

To the Senate Inquiry into VSU:

I am a second year science student studying at the University of Adelaide. I am deeply concerned about the Federal Government's plans to abolish Universal Student Unionism and the effect this will have on my ability to study successfully. In addition to this, I am concerned about the effect this will have on campus culture and university life as a whole.

I regularly use the Adelaide University Union's services. I got my first job with the Union's assistance, and am now working regularly. The Union's computing and resource centre is a 24-hour facility where I am able to research and work on assignments without the worry that the place I am using to study will close. I use the Union's booking facilities to book rooms to meet with my friends and am involved in a number of clubs. I have also used the Union's counselling service on a number of occasions and have found their advice very helpful. Being a student, and living generally, is made more affordable by the Union's book store which offers text books at discount prices, and the union membership card which allows me to get discounts at a variety of shops and eateries. The catering services available on campus are run by the Union, a fact I am glad of because I know that the money I spend there will be used to provide services I am likely to use.

The campus culture I enjoy as a university student will also be detrimentally affected by the VSU legislation. Activities put on by the Union and its affiliates make campus life more interesting. Without these activities, coming to university will be a much less pleasant experience. I don't believe that university is just a place to get a degree. I want to learn and experience things outside of the lecture hall, and much of what I have learned has been due to activities (such a Multicultural Week which is run by the Overseas Student's Association, a Union affiliate) supported by the student Union. In particular, I am worried that Orientation, the activity that introduces new students to the university and university life, will no longer be able to be run under VSU. It was through orientation that I met a lot of new friends, and got to know my way around the campus. I would have got off to a much poorer start as a student had Orientation not been run for the students' benefit.

I also do not wish my representation to the University or the wider community diminished. Representatives at the Student's Association are able to liaise with lecturers and advocate on students' behalf if there is problem. I believe that students need to be represented politically to the various state governments and the federal government, but VSU will almost certainly end any means we have to voice our views on issues affecting students such as the recent HECS hike.

Without universal student funding, the Adelaide University Union will not be able to provide the range and quality of services that it does. It is true that the system is not perfect. Some parts need to be changed for it to be more equitable to students in certain circumstances, but I urge the Senate to reject this legislation, because it will have a disastrous impact on students like me, and on so many others.

Kind Regards,
John Pezy