

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
Legislation Committee

Higher Education Support Amendment (Abolition of Compulsory Up-front Union Fees) Bill 2005

Submission no: 140

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Organisation: The University of New England Undergraduate Students

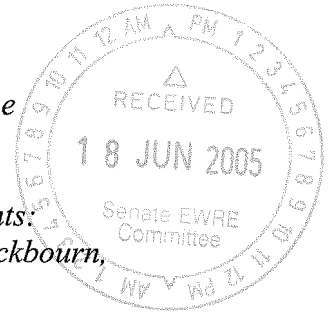
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This submission is intended to represent many undergraduate students at the University of New England.



The submission is directly supported by the following undergraduate students: Phil Schubert and Anna-louise Wilson (2005 UNESA councilors), Fran blackbourn, Giles Dickenson-Jones, Jenny Teece and Amy Irwin.

There are a number of undergraduate students, including some of the above students able to speak to this submission should a Senate Inquiry hearing be planned in Armidale.

Point of Reference: An Assessment of the likely effect of the legislation on the provision of student services, and related consequences

The impact of the Higher Education Support Amendment (Abolition of Compulsory Up-front Student Union Fees) Bill 2005 at the University of New England will be a reduction in the current level of student services provided. The University of New England has expressed significant concerns regarding the likely effect of the legislation on the provision of services, and has indicated that its introduction would result in reduction in the 'range, quality and viability of student services offered at UNE.' 1

The Higher Education Support Amendment Bill 2005 prohibits all higher education providers from collecting universal fees for student services. Reductions in funding to student organization are expected to occur under a system of voluntary student unionism in comparison to the current universal system, as occurred in the reduced funding of Western Australian Universities under voluntary student unionism. The lack of viability of the commercial provision of student services at a regional university is also a major concern for the university. This is based on the previous experience of the university, in particular the inability to attract and retain commercial providers to UNE.

In this research the university has stated that: *'The normal assumptions behind the provision of alternative and competing suppliers of services break down in the face of a 6km physical separation from the CBD and a once-hourly bus service.'* 2
The university has indicated that *'In practical terms commercial providers will not replace union subsidized services because the small size of the market makes them unprofitable. Many services will therefore disappear...'* 3

The university provides evidence of these outcomes through the following examples of their experience with commercial service providers at UNE:
'A number of services have already proven unviable to operate commercially, with two banks closing down their campus operations, the Commonwealth in 1998 and the National Australia Bank in 2001. The on campus travel agent franchise and real estate business shop front recently closed down, and in 2003 the UNE union took over the post office (now an agency in the union shop) and the hair dressing salon in order to ensure these services would still be available on campus.' 4

The effects of a reduction in student services at UNE

As mentioned above, it is estimated there will be a significantly reduced level of funding available for student services, and a corresponding reduction in the level of services resulting from this legislation. Under the current funding level, students receive customized, high standard and best value services covering diverse areas. These services

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are essential to the welfare and development of students, and any reduction in the level of services would risk reductions to these.

The UNE student organisations are the best resourced and most experienced service providers of student welfare and development. The University of New England Students' Association is able to address fundamental welfare and development needs of students by providing services for the sole benefit of students in the areas of Welfare, Advocacy and Representation. Within these functions this UNE student organisation is most effective, as it is able to provide advice and support independent of the university. The most important role of UNESA is to provide an open contact point for students who are not picked up through the university organised support services. UNESA, under its current capabilities has played an important prevention role in regard to serious adverse social issues of which students are vulnerable to. These include dropping out, depression and suicide.

This service provision is not transferable to commercial markets because of the 'not for profit' nature of these student support services. As discussed above UNE would also find great difficulty in attracting and retaining commercial providers for even the more commercial services, let alone for welfare and support services. To continue to ensure that such crucial provisions are made, the university would have to consider funding additional support services. However this would mean the loss of the independent nature of the services, still leaving vulnerable those students who aren't addressed properly through the university services. Ultimately this would result in a reduced ability to safeguard against the serious consequences discussed above.

