

Submission to the
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
Legislation Committee

**Inquiry into the provisions of the Higher Education
Support Amendment (Abolition of Compulsory Up-
front Union Fees) Bill 2005**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This submission has been prepared by the Higher Education Taskforce of the ANU Students' Association ('ANUSA') which is open to all undergraduate students at the ANU. The work of the Taskforce has been endorsed by the elected Student Representative Council of ANUSA.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ANUSA strongly opposes Voluntary Student Unionism ('VSU'). We believe that the effects of the Higher Education Support Amendment (Abolition of Compulsory Up-front Union Fees) Bill 2005 ('the Bill') will be unequivocally detrimental to the ANU Students' Association, to the Australian National University, and to the future of higher education in Australia.

1. ANUSA undertakes activities which are unique to university life. These include representation for undergraduate students and advocacy on appeals and complaints. We recognise the need for service provision to international, female and/or queer¹ students. Most of our budget is devoted to ensuring free legal and welfare advice, and a Second-hand Bookshop to cater to the needs of students at the ANU. ANUSA also funds activities of academic, cultural and social clubs and societies.
2. In much the same way that any representative body requires financial support from its constituents, ANUSA's existence relies upon a fee collected at the start of the year.
3. However the Bill mandates a user-pays principle. This means that we do not have assured funds at the start of each year. This, in turn, means that we cannot ensure services – and are instead forced to run the Association as a commercial entity, with varied prices and availability of the unique services we provide.
4. Running a representative organisation as a commercial organisation goes against the duty we owe to our constituents. We may have to sacrifice students' best interests in favour of commercial activities in order to maintain financial viability. If we do not, then the costs of our services will be placed directly on students as they use our services. As we indicate below, the user-pays cost to students is likely to be far greater than the one-off, compulsory, up-front fee currently paid.
5. The alternative to a commercial enterprise is to cease provision of our services altogether.
6. We would also argue that a voluntary system of membership enforced by legislative measures is fundamentally flawed. Students, already financially burdened, will be unlikely to pay a fee for essential services: believing either that the services are not valuable because they are not compulsory, or that someone else will pay for the provision of the service, thus ensuring its availability when they need it.
7. Related consequences include a greater pressure upon University finances to fund what ANUSA currently provides. There will be greater reliance on services provided by the ACT Government: eg accommodation services, health and

¹ For the rest of the document, "queer students" will be used to mean students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, intersex and/or queer.

counselling services, and access to affordable childcare. The Bill also poses a threat to the continued quality of education and international standing of Australia's universities.

3. OVERVIEW OF COMPULSORY UP-FRONT STUDENT UNION FEES AT ANU

3.1 What is the Immediate Impact of the Proposed Legislation?

The proposed legislation will prohibit the collection of the General Services Fee ('GSF') by the ANU administration. This fee is currently compulsory and is predominantly spent on services that are not directly academic in nature.

3.2 How much is the GSF?

The GSF for all students at ANU in 2005 was \$220.

3.3 Who is required to pay the GSF and what is the consequence of non-payment?

All students studying at the ANU are compulsorily required to pay the GSF each year. If a student has not paid the GSF or provided appropriate reasons for not paying, the student's results are withheld.

There are provisions to allow for financial hardship in the payment of the GSF. The ANU offers undergraduate student loans, which can be applied for to cover the costs of the GSF upfront. The GSF is a comparatively small reason given for loan applications compared with rent, textbooks, bills and living costs.

3.4 What Organisations Receive money from the GSF?

The GSF is paid to the University and is allocated to four organisations:

- The ANU Students' Association (ANUSA);
- The Postgraduate and Research Students' Association Inc (PARSA);
- The ANU Union Inc; and
- The ANU Sport and Recreation Association Inc (ANUSRA).

ANUSA: represents all undergraduate students at the ANU. It makes no profit from any of its services or activities. Its primary role is to represent the needs of undergraduate students to the University, and to the broader community and media.

PARSA: represents all postgraduate and research students at the ANU. It advocates on behalf of these students both in respect to their academic studies and factors affecting their social lives.

ANUSRA: provides access to sporting facilities and coordination of sporting activities on campus including national representative sport and the organisation of teams attending the University Games. All students at the ANU can be members.

ANU Union: the primary provider of food, beverages, stationery and entertainment for all students at the ANU. The organisation, which has an annual turnover of \$5m, plays a significant role in the Canberra's economy and the region.

3.5 Is membership of the Organisations compulsory?

Although payment of the GSF is compulsory, membership of the organisations that receive money from the GSF is not. The default position is that students become members of these organisations automatically on payment of the GSF; however students may opt-out of membership. If a student has paid their GSF to one of the four organisations and later decides they do not want an association with these organisations, they may resign their membership in writing.² The fee, however, remains in the University's GSF Fund.

3.6 How is the GSF Allocated?

The money collected from the GSF is allocated to the four organisations by the GSF Committee chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education). Allocations made by the GSF Committee are based on comprehensive descriptions presented by each organisation detailing where the money will go and why it is needed.

The Committee's recommended allocations must then be approved by the ANU's Finance Committee, and then by the ANU Council.

In this way, the budgets of all organisations receiving money provided by compulsory student fees are scrutinised by three University bodies with financial and legal responsibility for the University.

4. IMPACT ON ANUSA

The purpose of this section is to inform the Committee about where ANUSA spends its money and what the loss of this funding will mean for activities on the ANU campus. This is to demonstrate that the financial stability provided by the collection of a compulsory fee forms the core of our existence.

4.1 Overview of Funding

4.1.1 Where does ANUSA get its funding?

ANUSA depends almost entirely upon the compulsory fee collected from students. The total amount money received by ANUSA in 2005 is \$ 622 415. \$544 000 of this comes from the GSF, and represents approximately \$50 from each student's compulsory contribution. The other main source of income is advertising, which we have projected will amount to \$48 415. It should be noted, however, that money received from advertising is sought to fund specific events or productions such as O-week or the Student Diary.

It is evident from the summary of our activities given below that we have no profit-making enterprises whatsoever. Even those activities such as O-Week that obtain advertising sponsorship only make enough to cover their own costs, and will be unlikely

² ANUSA Constitution, s 1.8.2; available at <http://sa.anu.edu.au/index.php?module=content&contentID=52>.

to be able to generate profit to fund our other activities. These other services, in turn, are of a nature that makes advertising very difficult to obtain. For example, it is hard to market to potential advertisers the fact that we employ a free legal officer or undertake student representation on a committee.

4.1.2 What accountability mechanisms ensure that this money is spent appropriately?

In addition to scrutiny performed by bodies within ANU (see heading 3.6), students also act as a check upon the decisions made by the ANUSA trustees in the distribution of funds. This extra assessment demonstrates that ANUSA takes significant steps to hold itself accountable to students.

(a) Election of officers

All representatives, including those who hold financial responsibility, are elected annually by the undergraduate students of the ANU. In order to ensure fairness and democracy, these elections are conducted by the ACT Electoral Commission and no official role is taken by any student.

We should note that under the Bill, we would not have the funds to pay the ACT Electoral Commission to run these elections.

Even after these representatives are elected, the Constitution allows an Ordinary General meeting and/or a Student Representative Council meeting to remove any representative. These meetings also hold representatives accountable, requiring reports and details of the activities of all those who receive an honorarium for their work.

(b) Scrutiny of budgets

Budgets of the individual Departments are decided by the Department Officer in consultation with the Departments' Collective. Department and Sub-Department budgets are then reviewed and passed by CRC. The provisional budget for ANUSA is set each year by the outgoing Treasurer and is passed at an OGM in term 4. This budget is then reviewed and passed by an OGM in the first term of the next year. Any budget variations have to be approved by an OGM. This way, students can decide how they want their Students' Association to spend their money. In the interests of accountability ANUSA will be putting all of its budgets online in 2005.

4.1.3 How does ANUSA spend its money?

The ANUSA budget is divided into six areas; Administration, President and SRC, Departments, Publications, Staffing, and Special purpose funds.

(a) Administration- \$65,300

Like any small business, ANUSA has significant administration costs relative to its income. This includes computer, electricity, telephone, stationary, printing, photocopying and cleaning, along with other office needs. This also includes external auditing to ensure financial accountability and insurance.

President and SRC- \$51,430

The ANUSA President is paid an honorarium of \$13,300, and spends around 40 hours a week on students' association related matters. The four other executive members receive a \$2,200 honorarium each, spending around 15 hours a week on student association matters such as student appeals, organising social events, signing cheques, preparing meetings of ANUSA and generally answering student enquiries. Costs associated with student conferences and the ANUSA elections are also covered under this area of the budget. \$900 is allocated to ANUSA campaigns.

