campus.

Kind Regards  
David Pearson