The university has also mentioned that funding for these services would have to come at the cost of the quality of UNEs teaching and learning activities and therefore would not benefit students in the long term. *'..In order to maintain UNEs' marketing position through the provision of essential services on campus', 'UNE will be forced into a situation of having to divert funding from teaching and learning activities'.⁵ As a result the university has requested that significant amendments to the legislation be made so that they can collect a levy fee for essential services. The university has indicated that if they are unable to collect a levy fee for essential services they *'.. would have to seek alternative funding model in order to ensure the continued viability of The University of New England.'*⁶*

Reductions in the level of student services will impact on the continued development of the university. This is because as a regional university, UNE would be constrained in its ability to attract students without the level of student services that currently exist. Currently UNE competes successfully on a national and international level and has done so by working hard to continually improve and promote its strengths despite these constraints. The very welcoming and community based campus life that exists at UNE is one of these strengths, and UNE student organisations have through their service, taken a

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vital role in building this strength. Through this they have over the years contributed greatly to UNEs consistent five star rating in graduate satisfaction.⁷

The Effects of a reduction in student services provided by the University of New England Students' Association.

Some of the most essential student services are those provided by The UNE Students' Association, and are also those most at risk of closure under VSU. These services are highly successful in providing student support through the areas of welfare, advocacy and representation. Due to the not for profit nature of the services, they are not viable under a user pays model. Many UNESA services would disappear under less than a full membership subscription and the reductions in the current guaranteed level of funding that this would entail. In comparison to their private industry alternatives, the Dentist and Second Hand Bookstore, (which are UNESAs only trading Services), offer the most financially viable service for all students. The importance of affordable student services is more relevant now than ever, as educational related costs increase. For example the demand for second hand textbooks has only increased with the loss of the textbook subsidy in 2004 and the corresponding increase to costs of full price textbooks.

Below is a description of these UNESA services at risk under the shortfall in funding for student services that will be created through the Higher Education Support Amendment Bill 2005.

(appendix 1 provides a comprehensive list of UNESA services.)

UNESA welfare advocacy and representation services:

Under its welfare function UNESA provides many crucial services. These include the services of a dedicated Support & Welfare officer, who being employed independently of the university is able to provide the most accessible and effective support for students. The Support & Welfare officer provides support for students attempting to overcome personal crises or illnesses and those who require academic mediation. Another essential support service UNESA is currently able to provide is a free tax and a free legal service for students who are unable to afford taxation help or legal support in relation to serious issues affecting them. The other most used UNESA support service is the provision of free condoms, free tea and coffee and regular free bbq's throughout the year. These services are available in the UNESA 'breather' student room, which provides an accessible and supportive social space essential for students from less privileged backgrounds.

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Specialist services:

Within the local region, the UNE students' association has built a reputation as an excellent student services provider. The organisation has retained the long time service of highly qualified and expert staff, best equipped to address specialised student issues, including the needs of the majority of students who are well away from their home base support. Provisions such as employment and housing information services are of great assistance to internal students who have moved from other regions to study at UNE.

The UNE Students' Association is focused on providing full access for external students to all of its services and provides a crucial service in the retention of students studying at a distance. UNESA understands the importance of being flexible in its delivery of service and sensitive to the unique needs of external students. For example the UNE Students' Association provides a toll free number (and teleconferencing facilities where needed), to ensure that external students have equal access to all the support services offered.

Distance is no barrier to providing negotiation with university staff and government agencies to obtain special exams, mediation, or support payments to help overcome personal crises and illnesses.

There are also number of specifically external services provided by UNESA, including the fully funded external buses for external students during all residential schools, the External Helpline at the university library, as well as the External Blue Stocking Week.

In addition to these specialized services, the Students' Association 'appoints' a number of office-bearers to provide peer support for specific vulnerable groups of students at UNE. These office bearers provide a wide range of support to students and promote awareness to the campus community and remote students about issues relevant to their well being. They undertake research among students about the issues within the areas of suicide awareness and prevention among regional students, sexual health and environment, as well as issues relating to queer, women, Koori and Torres Strait Islander and International students. Collectively these office-bearers contribute many hundreds of voluntary hours of work to UNESA.

The UNESA queer collective (AQUA), convened by the UNESA queer officers, have been highly successful in supporting queer students at UNE. This student group has made an enormous difference to the welfare and experience of UNE students, keeping students aware of issues such as homophobia and suicide and providing a very positive social network and image of queer students in regional areas. Previous and current UNESA queer officers and the collective have worked hard to secure and maintain an on-campus queer space. This space is a welcome addition to the regions allied health services.