(c) Departments- \$63,400

ANUSA has four departments, Sexuality, Women's, Education and Environment. The officer of each department receives an honorarium of \$1,100 and each department is allocated \$6000. The departments campaign on important student issues and involve students in areas of interest. The Sexuality and Women's department are important contact points for some students on Campus. This area also includes funding for the Fine Arts Students' Association and International Students at ANU.

(d) Publications- \$102,518

ANUSA publications include a Student Diary and Woroni, the student paper. In 2005 we also published a 'Student Survival Guide.' These publications are essential to keeping students on campus up-to-date with what is going on at ANU. Both the Student Diary and Woroni receive some funding from advertising, which has been included in the above figure.

(e) Staffing- \$180,00

The skills, professionalism and services the ANUSA staff provide to students at ANU are essential. Our staff includes a:

- Welfare officer
- Legal officer
- Administrator/ Receptionist
- Information Technology support officer

(f) Special purpose funds- \$157,000

This area funds ANUSA social events, our clubs and societies, and student productions, all essential to creating a rich social and cultural university experience for students outside the lecture theatre. Again, some of these costs are covered by private advertising and sponsorship.

The rest of this section will examine what is provided under each of these budget areas, and what the impact will be upon each under VSU.

4.2 Services Provided by Permanent Staff

4.2.1 Service Description

(a) Information Services

The ANUSA offices are centrally located on campus, and are frequently used as a formal and informal reference and referral point for other University services and facilities.

ANUSA's role as an information service provider is pronounced at the start of each semester when other information points within the University are incapacitated due to high demand.

(b) Welfare

The Welfare Officer at ANUSA, Bronwyn Evans, assists dozens of students each week with varying problems. She provides information, applications and appeal assistance on Government Income Support Benefits provided by Centrelink, such as Youth Allowance, Austudy, Abstudy, disability support pensions, parenting payments and health care cards. Bronwyn can provide financial assistance in the form of interest-free Emergency Loans funded by ANUSA. She also assists students with their budgeting and financial counselling, applications for undergraduate loans, referrals to services within ANU and referrals to other welfare services.

From July to October each year, the Welfare Officer hosts the ATO Taxation Help Program. It is a service where low-income earners can have their tax returns prepared for free by ATO trained volunteers. In addition, general taxation information is provided all year round.

Bronwyn can also provide housing advice, and can help you explore the various housing options and make informed choices.

(c) Legal

A Legal Officer is currently employed by the two student representative bodies on campus, ANUSA and PARSA. Don Malcolmson is available to all undergraduate and postgraduate students at the ANU to assist with legal matters. These commonly include tenancy problems, landlord or tenant disputes, intellectual property concerns, help with drafting letters or appeals, assistance in interpreting legislation and a vast variety of concerns that students have.

The Legal Officer also acts as a mentor to various law students who volunteer to assist with research and cases involving students. This is an invaluable experience and provides skills in legal practice which cannot be found in the lecture theatre. If Don's job cannot be guaranteed under VSU, these students will lose an opportunity to gain practical experience on campus.

(d) Second-hand Bookshop

The ANUSA Second-hand Bookshop is a valuable service which allows students to purchase textbooks at a reduced price or to resell books to recoup some of the purchase costs of these texts. The bookshop is run by ANUSA on a non-profit basis.

Academic texts are a major purchase for most students, and an inability to purchase the required texts disadvantages students. Most academic textbooks retail for between \$30 and \$120. Specialist law, science or medicine texts are usually even more expensive. In the past 10 years, tax benefits for textbooks have been abolished, making textbooks a significant up-front expense for students.

4.2.2 Impact of VSU

Staffing costs are one of the most significant costs in ANUSA's budget. Without the guaranteed income ensured by the collection of a compulsory fee, it is unlikely that any of these staff will have the financial security to remain.

The Welfare officer makes an invaluable contribution to students and their welfare. Her knowledge of the University and opportunities available within the community cannot be seconded. She currently is paid a salary of \$38 000 from ANUSA's funds from the GSF. If our Welfare Officer is not guaranteed this salary, it will be difficult to find someone to employ at her level or with her knowledge for a lesser amount. The implications of this could be devastating, as many students who go to Bronwyn for the Undergraduate Loans or advice would otherwise 'fall through the cracks' of the University system. Under a user-pays system, such students may be charged a fee each time they consult Bronwyn. This cost would be prohibitive for many students, especially those come to see the Welfare Officer because they are in financial difficulty.

If VSU is introduced, the financial burden of providing a free legal officer may prove too great for ANUSA. This would mean that students would have to seek legal advice elsewhere, where it is likely that they would pay \$250 per hour (at a conservative estimate). Therefore in just one visit to the legal officer, a student has *saved* money because they paid a compulsory GSF.

Further, ANUSA may be unable to continue to provide the Bookshop. The administration and staffing costs which are currently covered by the compulsory GSF would have to be covered by collecting a percentage of the price of each book sold. This cost would be transferred to users in the form of higher book prices – undermining the purpose of having a Second-hand Bookshop.

It is unlikely that the Second-hand Bookshop service would be provided by other organisations on campus. Faculty-based clubs, such as the Law Students' Society, have previously run second-hand book schemes, however the administrative costs associated with this were too high, and the schemes have closed. The Co-op Bookshop, an academic text retailer, would presumably be reluctant to sell secondhand copies of books which it retails without adding retail profit margins to the sale. This would obviously disadvantage students.

4.2.3 Possible Methods of Mitigation

It is possible that a university with sufficient finances can pay these staff instead. However this creates a conflict of interest, especially between the legal officer's duties to the students he/she represents and his/her duties to the University as an employer. Such conflicts will significantly undermine the effectiveness of providing welfare and legal assistance.

4.3 Responsibilities of Representatives on Honoraria

4.3.1 Introduction

Below is a table outlining the responsibility of those elected positions in ANUSA who receive an honorarium. It should be noted that all honoraria are paid in instalments over a 12 month period in order to ensure the accountability and continued genuine work of paid representatives.

Primary Roles and Responsibilities of Elected Representatives

Position	Main Responsibilities	Amount of Honorarium
President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads ANUSA, and is ultimately responsible for the Association's activities • Represents undergraduate students on various University bodies and committees • Provide advice and advocacy • Acts as the spokesperson for ANUSA • Keeps the student body informed of changes which affect their welfare • Trustee of the Association. 	\$13,300
Vice-President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a similar and supporting role to the President • Involved in co-ordination of student appeals • Focuses on internal education matters such as Faculty policies and information services 	\$2,200
General-Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for internal administration of ANUSA • Convenes meetings, organises agendas and minutes, calls for nominations of vacant positions and interprets the Constitution • Trustee of the Association. 	\$2,200
Treasurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for financial organisation of the Association • Confirms the proposed Budget with the student body at an Ordinary General Meeting (OGM) • Ensures the finances of the Association are professionally audited • Sets a provisional budget for the following year • Trustee of the Association. 	\$2,200
Social Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organises O-Week, Bush-Week and other social events • Chairs the Clubs & Societies Committee 	\$2,200
Heads of Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Women's, Sexuality, Education and Environment Departments are each headed by the Departmental Officer. • Each Departmental Officer is guided by their Collective, a group of people who are interested and involved in the Department. • Departments are usually involved in activism and representation, and often have particular campaigns happening throughout the year 	\$1,100
Heads of Sub-departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The International Students' Service of the ANU (ISSANU), the Fine Arts Students' Association, the Indigenous Officer and Disabilities Officer are all sub-departments of ANUSA • The Presidents and Officers of these sub-departments sit on the various ANUSA Council meetings • The ANUSA President must consult with the sub-departments on any issues affecting International, Fine Arts, indigenous or disabled students respectively 	\$0
Faculty Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 12 faculty representatives, elected from each of the 6 Faculties; Arts, Asian Studies, Law, Engineering&IT, Science and Eco/Commerce 	\$0

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty representatives must be enrolled in a subject from the Faculty which they represent • Sit on the Faculty Representative Council, which discusses issues relevant to education and the Faculties • Sit on the various Faculty Boards and present students' issues to the Boards 	
General representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 students are elected to sit on the Student Representative Council and direct the policy of the Association • General Representatives are a good point of contact for students with concerns or suggestions • They also assist with social and other events run by ANUSA 	\$0

4.3.2 Why are costs incurred by these positions?

First, the honoraria that representatives receive, although small, reduces the pressure on representatives to commit to part-time jobs.³ This means that they can afford the time to sit on committees and coordinate appeals for students. Representatives already find it difficult to juggle their studies and jobs with their representative duties. Without these minimal honoraria, representatives would find it much more difficult to fulfil these duties.

Secondly, a significant amount of money is invested in ANUSA's administrative and support infrastructure. This includes our administrative staff member (who manages the accounts and day-to-day running of the building), office space, IT equipment, photocopiers and other facilities present in any ordinary office. We believe it is entirely reasonable that these facilities and support are provided; they are essential to representatives in fulfilling their duties in the efficient, organised and professional manner that students deserve.

4.3.3 Description of Representation and Advocacy roles of ANUSA

(a) Representation

(i) President and Vice-President

The President and the Vice-President play a vital role in representation, advocacy and administration affecting the students of the ANU. The President is one of 15 members of the University Council, and consequently holds significant directorial responsibilities on the governing body of the University.

The ANU has numerous other Committees and Councils.

The President attends:

- The University Council (governing body)
- Executive Committee of Council (smaller, emergency meetings when necessary)

³ In ANUSA's 2004 student survey 71.17% of students answered that they undertake paid employment while they study. Approximately 1000 students took the survey.

- Academic Board (specific focus on degree structures, assessments, courses)
- Campus Planning and Development Committee (must approve new buildings/use of land on campus, responsible for projects, eg accommodation and renovations)
- Campus Advisory Sub-Committee (advises the Campus Planning and Development Committee, examines more specific issues at length)
- Student Services Advisory Committee (body to which student services report, including academic skills, counselling, administration, accommodation services, health, equity and diversity, information services, disability support unit etc.)
- Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee (makes policy on matters of equity: disabled students, pregnant women, breastfeeding, children on campus, indigenous students, students disadvantaged by a particular course or study etc.)
- Unisafe Committee (responsible for UniSafe Patrol Officers, anti-drink spiking campaigns, safety posters in various languages. The ISSANU President and the ANUSA Women's and Sexuality Officers are also members.)
- Residential Life Planning Committee (long-term strategic planning for accommodation services on campus)
- Vice-Chancellor's Awards Selection Committee (decides recipients of the University's top awards)
- Honorary Degrees Committee (determines if a candidate is worthy of an honorary degree of the University)
- Transport Reference Group (parking, cycling, financial reports, permits)
- Finance Committee (President, as an observer) (scrutinises the budget of the University extensively, and makes recommendations to Council on the budget).
- Audit Committee (President, as an observer) (ensures the legality and responsible use of money).

The Vice-President and other representatives attend:

- University Committee on Education Policy (Vice-President) (Reports to Academic Board; looks at detailed education policies, eg examination guidelines or new degree proposals)
- Divisional Planning Committee (General Secretary)
- Divisional Education Committees (Faculty Representatives) (approve, reject, or alter the decisions of a Faculty Board; approve new degrees and partnerships.)
- Faculty Boards (Faculty Representatives) (Grass-roots education issues, for example a timetable clash, or whether a new subject can be approved and what the goals and assessment will be).

Working parties

- There are working parties periodically established by the University which design new structures and education directions. The President is required to attend these as well. There are also a number of informal and regular meetings with directors of various sectors in the ANU, which keep us informed on matters such as printing and accommodation. Other commitments include interview panels, panels for deciding tenders,

The ANU benefits from being able to access representative student opinions, whilst the student body benefits from having their positions represented on ANU decision-making bodies. The President has the primary representative role on the various committees,

however the scope of this commitment means it is traditionally shared between two officers.

(ii) Faculty and General Representatives

These representatives are elected by students from each Faculty of the ANU and by the student body as a whole. They perform two important representative functions.

- General Representatives sit on the Student Representative Council of ANUSA and are responsible for making policy and keeping the paid office bearers accountable.
- Faculty Representatives have positions on their respective Faculty Boards and Education Committees.

(iii) Departments and Sub-Departments

Women's Department

The Women's Officer represents undergraduate women students on internal ANUSA councils, and in the University community through such groups as Unisafe, Equity and Diversity Unit, and Residential Halls and Colleges. She also represents women undergraduate students in the wider community, and has been in contact with, for example, the ACT Status of Women Office regarding safety on campus, and the ACT Minister for Women.

The Women's Officer aims to represent all women undergraduate students, and has been in contact with many women's groups, be they social, religious, or political, on campus. These include: ANU Muslim Association Women's, Amnesty International [ANU and ACT], Women on Campus, ANU Vagina Monologues Committee, The Young Liberals and Left Labor ANU.

The Women's Collective meets regularly and is open to all women undergraduate students. It is a forum in which the officer may be contacted, issues may be raised, and areas of concern to women may identified and discussed, and these concerns may then be brought to the relevant University or community body.

Sexuality Department

Representation provided by the Sexuality Department works on three levels: amongst the students, on decision-making bodies within ANUSA and to the wider University community.

The Queer Collective, a group open to all members of the Department, that meets regularly, provides an avenue for political expression to students who would otherwise be politically disenfranchised. It organises not only the social work, but also the political work of the Department, and, through the Sexuality Officer, has a voice within ANUSA.

The Sexuality Officer sits and votes on Student Representative Council (SRC) and Combined Representative Council (CRC) and partakes in Interdepartmental-Executive meetings. The importance of these voting rights cannot be underestimated as they are

at highest level of student representation and decisions made in these bodies represent the voice of the students.

The Sexuality Officer is in regular contact with the Equity and Diversity Unit⁴. With the current moves at ANU to establish an Ally program, a University-wide program aimed at acknowledging and actively combating homophobia and social prejudice against queers at all levels in the University, the Officer has also been in contact with the Dean of Students, Human Resource Division and the Chancellery to ensure that the members of the Department are represented in this initiative. Additionally, in acknowledgement that queer students face different sorts of danger on the ANU campus, the Officer sits on the UniSafe⁵ board and is in regular contact with ANU Security.

The Sexuality Department works as a representative body because it represents all queer undergraduate students. All queer students can be members of the queer collective; all queer students can guide the Sexuality Department and the Sexuality Officer because, under universal membership, all queer students are members of the Department. The financial and political accountability of the Officer and his/her/hir legitimacy as the representative of queer students are ensured because *all* queer students can criticise the Officer and *all* queers students can have their voice heard in Department meetings.

(b) Advocacy

(i) President and VP

The traditional advocacy roles, such as academic appeals, appealing disciplinary measures and assisting students with complaints, are undertaken by the President and Vice-President of ANUSA. In fact, the ANU's regulations require that the President or nominee be a member of any appeals panel dealing with an undergraduate matter.⁶

Advocacy often involves dealing with sensitive matters, and requires complete confidentiality on the part of these two office bearers. Sometimes a student will ask that the Legal Officer or Welfare Officer be involved as well.

Examples of matters which students raise in appeal are: appealing a mark awarded in a course, accusations of plagiarism or appealing a method of assessment. In many of these cases the student can be facing a penalty of failure in a course, leading to expulsion from the University for breaching the Academic Progress Rules.⁷

⁴ The Equity and Diversity unit is the branch of ANU administration that deals with grievances and institutes anti-harassment policies on campus (www.anu.edu.au/equity).

⁵ UniSafe is a multi-faceted organisation that brings together resources and knowledge of other groups on campus to ensure that the campus is made as safe as possible.

⁶ ANU Assessment Review and Appeals Policy, principle 4.5; see http://info.anu.edu.au/policies/Policies/Students/Other/Assessment_Review_and_Appeals.asp.

⁷ ANU Academic Progress Rules 2005, rule 10; see <http://www.anu.edu.au/cabs/rules/index.html>.

Disciplinary action that students may wish to challenge includes: being expelled from a Hall or College of Residence of the ANU, being expelled from the ANU, or being disciplined for breaching the Examinations Rules.⁸

Complaints made by students are many and varied. They include: complaints about administrative processes, the quality of facilities and resources, assessment procedures in a course, being subjected to a financial penalty for late enrolment. It is the task of the President and Vice-President to liaise between the University and the student to reach a satisfactory outcome. This requires knowledge of the University's processes as well as an understanding of the needs and concerns of an undergraduate student.

(ii) Departments and Sub-Departments

When women, disabled, international, indigenous and/or queers students come to any of the Departments or Sub-Departments, the relevant Officer acts as a point of referral, using their position as a point of contact to ensure the correct procedure is followed in the best interest of the student. Harassment and discrimination are dealt with through grievance procedures by Equity and Diversity. The Officers can act as advocates for students as they advance their appeal through these processes.

Women's Officer

The Women's Officer is a student contact for grievance procedures, and may present information on or concerns about issues pertaining to women students (eg childcare and sexual assault), to the University and to the Equity and Diversity Unit. She may also be a point of referral, information and advice, and can put people in contact with relevant bodies inside and outside of the University in order to resolve their complaints. The Officer maintains contact with Domestic Violence Crisis Service, ANU Security, ANU Counselling Service, Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT, AFP Victims Liaison Officers, Equity and Diversity Unit, Rape Crisis Centre, and a vast array of other crisis services and women's services in the ACT.