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Related consequences from the loss of essential UNESA support services:

There are a number of adverse social consequences that are at risk of occurring with the loss of effective welfare and support services. Given that *'Nationally UNE has one of the largest percentages of students from rural, isolated or lower socio-economic backgrounds'*, and *'..the largest on campus residential student environments in Australia..'*⁸, there is an increased responsibility to guard against issues such as suicide, depression, alcoholism, dropping out and unwanted pregnancy. Independent, accessible, affordable, and specialized support services must be available to address the issues facing both young and older adults living on campus or in town, and/or from these backgrounds, due to the well documented vulnerability of these groups.

With the loss of such independent specialised financially viable services, pressure may be placed on the health and welfare structures existing within Armidale. In comparison to the arrangement where UNESA has the sole brief of targeting the specific needs of students, the provision of services by the local health and welfare services would be so much less effective. The university has also advised that *'Provision of health services in regional and rural communities is already under resourced, the removal or contraction of student services will place a significant burden on these already 'Stretched' services and volunteer organisations within our community.'*⁹.

The UNESA dentist and Second Hand Bookstore:

From a portion of the student General Service Fee, UNESA is able to provide a diverse and financially viable range of welfare services compared with alternative commercial providers. Under a 'User Pays' system, the UNESA dentist and Second Hand bookstore will collapse, as they require a consistent funding level to service students in the way they currently do. These services provide students with crucial access to basic dental care and affordable textbooks, as commercial rates for these services prohibit access to these for most students who have no income additional to Youth Allowance and Austudy. For example the cheapest private dental providers in Armidale charge near double the fee that the UNESA dentist charges for basic yearly dental care, for just one consultation.

UNESA would require the current level of funding received from a full subscription to continue to provide these essential services. In particular to attract quality full-time dentist staff a significant and consistent level of funding is required.

Employment:

Many of the loyal and hardworking Staff from the combined student organisations are facing redundancy under this legislation. Within a regional university these

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retrenchments will have a negative impact on these workers, their families as well as the university and wider community who have come to know the staff on a personal basis. Job losses in a regional area are unwelcome developments socially, and have significant flow on effects to the growth of the whole region. The UNESA staff are by far the most valuable resource that the association has. Students consider their long service to UNESA a great asset and the uncertainty they face in their continued employment, that they have been forced to consider as a result of this legislation, is regrettable.

With reductions in student services the current level of student employment is at risk. This relates to up to 160 casual student jobs provided by the UNE student organisations combined. Employment opportunities for students are already far below demand with the UNESA student employment service consistently reporting that there is usually only enough employment for a quarter of the students looking for work. The further employment shortages threatened with the loss of services would directly impact on the welfare of those students, (particularly part time, student parents and mature age students who are dependant on income additional to support payments.)

Student Participation:

Two extremely important services at risk under the Higher Education Support Amendment Bill 2005, are the student radio station 'TUNE FM', and the student newspaper 'Neucleus'. These services are at risk because their ability to generate income is very limited. The main function of TUNE FM and Neucleus, is to provide students with the opportunity to participate and gain professional experience, and as such they operate on a primarily non-commercial basis. The student radio station and newspaper offer essential opportunities for students to gain experience. This is because often students attending a small university are otherwise disadvantaged in gaining this experience given that there are less of such opportunities in regional areas. These services are professionally managed and have been running for up to fifty years. They are regarded highly by their professional industry peers and of course by the many students who have become involved with these over the years.

Representation and accountability:

The life of the Students' Association spans over half a century, and during this time the association has developed finely tuned organisational structures and has established lasting alliances within the University of New England. The self governance structures of the UNE Students' Association provide the foundation of the organisation and allow the students association to be independent and accountable to students. As demonstrated above, the provision of independent specialized, financially viable services is crucial in meeting the welfare and personal development needs of students, and the current model of governance has worked best in providing this. In comparison to alternative models,

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student governance provides the best one available in the provision of independent, specialised, cost efficient and accountable services.

The mechanisms of student governance developed gives the organisation its legitimacy. These provide the means by which the organisation can meet both the democratic accountability requirements owed to its stakeholders- the students, as well as the legal and fiduciary requirements owed to the university and the government. These governance mechanisms include a sophisticated constitution and regulations of which the organisation is run along, and through which the organisation is accountable to both these interests. With access to the accumulated knowledge and experience existing within the association, students are able to fulfill fiduciary and legal responsibilities that entail from the provision of Welfare and Student support services. Also, independent self governance provides the best circumstances under which students can ensure that they are supported.