Sexuality Officer

Queer students face particular issues such as a higher suicide rate and higher likelihood of being kicked out of home. The way in which the Sexuality Officer advocates for queer students is by being a friendly face, a point of reference in the queer community and someone who is well-informed and can point students in the direction of Crisis Centres, the AIDS Action Council, Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT, the Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers within the AFP etc. Because of the specificity and sensitivity of issues faced by queer students, the Sexuality Department plays a vital role in advocating for these students.

4.3.4 Impact of VSU

Without the honoraria received, it is unlikely that enough students will be able to commit to these positions at the cost of their studies and work. The result will be that when students make a complaint or lodge an appeal, they are unlikely to have support or

⁸ ANU Examinations (The Faculties) Rules 2005 and the ANU Discipline Rules 2005; see <http://www.anu.edu.au/cabs/rules/index.html>.

representation. In many cases this may result in the student being unable to demand the quality education they deserve, or suffering a greater penalty.

It is similarly unlikely that a President or Vice-President will have sufficient time to attend the dozens of University meetings on which student representation is considered essential.

4.4 Independent Departments

Departments within ANUSA are independent in the activities which they conduct, however their budgets remain subject to the scrutiny of the Combined Representative Council and the Ordinary General Meeting of the Association.

4.4.1 Description of Services provided by Departments

(a) The Women's Department

The Women's Department is an autonomous collective within the ANU Students' Association. The Department is managed by the democratically elected Women's Officer. Any woman undergraduate student at the ANU is automatically a member of the Women's Department and whether or not she becomes an active member through joining the Women's Collective is her choice.

The aim of the Women's Department is to provide the following services to undergraduate women students:

Information/referral services as follows:

- Provides information and referral services regarding important issues of women's health, drink spiking, crisis services (in a range of languages), personal safety, drug referral, sexual health, relevant ANU policy, child-care, counseling, opportunities, funding, scholarships and legal services.
- Advocacy and Representation (see headings above).
- Numerous events are organised by the Women's Department, including awareness raising events about domestic violence, celebratory events such as International Women's Day, and campaigns about childcare, maternity leave and reproductive choice. Social events are also organised by the Women's Department, for example a Dance Party in O-Week 2005.
- Policy: the Women's Department has written numerous policies to benefit female students. A prime example is our sexual assault policy which we hope will fill a gap in the University's own security procedures.

(b) Sexuality Department

(i) What is the Sexuality Department?

Any student identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender/sexual⁹, intersex¹⁰ and/or queer is automatically a member of the Sexuality Department and is able to participate and vote in the Department. The Queer Collective, consisting of over 15 active members in 2005, with the Sexuality Officer as its head, runs the Department.

The Sexuality Officer is paid an honorarium of \$1100, and manages a budget of \$6000. The Officer is constitutionally responsible for establishing a collective and managing the administrative affairs of the Department, and has traditionally spent approximately 20 hours a week in his/her/hir¹¹ office in order to perform these tasks and be available for contact.

(ii) Services

The Sexuality Department office serves as a physical point of reference for queer students looking for advice or resources, and for the members of the broader community looking provide services for the queer student community.

The Department has a well-stocked and evolving library of self-help books, biographies and theoretical journals that are relevant resources for queer students, and those studying relevant areas, such as Gender and Cultural studies. The Department also provides safe-sex resources and information for queer students. These resources and information have been traditionally provided for free through our ongoing cooperation with organisations in the broader community such as Sexual health and Family Planning ACT (SHFPACT), the AIDS Action Council and Ansell.

The Sexuality Department also runs Pride Week: a week of forums, workshops, market days and political activities facilitated by the Sexuality Department. Events in Pride Week are organised and run by individual members of the Department, the Officer and our affiliated social club for queer and queer-friendly students, Jellybabies. This year, the highlights of Pride Week were a safe-sex workshop, a theatrical sexuality forum and dance party. Both the seminar and the dance party were well attended; that the attendance of the dance party this year was more than double dance parties in previous years is testimony to the growing interest in and continuing relevance of the Sexuality Department.

Residential Halls and Colleges, home to a quarter of ANU's undergraduate population, have been a focus of the Sexuality Department for the last three years. Now, with support both of the Sexuality Department and the administrative organisations within the Halls and Colleges, an active network of sexuality officers, made up of resident tutors or elected representatives, has been created. A sexuality forum was organised for all resident tutors to facilitate better networking between Halls and Colleges and ANUSA. Meetings and socialising between the sexuality officers in the Halls and

⁹ A transgender/sexual person is someone whose gender identification does not conform with the social expectations attached to their sex allocation. They may identify as the “opposite” gender, or amorphously in between man and woman, and may or may not undertake surgery to “correct” their sex.

¹⁰ An intersex person is a person who was born with atypical genitals and cannot be defined as exclusively male or female.

¹¹ Hir is a gender non-specific third person possessive pronoun.

Colleges and the Officers of the Department have been highly successful, and more are planned for the future.

(c) Education Department

The Education department is responsible for promoting student interests in education at both a national and campus level, and is concerned with how various policies could affect students studying at ANU. The Education Department is committed to promoting accessible and quality education at the ANU and across Australia.

The Department promotes information about issues that affect all students in regard to access to quality education, and the quality of the education provided at both the ANU, and other higher education institutions across Australia. It runs numerous activities through out the year which include information stalls, video screenings and inviting guest speakers to forums to discuss education issues.

All undergraduate students at ANU are members of the education department, and thus have a say in the activities of the department. The Education Officer is elected by all undergraduate students at the annual ANUSA elections. There are weekly informal meetings of the department so that any educational issues can be discussed, and possible solutions to identified problems can be worked out.

(d) Environment Department

The Environment Collective, which is responsible for running the Environment Department, offers information on all things green. Its aim is to promote issues related to the environment and its surroundings. It should be considered as the students' link to understanding and being active in a greener side of university life. Essentially the Collective is active in local, national and international environmental campaigns and provides valuable resources to students.

There are many projects and ideas that students can be a part of, including:

- Regular market day stalls and meetings
- Bicycle workshops to promote the use of bicycles over other modes of transportation which are not environmentally sustainable
- Working together with other Canberra community organisations, such as the ANU Food Co-op and the Rocks Community group and the local radio station 2XX
- Reintroducing the Green Screen art exhibitions, encouraging artists to perform and display artwork which is environmentally conscious.

The collective also acts as a re-distribution centre and provides items such as lecture pads and folders that have being either recycled or able to be reused. It also has an extensive and growing library that is regularly updated by various organisations such as Green Peace and the Wilderness society. This library and resource cache is particularly useful not only to employ students to be more environmentally friendly, but also to provide useful references in assignments for students in various course at ANU.

4.4.2 Description of services provided by Sub Departments

(a) The ANU Fine Arts Students Association (FASA)

The bulk of FASA's activity is about subsidising costs for students in art, music, media arts, digital arts and other areas which often place a large cost upon students in terms of materials and equipment required for study. Thus, FASA relies very heavily on funding. VSU would mean student grants offered to relieve study costs may no longer be available. In addition, the music school ball, art school ball and the quarterly happy hours are all dependent on ANUSA funding. VSU will greatly disadvantage fine arts students and disadvantage the institutes as a whole too.

(b) The International Students' Service of the ANU

The International Students' Service of the ANU ('ISSANU') is an independent Sub-Department of ANUSA and is a non-profit organisation. It is the primary representative body of all undergraduate international students on campus. ISSANU's objectives are:

- To represent and co-operate with the responsible authorities on all matters which pertain to the interests and welfare of international students;
- To facilitate cultural and information exchange between international students and the general student population;
- To assist in the welfare of international students
- To provide facilities and services to further the above objectives; and
- To join as a contributing member and co-operate with any body or organisation in pursuance of the objectives of ISSANU.

ISSANU organises many social events throughout the year in order to pursue the above objectives. These include an ISSANU dinner and International Students Awareness Week (ISAW).

International students elect ISSANU office bearers each year. The ANUSA President is required to consult the ISSANU President on any matter that may impact upon international students. The ISSANU President also sits on ANUSA Student Representative Council and Combined Representative Council meetings.

(c) Woroni

Woroni is the official student magazine of ANUSA. It operates independently and is accountable to the Combined Representative Council and the Ordinary General Meeting of ANUSA. Its editors are elected at the annual elections, and receive a commission from advertising obtained for the magazine.

ANUSA provides Woroni with a set amount of funding each year; editors must seek advertising and alternative revenue to cover a significant amount of their costs.

The function of Woroni is to provide students and staff of the ANU with information about the activities of ANUSA and about student-related matters (such as entertainment, academic issues, accommodation, services).

4.4.3 Impact of VSU upon Departments and Sub-Departments

(a) Effects of VSU on the ANUSA Women's Department

(i) General

VSU underestimates the intrinsic value of services such as those provided by the Women's Department. Without the (minimal) payment, resources and budget allocated it is probable that the Officer would be unable to perform her duties. Women's rights are not voluntary and we, the Women's Collective, do not believe that these rights have, in the past, or will in the future, been adequately endorsed by other groups in the University. It is therefore essential to maintain a functioning and properly-resourced Women's Department.

(ii) Western Australian Model

This is the model of VSU currently being proposed. It would have highly adverse implications for the Women's Department. A severe lack of funding would limit the Department's capacity to provide an accessible point of contact (the Officer), and would make such social events and awareness raising campaigns practically impossible. Further, this model also limits a University's capacity to provide services such as childcare, anti-discrimination and security services, many of which are currently provided at the ANU.

Additionally, if the University's ability to subsidise such provisions as printing and internet access via a compulsory up-front fee is removed, women students will be more greatly affected financially. Statistics show that women earn less money, work more (overall between the productive and reproductive economy) and have more time constraints and familial expenses.¹²

(iii) Victorian Model

Although we acknowledge that this model allows for the provision of service by the University and the Students' Association and that these services will benefit women students, we feel that it will, regardless, have a severe impact on the Women's Department.

This model as it currently operates in Victoria allows a fee to be collected from students for the non-academic purpose of service provision, but is not to contribute to any form of student political activism. However, the definition of 'political' is not provided, nor is it stated who will provide it.

We, the Women's Collective, recognise that the broader feminist movement has as its basis the concept that 'the personal is political.' To provide women-specific services, to acknowledge women's continuing oppression and to aim to assist women students in problems specific to their gender is to be political. Thus the Women's Department is a political unit, although (generally) a non-partisan one.

¹² Australian Bureau of Statistics, available on the Commonwealth Office For Women website, at <http://ofw.facs.gov.au/publications/wia/chapter5.html>.

As such, the implications of the Victorian model of VSU are dire for the ANUSA Women's Department and its continuing efforts to represent women on campus.

(b) Sexuality Department Budgetary Impact

Following the premise that an 80% reduction in membership is expected with the introduction of the Bill as it stands; the Sexuality Department would expect a 90% reduction in its budget (because we expect membership fees to fall as well) with the Sexuality Officer unlikely to receive an honorarium. A budget of \$600 would: prevent a publication being compiled and printed, reduce the funding allocated to Pride Week; not allow for the maintenance or expansion of resources in the Department; greatly reduce the amount spent on the up-keep of the Queer Space; and not allow for students to attend any conferences or information days.

Under a Western Australian model, it is unlikely that the Sexuality Department will continue to exist in a functional and effective manner. Empirical evidence from the experience of Western Australian universities under VSU shows that departments dealing with queer issues were forced to discontinue activities within two years of the introduction of the legislation. This is a result of the reduction in not only membership of the student-run bodies, but also a decreased level of general services fees collected. This would not necessarily be the case under a Victorian model of the VSU legislation.

However, it should be noted that while the Victorian model of VSU would mean the continued existence of the Department, several of the campaigns run by the Department and its involvement with community groups would be under forced scrutiny from not only University administration, but the Federal Government. The departments' existence implies that queer students have specific needs; this is a political statement. Thus, it is not just the campaigns run by the department, but the very existence of the department that could be construed as political activity, and so, under the Victorian model, the funding of Department could be made illegal. The Western Australian model threatens to destroy the department; the Victorian model undermines its ability to act in a relevant manner.

(c) Environment Department and Education Department Impact under VSU

The Education Department and Environment Department are in very similar positions in that neither, in the long term, would be able to continue under either the Western Australian or Victorian models of VSU legislation. However, there is potential for short-term continued existence until current resources are depleted.

The Western Australian model of VSU would see a dramatic decrease in membership to ANUSA and thus in the budget of both the Education Department and the Environment Department. This would render the two Departments incapable of any relevant activity, thus not allowing the continuation of many of the projects already undertaken by either of the groups.

The Victorian model of VSU would see fees collected by the University be used by services that are non-political. As there is no definition of the term 'political' produced in

the legislation, it is hard to determine in what capacity the two Departments could exist. Many of the projects that the collective undertakes and associations, which the collective is affiliated with, could be construed as political, and thus the continued existence of the collective under this form of VSU would rely solely on those who would decide what is political in the context of the Students' Association of ANU.

(d) Impact upon FASA

(i) No student grants

The grants are a tremendous opportunity for students. They allow students the chance to attend conferences, make recordings, tour, present concerts and stage operas, exhibitions and installations, make films and more. Grants are most important to FASA students as they are highly sought after opportunities and the application standard is very high.

Some examples:

Fine arts students this year have been given grants for:

- i). Help with travel costs to New York for a music student (flute) who has been accepted to undertake a month long study at Julliard – fantastic for her and the ANU too.
- ii). Setting up a gallery in Canberra city, presenting art students work.
- iii). A digital media student to make a *Bollywoodesque* type film with much collaboration between digital media students, art and music students at the ANU.
- iv). 2 string quartets to the Townsville Chamber Music Festival and ANU's "Dominant Seventh" group to perform works by ANU composers at the Darwin international music festival.
- v). Female jazz students recording female compositions.

These grants are such a rare, fantastic and tremendous opportunity for ANU students – VSU means far fewer opportunities for them.

(ii) No school of music ball

The social event of the year as far as the school is concerned. Very well received by music students and provides music students a unique opportunity to perform in front of their peers.

(iii) No art school ball

Just like the music ball, this also attracts a huge following of non-visual art students too. Visual arts students present their works at the ball.

(iv) No quarterly happy hours

Social reward and networking opportunities for FASA students that are very well attended.

(e) ISSANU and Woroni

These sub-departments are likely to receive little to no budget at all. Woroni will be able to survive at lesser quality on advertising revenue, but this will be at the expense of student-focused material.

ISSANU faces the possibility that international students will cease to be represented in the University. Without the support and administrative infrastructure that is required for representatives to fulfil their roles, it is unlikely that students will be able to undertake these positions.

4.5 Allocation of Grants for Student-Run Activities

As with every other financial expenditure by ANUSA, the amounts allocated for these activities are agreed upon by numerous bodies within ANUSA. The Social Officer is primarily accountable for the day-to-day management of this money, and must account to the trustees and the Combined Representative Council of the Association.

4.5.1 Description of Services

(a) O-Week

Orientation Week (O-Week) at the ANU is the highlight of many students' university year. For first-year students it provides an opportunity to learn their way around the university and enables them to meet new people. For the many students who come from inter-state and overseas, O-week plays an essential role in providing a smooth transition from living at home with the support of a family network to the often daunting university culture.

Fra from being removed from the academic aspects of university, O-Week is usually remembered by students as the introductory event to university. A student is unable to perform well academically without an adequate social support network which is enhanced by events like O-Week. Furthermore, university is about more than lectures and tutorials; university also equips students with essential life-skills, such as those inter-personal skills which are developed during social interaction. In the workplace, both nationally and internationally, ANU graduates are praised not only for their intellectual abilities but also their capacity to interact and work well with others.

O-Week in 2005 provided a series of social events to allow students to make new friends and relax before the academic year began. The budget was mainly funded via sponsorship and ticket sales, with a substantial contribution of \$15,000 from the ANUSA.

(b) Clubs and Societies

Clubs & Societies are one of the highlights of campus life, providing an opportunity for students to meet new friends, get involved in campus life and learn new skills. Clubs & Societies are formed by students and are open to all students. They usually focus on some interest-group, such as a language, activity, religion or study-area.

Clubs & Societies are affiliated to ANUSA at no cost, and they are covered by ANUSA's public liability and can apply to us for funding. Thus their main source of revenue is

usually ANUSA grants, as well as their own fundraising activities and sometimes sponsorship. Most Clubs & Societies have a small joining fee, which is discounted if you are a student. There is \$75 000 allocated to clubs and socs in the ANUSA budget. Clubs & Societies can apply for grants (to a maximum of \$6750) from this line item for activities that they intend to run.

This money is allocated to clubs by the Clubs & Societies Committee, which is comprised of five elected representatives. The ANUSA's accounts are audited every year, and part of this process means auditing all clubs and societies accounts as well. Clubs that receive grants have to reconcile the amount of money given at the end of the year, and will not be reaffiliated if they do not.

The benefits of affiliation include not only the ability to apply for grants, but also access to the Board Room for meetings and the Clubs & Societies room, which contains computers with internet access and printers. Clubs & Societies can apply for photocopy and mailout points to help keep their running costs down and they can get their own webspace on the ANU's server. They can also hire rooms on the campus for free and book BBQ's.