The UNESA Council

The UNESA Council consists of students democratically elected on an annual basis. These councilors are accountable to the undergraduate student body and have certain responsibilities to the university. The UNESA council follows the governance mechanisms of the UNESA constitution and regulations and conducts regular meetings of which all undergraduate students can participate in. These student representatives have the experience and technical knowledge of the Executive Officer and a UNE council representative to guide them in this. To prohibit funding for student governance would see the loss of these structures, and this would impact on the organisation's ability to remain accountable, ultimately impacting on the legitimacy of the organisation.

The existence of a system of student governance is very important to ensure that there are processes by which the university or other groups can interact with the student body. For example the UNESA Council receives all requests from university committees to appoint student representatives for their committees. It is crucial for good student-university relations and communication that students are represented on all of the university and faculty committees. The formal structures and procedures that establish the Student Association allows an appropriate system for appointing such representatives and gives a legitimacy to student representation to the university.

Within its representative functions, The UNESA council provides essential avenues for students to gain experience in student leadership. This student leadership function is more important than ever considering the level of peer support required as students feel increased pressures relating to academic fee increases. The UNESA Council, through its meetings and activities provides a forum for free speech and debate for all students, as well as an open entry point for students from diverse backgrounds and viewpoints. The professional and life skills gained from the opportunity to engage in student governance are very important for students, and especially students attending this regional university who would not readily gain these skills elsewhere while at university.

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A very limited proportion of the student associations total income is spent on council related activities, with the majority of funds spent on the continuation of services producing an immediate tangible benefit to students. While the system of student governance requires only a limited proportion of funding (in comparison to the more material services provided), they need to be resourced so that they can be maintained. The maintenance of this system is important given the role that a self governing structure plays in ensuring communication of the various positions and concerns of the student body to the university and government in regard to rulings and legislation that directly affect them. The service provided by UNESA councilors, especially in recent years with the extensive reforms to higher education, have been of prominent importance to the student interest.

The UNESA Council meets its responsibility in maintaining a democratically structured organization by encouraging full participation from all students. All undergraduate students are able to nominate or vote in elections, and elections are conducted in line with regulations that are upheld by an independent electoral tribunal. The UNESA Council is committed to ensuring that the unique interests of external students are met, especially as they constitute approximately two thirds of our membership and not being on campus have less opportunity to see the benefits provided from their General Service Fee. Through reserving one half of the governing council positions for students who are enrolled externally, the council shows its commitment to the provisions of external student representation. An External Vice President is voted from among the elected council representatives and is given the sole portfolio of serving external students.

While UNESA has received some negative attention for the actions of some UNESA councilors recently, this has been an 'extreme' exception to the rule. The motivation for the unusual disruptions that have occurred are based on the ideological strategy of a handful of young liberal club students to oppose student organisations. The attempt to damage the reputation of the UNE Students' Association does not tarnish the long existing reputation of the UNE Students' Association in its provision of welfare and student support services. As a result of current and former agreements, the students and the university have the mechanisms to limit any disruption intended by those students. For example previous UNESA Councils have worked closely with the governing body of UNE (UNE Council) in making agreements that ensure that legal and fiduciary standards in line with government requirements are maintained. Currently both the students and the university are stepping in to address this issue through the appropriate mechanisms.

Recommendations:

1. That the government ensures the University of New England is allowed to continue to collect universal fees from students and distribute the same level of funds to the UNE student organisations.

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2. That the government allows the University of New England to ensure that the UNE student organisations continue to receive the same level of funding from a full membership subscription, and that student governance structures are protected and maintained through the current funding arrangements.

These recommendations are to ensure that there will be no reduction in the current standard of student services at UNE as a result of the effects of the Higher Education Support Amendment (Abolition of Compulsory Up-front Student Union Fees) Bill 2005.

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1. Voluntary Student Unionism, The University of New England, 2005 p1.
 2. VSU, UNE p1.
 3. VSU, UNE p2.
 4. VSU, UNE p3
 5. VSU, UNE p2

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6. VSU, UNE p4
7. The Universities Good Guide 2000-2005
8. VSU, UNE p1
9. VSU, UNE p5

Attachment 1: UNESA SERVICES

Representation of students interests to the university administration, to federal, state and local governments and to the local and wider communities. This representation and advocacy role is the central core activity of UNESA. Students have access to Government committees via the National Union of Students and the university and regional bodies via the committees that they themselves are on. UNESA has close ties with local government bodies in Armidale and is represented on many of the youth orientated committees. All students benefit from this representation.