There are Clubs & Societies catering to all interests and persuasions. There are faculty-based clubs where students can meet other people doing their course. There are debating, public speaking and networking clubs, so students can improve their communication skills. There are all manner of sporting clubs, from the conventional sports to the more unusual: mountaineers, rugby, tennis and hockey.¹³ There are also choirs, games and religious societies, and much more. Ultimately this means that students can participate in a wide variety of activities at highly subsidised rates which they could not otherwise afford.

Please see Appendix 1 for a list of Clubs and Societies that will be affected under VSU.

(c) Productions

ANUSA allocated \$20 000 in its 2005 budget for student productions. This allocation is divided among 4 student driven productions, run by Residential Colleges and the Law Facility. The productions funded range from small dramatic pieces (with an average of 10 students) to larger scale musicals (of up to 60 people in the cast alone). ANUSA's grant traditionally makes up to a quarter of the budget of these productions. Also funded is the only student comedy revue in the ACT (the ANU Law Revue).

Accompanying this is the annual grant to the National University Theatre Society from the Clubs and Society's budget. These two bodies are wholly dependant on the allocation from ANUSA.

Traditionally, like many amateur productions, student productions will not make significant profits. This is counterbalanced by the benefits of community building and support that these productions can produce, let alone the opportunity for artistic

¹³ Sporting clubs are affiliated with the ANU Sports and Recreation Association, not ANUSA. However they receive funds and other advantages from the General Services Fee. See heading 5.2 below.

expression that these productions provide. The true benefit is allowing an easier route for these benefits to come about. However, as there is little commercial reason to support these productions, there exists a dependence in ANUSA's unwavering support through its grant program.

4.5.3 Impact of VSU

(a) O-Week

At first-glance, O-Week could continue quite successfully without the subsidy provided by ANUSA under a system of Western Australian VSU. Unfortunately this would not be the case. O-Week's funding may come from groupings outside of the university community but its backbone are the committed students who organize and manage the events of the week.

During 2005, two O-Week directors and the Social Officer, together with a team of over fifty volunteers ensured that the week ran smoothly and safely. VSU would essentially destroy the ability of ANUSA to function, and, without that organisational base, an O-Week team would be near impossible to organize. In a VSU climate, students would lose the wonderful social opportunities provided by O-Week. Both their university experience and the skills they gain during their time at the ANU would be severely affected.

(b) Impact of VSU on Clubs & Societies and Student Productions

It is very likely that the money currently available for Student Productions and Clubs & Societies grants will have to be significantly reduced or cut-back altogether as ANUSA's budget is diminished. This would mean that Clubs & Societies would have to increase their membership fees in order to continue operating at the same level. In some cases such an increase may prove prohibitive on students.

Alternatively, they could increase their fundraising efforts. In practice, however, sponsorship is difficult to obtain and is often a time consuming process, which means that in the absence of ANUSA grants these clubs would have less money to run their activities. As a consequence, Clubs & Societies would have to scale back their activities and some may not be able to continue operating at all. For example, many clubs currently offer subsidies for students to attend national and international competitions and conferences. This enables all students to attend, regardless of their financial position. It means that the best competitors are sent, not just the students who can afford to go. These subsidies will be one of the first cut-backs most clubs will make, as they will prioritise their basic running costs.

Furthermore, ANUSA may not be in a position to allow Clubs & Societies to use its facilities and resources for free, as it currently does. This would significantly increase the basic running costs of most Clubs & Societies. Lastly, all affiliated Clubs & Societies and the events that they run are currently covered by ANUSA's public liability insurance. Without this cover, each Club & Society would have to secure its own insurance. This expense alone would more than likely result in the collapse of many Clubs & Societies.

4.6 Investment in Facilities and Resources

4.6.1 Publications

Every year, ANUSA produces several official publications to inform, involve and entertain the student community. Each one is free to undergraduates, and most contributors are unpaid. The annual *ANU Student Diary* proves consistently useful for the Association's members, providing a detailed academic calendar and quick facts on ANU student services, campus geography, transport options and social activities. ANUSA's Departments regularly release handbooks that explore issues of concern to current students. The Association's official magazine, *Woroni*, is distributed twice a term, and publishes material from a variety of different groups and voices on campus. For the 2005 academic year, ANUSA also produced the *Student Survival Guide*. A ready-reference for queries on every subject from academic procedures to the ANU's health service, this resource aims to provide all undergraduates with essential information on all aspects of university life. Given the significant production costs of each publication, free distribution to students would be almost impossible without the funds made available by a compulsory GSF.

4.6.2 Social Space

ANUSA provides a 'chill-out space', where students can come and relax, chat, read recent publications, watch TV (two provided), or read the newspapers provided free by ANUSA each day. This space includes a Clubs & Societies room which can be used for meetings, to get together, or to access computers and printers provided by ANUSA. Clubs and Societies (see heading above for more on their activities) use these free facilities to promote their club's events and to do research and work for their club. Free stationary such as recycled lecture pads, folders and other items are also provided, as are lockers or storage space on application.

In addition to couches and tables throughout ANUSA (centrally located on Campus), there are microwave, fridge and kitchen facilities provided. Provision of such facilities comes at a cost to ANUSA, through cleaning, electricity, maintenance, and administration. Because it is currently funded through students' GSF, it can be used and accessed by all.

(a) Rapunzel Room Space

The Rapunzel Room is a women's room; essentially a safe space provided for women on campus with 24-hour access (knowledge of the door code is restricted to women who request it). It has a fridge, microwave, cutlery and free tea and coffee, tampons, safe sex resources, subscriptions to magazines and relevant publications.

The Rapunzel Room has become, for many students, a support network for female students at ANU providing a compassionate and safe space where women can come together and support each other. It is especially important for mothers who bring their children to the space and for international students to find information on women's services in the ACT and more generally to develop friendships.

Unlike many other women's rooms in universities around Australia, the Rapunzel Rooms' up-keep is provided for by the affiliated, Women on Campus club. Women on Campus spend up to \$1400 per year in providing the room with food, drinks, magazine subscriptions and capital expenditure where necessary. While the implementation of the

Bill will not discontinue the use of the room (the room is provided by the University), it would not exist in its current capacity because there would be no funds available for continuing costs.

(b) The Queer Space

Otherwise known as the Hue Depot, the Queer Space is a great place for queer-identifying students to go and chat, check email, read, watch TV, heat up lunch or have a hot drink. To obtain entry via student card swipe, students need to let the Sexuality Department Officer know their student number, in complete confidentiality. This ensures that queer-identifying students on campus have a safe place to relax and discuss issues that affect them.

Despite progressive attitude changes in recent times, there is still a real danger of physical harassment directed specifically at queer students. As an example of this, we draw your attention to University of Wollongong where “a female student was trapped in the queer space by a man who blocked the door with his bike, to ‘burn the woman to death’ for being a lesbian”¹⁴. This illustrates that the threat of homophobic violence is real as well as the importance of a safe space that is monitored by security (University of Wollongong’s queer space was not monitored).

Additionally, university campuses are not isolated from cultural and social prejudices against queer people in general, and the Queer Space provides a space where these prevailing ideas are not present nor used as a standard against which people are judged as normal. Given that youth suicide rates are high, and significantly higher amongst queer youth, we would posit that a space free from prejudice is paramount to the mental safety of queer students. In order to get the most out of their university education, students need to study in a safe and welcoming environment. By providing a safe and welcoming environment in the Queer Space, the Department allows queer students to fulfil their potential so that they can leave university to become productive members of society.

The Sexuality Department and Jellybabies Club (both funded by the GSF through ANUSA) are responsible for running the Hue Space. Without GSF funding, individual students would have to pay to cover services of cleaning, electricity and organization before they could access the safety of the space. So many students access this space that it would be detrimental to not have it provided, and difficult to discriminate about whom it could be provided to.

5. IMPACT OF VARIOUS METHODS OF LEGISLATION ON ANUSA

Voluntary Student Unionism in any form is of the greatest threat to the independence and activities of the ANU Students’ Association.

5.1 Western Australia

¹⁴ O’Keefe, B “Safe space protest ends in eviction” *The Australian* September 1, 2004.

5.1.1 Restrictions on Universities

The Bill is very similar to the *Acts Amendment (Student Guilds and Associations) Act 1994* (WA). An added feature of the current Bill is the financial penalty that Universities will be subject to if they continue to levy a compulsory fee.

For evidence of the impact of that the current Bill will have upon us, we can do no better than refer you to the submissions being made to this Committee by the Student Guilds/Associations of: The University of Western Australia, Curtin University, Murdoch University and Edith Cowan University. The devastation caused in these Universities by the introduction of VSU in 1994¹⁵ was catastrophic. It is significant that the Vice-Chancellors of these higher education institutions oppose VSU, having been through the experience in the 1990's.¹⁶

Further, we refer you to the *Australian University Act 1991* (Cth), which is an Act of the Federal Parliament. Sections 8 and 9 state:

"8 The Council

The governing authority of the University is the Council.