Student Support is available on a wide range of student issues including but not restricted to all aspects of students academic studies, general welfare, HECS, Austudy and Youth Allowance, enrolment and course difficulties. UNESA staff maintains close liaison with Armidale, Regional and State Community Support Groups and is able to access these additional services for students as required. Student Support is available to all students including all off campus students who have access via a toll free telephone number.

Second Hand Bookshop provides all students with the opportunity to purchase prescribed textbooks at a discounted rate. It also gives them the opportunity to sell off their unwanted texts for a fair price. This service is available to both internal and external students of the University irrespective of whether or not they come onto campus. All textbooks available in the bookshop are listed on our website and students are able to search on line, then order via email. External students in general make up over 50% of customers and when on campus they make great use of the opportunity to browse the stock. During residential schools opening hours of the shop are extended, including weekends. All students have access to the bookshop via a toll free telephone number or the internet.

106.9 TUNE!FM is the oldest continually operating student-staffed radio station in Australia. Celebrating its 35th year of broadcasting, the station provides a youth-focused alternative to listeners with interests other than the mainstream and can be heard both within the local community and also around the globe via the station's live stream on the internet. The live stream is regularly listened to by a significant number of UNE's external students including those based overseas, who are able to participate in competitions/giveaways and contribute to both the station and the website. The station receives regular e-mails from listeners in the UK, Europe, north America/Canada and around Australia. Open to all students and community members, TUNE!FM provides a vocational learning environment for more than 120 university student volunteers and 30+ secondary students every year. Volunteers are trained and encouraged to become involved in all facets of radio production including the management committee. TUNE!FM allows students to produce, run and announce programs and therefore provides one of the only vocational education and practical experiences in the

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broadcast media in the region. Skills gained by volunteers are applied to those seeking a career in the communications/media/radio industry. 2005 also marks the first year of a pilot program to provide Internships to students under the UNE Workready Scheme in Journalism/News/Documentary Production, Audio Engineering/Sound Production and Marketing/Public Relations.

Dental Clinic – UNESA provides all internal and local external students with free dental care at a clinic located on campus. Funded by a dental levy paid by internal and local external students as part of their General Service Fee. Other external students are encouraged to access this service whilst on campus. All that is required is an appointment and payment of a dental levy at the time of the initial appointment. Of the current student population some 2400 students have used this service.

Finding suitable **Housing/Accommodation** off campus can be a daunting task for students and their families. UNESA assists students in finding suitable off campus Housing/Accommodation or flatmates for those who wish to share their available accommodation. This is a very popular service used by most of the internal students who live off campus. External students also use this service for their residential schools.

The **Employment service** enables students to register their interest in part time and casual work that may be available within the university and the wider community. When work is available the student skills are matched and names passed on to prospective employers. This aspect is not restricted to the local area as we often find work for students in the regional area including Tamworth, Glen Innes and Moree. UNESA itself is a direct employer of students in many areas of its diverse operations and also indirectly through the various joint initiatives it operates with the university.

Legal Service (solicitor) is available each Monday afternoon at the UNESA office and is free and available to all students at UNE. Emergent legal concerns are referred under appropriate circumstances to the UNESA retained solicitor. The Legal Service is available to all students including all off campus students. Our Solicitor regularly deals with student problems via the telephone (at no cost to the student).

Free Buses – (1) UNESA operates a **free bus service for external students** during residential schools. This service operates at regular intervals between the colleges, northern carpark, Railway station and town areas. This service is available to all students who come on campus for residential schools and allows for students to make use of the library and then obtain late night travel to town when other services have long ceased.

(2) UNESA operates a **free bus service for all students** during the University examination period. The service is available to all students who have examinations on Campus including the Wright Centre.

Various **Campaigns** are supported and sponsored by UNESA, from free Barbecue's highlighting students living in poverty to problems with Centrelink. Care of the Environment is a big issue and UNESA makes and distributes recycled note pads for student use. A continuous campaign is Safe Sex. UNESA supplies students with free condoms and safe sex information to help keep the student community informed. All students benefit from these various Campaigns.

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Tax Help is provided with the assistance of the Taxation Department and volunteer helpers and allows for students to have a basic annual tax return completed and submitted free of charge. Students who wish to be involved in Tax Help receive training and skills that may help them in their future career. Tax Help is available to all students. External students requiring use of this service are put in contact with the centre nearest their location.

The publication (1) **Neucleus** – is the **student newspaper** that is published ten times each year. All students are able to contribute articles of student interest and have published their writings. Neucleus is available in hard copy to all students on campus, and is posted to external students who ask to be sent a copy. It can also accessed via the UNESA Web site by any student.