9 Powers of Council

(1) Subject to this Act and the Statutes, the Council has the entire control and management of the University.

(2) The Council is to act in all matters concerning the University in the way it thinks will best promote the interests of the University."

The submission to this Committee by the Vice-Chancellor of the ANU, endorsed by the ANU Council, notes that the provisions of the Bill conflict with the provisions of the *Australian University Act* which require the Council to manage the University.

ANUSA would add that this should be without interference from the Federal Parliament unless the Council is manifestly not acting in the best interests of the University. We are not convinced that the levying of the General Services Fee to provide the services and representation outlined above constitutes acting against the interests of the ANU. In fact, failing to levy such a fee will have a wholly negative impact upon the ANU, in terms of lost services and representation and a reduced international standing.

5.1.2 Voluntary Membership

Under the proposed Bill, both membership of student unions and payment of a joining fee are voluntary. We argue that voluntary membership is unlikely to be taken up by many students. The figures from Western Australia support this argument.

¹⁵ *Acts Amendment (Student Guilds and Associations) Act 1994* (WA).

¹⁶ Prof Lance Twomey, 'University and Guild stand together against VSU', Curtin University of Technology, Media Release April 13 2005, see <http://announce.curtin.edu.au/release2005/c7305.html>. Prof Alan Robson, University of Western Australia, All Staff Email 27 April, see <http://maillists.uwa.edu.au/pipermail/all-staff/2005q2/000237.html>.

Prof Millicent Poole, 'ECU to be hardest hit in WA by Nelson's federal ban', Edith Cowan University, Media Release 16 March 2005, see <http://www.ecu.edu.au/VC@home/media.html>.

First, people do not pay a tax unless they have to. Analogising with the taxation system of our country, where the majority of citizens pay taxes because the functioning of our country requires it, we believe that students will be only as likely to pay voluntary fees as a citizen would be to pay voluntary taxes.

The second reason is that people may pay double or more for services under VSU, because it is a user-pays principle (greater fees from fewer people). For example, gym membership currently costs \$110 at ANU, and is projected to cost \$300 under VSU.¹⁷ This is a significantly less affordable price for students. The advantage of the current system is that at least 35% of ANU's undergraduate students make their \$220 compulsory fee back in subsidies within the first week, merely by joining the Sports and Recreation Association.

Thirdly, people are averse to buying something available 'for free'. Under VSU, benefits of student input into university decisions cannot be confined to paying members. For example, an argument against increasing an administrative cost will be made on behalf of all students. Many students will decide not to pay for representation – and will receive it anyway because someone else is paying for it. It is an inequity easily avoided by compulsory membership where all students obtain benefit.

5.2 Victoria

Legislation with a similar ideology has been introduced in Victoria. The *Tertiary Education Act 1993* (VIC) states "12F (1) The governing body of a post-secondary education institution must not spend or allow to be spent ... (a) ... a compulsory non-academic fee, subscription or charge; or (b) any money which is profit made by the institution or an organisation of students in the course of providing facilities, services or activities funded wholly or partly by the money referred to in paragraph (a) except for providing facilities, services or activities of direct benefit to students at the institution."

This would allow the ANU to continue to collect a compulsory fee, with strict regulations. There are two particularly concerning aspects of the Victorian legislation. First, it is difficult to define what should be included under the category of 'direct benefit to students'. The fact that all of Australia's public universities operate very differently and provide different services in a variety of ways makes it impractical to set out a list of activities that may or may not be funded by the compulsory fee. The Victorian legislation would only be practical in the case that a broad interpretation is given to these words, with the authority remaining with the University to decide where its fees are spent.

Secondly, s 12I of the *Tertiary Education Act* requires that the University must report to the Minister on the amounts of money collected and where and by whom they have been spent. This includes the names of persons and organisations spending the money and proof of the activities that the money has been used for. Essentially, autonomous Universities are being required to account to Government about their internal service provision. This would again constitute an unwarranted intrusion into the autonomy of the ANU under its governing statute.

¹⁷ See heading 6.2.

5.3 Comparison of effects

The following table is a summary of the effects that both the Western Australian and Victorian models of VSU will have on the ANU, within two years of implementation.

Activities are marked as Unaffected, Reduced, Greatly Reduced and Lost. The distinction between Greatly Reduced and Reduced is that those services labelled Greatly Reduced are likely to become Lost if VSU continues for more than 2 years.

Service provided by ANUSA	Impact under VSU – WA model	Impact under VSU – VIC model
Information services	G. Reduced	Reduced
Representation	Lost	G. Reduced
Advocacy	Lost	G. Reduced, possibly Lost
Legal	Lost	Unaffected
Welfare	Lost	Unaffected
Second Hand Bookstore	Reduced	Unaffected
Departments - Women's'	Lost	G. Reduced
- Sexuality	Lost	G. Reduced
- Education	Lost	Lost
- Environment	Lost	G. Reduced
ISSANU	Lost	Reduced
Woroni	G. Reduced	Reduced
FASA	Lost	Unaffected
Clubs and Societies	Lost	Reduced
Productions	Lost	Unaffected
O-Week/Bushweek	Reduced	Unaffected
Social Space	Reduced	Unaffected

6. OTHER SERVICES PROVIDED FROM THE GENERAL SERVICES FEE AT THE ANU

As noted above, the GSF is divided between four organisations. This is a description of what the other three organisations provide and their potential losses under the Bill.

6.1 The Postgraduate and Research Students' Association Inc¹⁸

¹⁸ This information is summarised from a document provided to ANUSA by PARSA.

PARSA's primary role is to advocate on behalf of postgraduate and research students at the Australian National University, both in respect to their academic studies and factors affecting their social lives.

PARSA represents approximately 2000 students on over 40 University committees, and its representatives support students who are engaged in dispute resolution with the University. These activities ensure that postgraduate students are effectively represented in decision-making at the University, and that students and the University administration can work cooperatively to improve the quality of ANU postgraduate education. The University administration values PARSA's cooperative style of engagement because it makes University management less complex and more efficient. Quite simply, it means that University policy makers can work with one representative organisation rather than (literally) thousands of individual students.

PARSA's governing body, the Postgraduate Representative Council (PRC), consists of postgraduate student representatives from each of the Research Schools, Faculties and Centres, the Faculties and the Centres, as well as up to 15 general representatives from across campus.

PARSA employs a Student Consultant, who offers confidential advice to individual students about administrative, academic and personal issues as they arise. In addition, the association helps administer the emergency postgraduate student load fund. In conjunction with ANUSA, PARSA employs a Legal Officer who provides free, confidential legal advice to ANU students as well as basic legal services – a service few could afford to pay market rates for.

In this way, PARSA ensures postgraduate students enjoy access to basic social services that may be otherwise beyond their financial reach, improving their academic prospects and the overall quality of their university experience.

6.2 The ANU Sport and Recreation Association Inc¹⁹

The General Services Fee (GSF) currently paid by ANU students provides funds to a large number of sport and recreation clubs and activities, providing students with both social and competitive sporting opportunities.

The effects of VSU on gym membership, inter-hall sports competitions, university games and facilities will seriously undermine the ability of the ANU Sports and Recreation Association (ANUSRA) to provide financially viable and universally accessible sporting opportunities. Further, the integral role sport plays in building a university community, and allowing interaction between the university and broader community would be diminished, to the detriment of both the student body and the broader Canberra community.

¹⁹ This information is summarised from a document prepared by ANUSRA entitled 'Voluntary Student Unionism: What will it mean for the Members of the SRA?', March 2005.

Specifically, the effects VSU legislation would have on the ANU include:

(a) Membership

- Students will have to pay a membership fee to join ANUSRA. Ordinary members are currently charged \$120.

(b) Fitness Centre Membership

- The gym currently has 2300 members. With the introduction of VSU gym membership will rise to \$230-\$300. If this increase in cost affects membership numbers, the fees may increase further in 2007.

(c) Affiliated Club Membership

- 1800 students currently belong to ANU sporting clubs. These students will be forced to pay the ANUSRA membership fee in order to participate.
- Funding to individual clubs will be reassessed and reduced proportionately to no more than 80% of the current funding structure.
- The number and variety of sporting and recreation clubs will reduce.
- Currently there is substantial 'in kind' facility use by affiliated clubs. Under VSU this use will be monitored and restricted.

(d) Inter-Hall Sports Competition

- The Inter-Hall Sports Association will no longer be provided free access to sporting facilities, greatly increasing the financial burden on halls/colleges wishing to participate in inter-hall sports competitions.

(e) University Games

- The ANU currently sends 250 students to University Games. Under VSU there would be no provision for subsidising teams. Further, Australian University Sport who organise University Games would be threatened, such as occurred in Western Australia.