(2) A **Student Diary** called Lifesaver is produced and made available on request to all students each year. This Diary is designed for all UNE students.

(3) A **Yearly Wall Planner** is provided by UNESA for all students and is distributed as part of their enrolment and course material.

The **External Students' Library Help Line** is a very popular service funded by UNESA. It is staffed by friendly personnel who will advise on the availability of material and delivery times. This is great help for students when deciding their next assignment topic. Requests to the Help Line include the loan of items such as books, videos and audio-tapes, photocopies of journal articles, book chapters and past exam papers as well as subject searches. Extended operating hours commence at the beginning of term and operate until the end of second semester exams. The UNE Libraries are only able to offer these extended operating hours for the External Students' Library Help Line due to continued financial support from the UNE Students' Association.

UNESA office has become the **Information Centre** on campus by way of its location (central courtyard and open shop front) providing general information and an inquiry service for the University and Community. All University sections, the wider Armidale community and other educational establishments use UNESA to display posters and brochures relating to their function/upcoming event or just general information. Visitors to the university and students use UNESA for directions and maps.

The UNESA Council each year appoints a number of Ad-hoc Officer Bearers to look after and **support the interests of various groups** within the student population. Currently the following areas are catered for - International Student Officer, Women's Officer, Queer Officers, Environment Officer, Mature Aged Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Officer and Education Officer. Ad-hoc Office Bearers are available to all students including all off campus students who have access via a toll free telephone number.

Local and National **Newspapers** are available daily in the UNESA office for students to view/read at their leisure.

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<p>The Breather is an area located within the UNESA complex providing a safe environment for students to relax. It is open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and weekends during residential schools. Many students make use of and respect this area and meeting place during their lecture breaks and meal times. Services provided in the Breather for student use include computer and printing facilities, microwave oven, refrigeration and freezing, lounges and student notice boards.</p>
<p>Subsidised photocopying and Binding - Students are able to bind assignments and other items at competitive rates. Photocopies are also available at reasonable rates.</p>
<p>Free Tea, Coffee, Hot Chocolate and Soup is available in the UNESA office and is available at all times. During Residential Schools this is located outside the office to make it more accessible to external students & biscuits are provided free at morning & afternoon tea.</p>
<p>UNESA helps organise and participates in Campus Events such as O'week, Open Day, Info Day, Conferences and Barbecues</p>
<p>Free Filtered and Chilled Water is available at all times from the UNESA office.</p>
<p>Nightride is a security service financially supported by UNESA and provides safe escorted travel from the campus to Colleges and parts of town at regular intervals of an evening. This service operates up until the Library Closes each weekday night during the academic period.</p>
<p>Free Sun Screen is made available from the UNESA office for use by students as required. This is considered a must when the altitude and climate of Armidale is considered.</p>
<p>International Student Identity Card (ISIC) – application forms for ISIC cards are available at the UNESA office to all full time students of UNE. ISIC cards can be used for concessions with the State Rail Authority. Also these cards can be used to gain discounts worldwide. The cost is \$15.00 and details are available at the UNESA office</p>
<p>Facsimile Services – UNESA runs a subsidised fax service through which you can receive and send faxes. As this service is subsidised it is affordable for students to send faxes at very competitive prices.</p>
<p>For many years now UNESA has supported the Country Scholarship program each year by making a financial contribution to the scheme. UNESA sees these scholarships as a worthwhile program enabling students to attend University who may not otherwise be financially able to attend.</p>
<p>On campus Child Care is supported each year by UNESA. A significant donation is made that is directed towards the provision of child care and child care facilities provided for children of external students during residential schools.</p>
<p>Each year UNESA makes a sum of money available for students as Financial Assistance to attend various courses and conferences or as grants for projects that UNESA sees as being beneficial to the wider student population.</p>
<p>UNESA makes contact with all students accessible via a Toll Free 1800 contact number. This number is widely publicised in all UNESA publications, and on our Web Site which also contains much general information and useful links. Generic E-mail Addresses to the organisation are also widely published and used by all students.</p>

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UNESA contributes to the **UNE Experience** of those students who are involved in the organisation in so many ways that are available. Those Councillors and Office Bearers who are elected annually receive skills ranging from meeting procedure, financial management to director management. Each year some 30 to 40 students take on these roles most of which are carried out in a volunteer capacity.