(f) Lunchtime Sport

- The 650 students and 200 staff who participate in lunchtime sport competitions would face increased registration fees.

(g) Facilities

- ANUSRA will need to increase use/hire fees to finance the repayment of the new sports hall loan, as the GSF is currently the primary element of this facility's usage subsidy.
- Overall usage fees of facilities and equipment will be increased, or maintenance which currently costs over \$250,000 per annum will be cut-back, reducing the quality of facilities.
- Any future capital works would be severely compromised.

Under VSU students who wish to participate in sports and recreation will be severely financially restricted from doing so. The services and funding, the cultivation of elite athletes, and the community building element which the ANUSRA provides will all be

jeopardised under this legislation, severely disadvantaging both current and future generations of ANU students.

6.3 The ANU Union²⁰

Around 12 000 students belong to the ANU Union, which provides facilities within the Union for the free use of C&S and students, such as our boardroom. This includes heated and air-conditioned spaces for members to utilise regardless of whether the catering facilities of those areas are open. The Union provides the most widely used JP service on campus, and the front counter acts as an information point for all students on a range of issues. The Union houses a multi-faith prayer room.

The Union provides free of charge: BBQ's, gas, tables, chairs, marquees, crockery, cutlery, glasses, esky's etc for Clubs & Societies affiliated with ANUSA.

The Union subsidises the cost of services for students:

- a range of two tiered pricing structures in all catering, function and bar services.
- The Union Bar offers members \$3.20 schooners of beer as opposed to \$4.25 for non-members an 85¢ difference. This difference is even larger during happy hour prices. This subsidy alone costs us around \$40 000 a year.
- Our catering outlets all provide subsidies to members in the form of two tier pricing structures and members specials. For instance, the Asian Bistro is 10% cheaper for members.
- Members receive a drink voucher worth \$3.50 on paying the entrance fee for local bands \$5-\$8. Members are not charged the Ticketek booking fee for shows held in the ANU bar.
- We provide subsidised photocopying, binding and laminating services for members.

7. RELATED CONSEQUENCES OF THE BILL

7.1 The quality of education

It is acknowledged that the ANU is amongst Australia's leading universities. Campus life is an important aspect in determining the quality of a University experience. The quality of that campus life, in turn, is dependant upon the services and representation that can be provided to students. Hence the services and activities of ANUSA outlined above have been acknowledged by the University and by external experts as factors contributing to the success of the ANU.²¹

²⁰ This information is summarised from a document prepared by the ANU Union entitled 'What does the ANU Union do with \$213 000 of student money?', March 2005.

²¹ *ANU: university with a difference*, The Report of the Committee established by the Council of the Australian National University to evaluate the quality of the Universty's performance, September 2004, p 48.

Moreover, campus life it is undoubtedly accounted for in all unofficial rankings, in the choice that thousands of students make when they conduct their own assessment of our universities. Unsurprisingly, our universities have long been aware of the importance of this factor, to both domestic and international students. The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) has stated that "universities should ensure that the academic programs, support services and learning environment offered to international students will encourage them to have a positive attitude about Australian education ... Support services should include ... adequate promotion of on-campus international student networks and organisations to assist new arrivals".²² International students form perhaps the largest single group to use student services on campus. A logical conclusion: with fewer or poorer quality services, we can expect fewer international students to find the ANU attractive.

7.2 The wider community impact in the Australian Capital Territory

7.2.1 Services

Under VSU, the lack of funds may mean that university students' associations can no longer provide the essential services that students require. At the University of Canberra and the Australian National University these services include a medical centre, childcare, counselling free legal advice, free welfare support, a secondhand bookshop, cheap printing and more. As a result, there will be greater reliance on services provided by the ACT Government, such as accommodation services, health and counselling services, and access to affordable childcare.

7.2.2 Representation

But the impact goes further than just services. The proposed legislation's main effect will be on those who plan to study at university in the future, and thus upon the wider community as a whole. As University education becomes more expensive, the work that students' associations do to maintain the quality and conditions of learning becomes more vital. Without compulsory membership, we cannot effectively lobby for all students, and, indeed we may not have the resources to represent any of them.

The ANU is currently ranked 16th in the world. Canberra is home to some of the best learning and research in the country. The Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee has stated that they expect the quality of campus life and thus of University education to deteriorate under VSU.

7.2.3 Recreation and Community

The GSF paid by ANU students currently funds over 135 academic, cultural, sport and recreation clubs, which, under VSU, will face funding cuts and deprivation of resources, and force them to raise joining fees.

Sports that will be affected include: Men's and Women's Hockey, Netball, Rowing, Men's

²² AVCC, *Universities and their Students: Principles for the Provision of Education by Australian Universities*, December 2002.

and Women's Soccer, Rugby Union and many, many more. Significantly, the interaction between these clubs and the ACT community will diminish. Projects under threat include: the ANU Cricket Club which provides coaches to Canberra Grammar School and Daramalin; the ANU Rugby Club which provides full assistance to Norths Juniors; and the ANU Volleyball Club which provides coaches to Deakin and Campbell High Schools.

Academic and cultural clubs affected include: the Malaysian Students' Organisation, Singapore Students' Association, Fellowship of Christian University Students, the Debating Society, Amnesty International, Jewish Students' Society, Economics and Commerce Students' Society, Legal Workshop Club, Medical Students' Society, Women on Campus. These clubs face extinction or severe diminution under VSU.

8. CONCLUSION

We have attempted to prove here the value and sincerity of the activities, the people, and the ideals of the ANU Students' Association.

There has been a strong emphasis on the financial accountability and management of compulsory up-front fees collected at the ANU. This has been emphasised in order to convince the Committee of both the justification for charging this compulsory fee and the imperative of continuing ANUSA's services and representation.

The submission also outlines the detriment that ANUSA foresees for the ANU and the broader ACT community should the Bill become law.

Given these arguments, it is difficult to understand the practical reasons behind the proposed Bill. Many spurious arguments and incorrect statements have been made since March 2005 about the nature of student organisations and their activities. It is our hope that the work of this Committee will serve to enlighten Members of Parliament, Senators and the Australian people as to the true work and motivation of student unions.

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Appendix 1: Clubs and Societies which may be affected under VSU

Note: 'affected' includes the club/society either ceasing to exist, being forced to charge students more for its events, or scale down its activities considerably.

Actuarial Society	Medical Science Society (Club Med)
AIESEC ANU	Meditation Society (ANU)
Amnesty International (ANU)	Multicultural Week
Ancient Arts Fellowship	Muslim Association (ANU)
Anime Society (ANU)	National University Theatre Society
ANU Hotel School Club (ANU HSC)	Native Tree Planters Club
Baha'i Society	Navigators
Bangladeshi Students' Association (ANUBDSA)	Overseas Christian Fellowship
Biology Students Society	PhB Students' Society
Camarilla ANU Branch	Philosophy Society
Canberra Council for International Students	Physics Students Society
Capoeira Society (ANU)	PNG Canberra Students Association
Card and Board Games	Refugee Action Club
Chemistry Society	Resistance Club (ANU)
Chess Club (ANU)	Roleplay Society (ANU)
China Club	SCA College of St Aldhelm
Chinese Students & Scholars Association	SCUNA (ANU Choral Society)
Classical Society (ANU)	Secondhand4students
Debating Society (ANU)	Shakesperian Reading Group
Economics and Commerce Students' Society	Simpsons Society (The)
EKTA (Sub-Continent Students' Association)	Singapore Students' Association
Engineering Students Association	Socialist Alternative (ANU)
Film-Makers' Society (ANU)	Socialist Worker Student Club
FOCUS (Fellowship of Christian University Students)	Street Spectacular
French Collective (Collective Francais)	Student Christian Movement (ANU)
Geological Society (ANU)	Social Interhall Committee
German Language Club (ANU Deutsch-Klub)	SRES Student Society
Hindu Society	Student Music Society (ANU)
Hong Kong Student Society	Taiwanese Student Association
Indonesian Society	Ticuna Motorsports
Japan Club (ANU)	United Nations Society - UNSOC
Jellybabies (for queer and queer-friendly students)	Ursula College Theatre Group
Jewish Students' Society ANU (ANUJSS)	Vegetarian Society (ANU)
Korean Society	Vietnamese Overseas Students Association (VOSA)
Labor Students Club (ANU)	Women on Campus
lawskool.com.au	Woodworkshop Exhibition Club
Law Revue (ANU)	
Law Students Society (ANU)	
Legal Workshop Social Club	
Liberal Club (ANU) (not affiliated 2005, has previously been affiliated to ANUSA)	
Literary Society (ANU)	
Malaysian Students' Organisation	
Mandarin Club	