

# Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education  
Legislation Committee

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

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**Submission no:** 143A

**Received:** 17/06/2005

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Executive Officer

**Organisation:** Adelaide University Sports Association Inc

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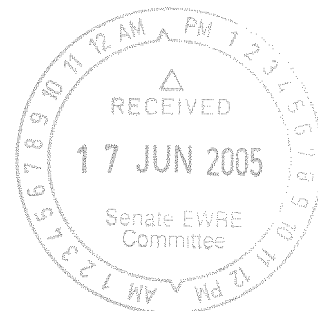


# Adelaide University Sports Association Inc.

ABN 92 057 571 187

17<sup>th</sup> June, 2005.

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations  
and Education Legislation Committee,  
Dept of the Senate.  
Parliament House,  
Canberra, A.C.T. 2600



Dear Members,

## **Voluntary Student Unionism**

The Adelaide University Sports Association Inc. is extremely concerned by the proposed legislation that seeks to curtail the universal contributions made to student organisations, especially those contributions that contribute to the sporting and recreational services used by a major proportion of campus based students.

### **Introduction**

Our Association was established in 1896 and has a long tradition of providing a comprehensive and affordable range of sporting and recreational activities to encompass all members of this multicultural university community whether they be in majority or minority groups.

Sporting clubs currently affiliated to us are:-

Athletics, Badminton, Baseball, Basketball, Boardriders, Boat (Rowing), Cricket, Cycling, Eight Ball, Fencing, Football, Gliding, Golf, Gymnastics, Hockey, Judo, Karate, Kendo, Lacrosse, Lawn Tennis, Mountain, Netball, Rugby, Sailing, Scuba diving, Snow Ski, Soccer, Softball, Squash, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tae Kwon Do, Tai Chi, Target Shooting, Touch, Triathlon, Volleyball, Water Ski, Wing Chun Kung Fu.

Our governing council is made up of a representative of each club as well as representatives from the University Council, other student organisations and residential colleges. The University Student Services Director, Student Union CEO and the Executive Officer of the Association are ex-officio members of council. This



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council annually elects six committee members to stand on the Board of Management to conduct the business of the Association

All other office bearers are elected annually by the ordinary membership which is made up of all enrolled students of the University of Adelaide. Non-voting members are Associate members, (university staff, graduates etc.) and Affiliate members (others limited to 10%).

The objects of the Association are to further the interests of sport and physical recreation at the University of Adelaide, to undertake the collection, expenditure, investment and distribution of monies due or belonging to the association, to liaise with the responsible University Department regarding the provision, preparation and maintenance of field sports, facilities on university sports grounds, including all buildings designated for sport use as required by the association, to appoint any officers necessary to carry out the objectives of the association, to supervise the management of clubs, to acquire by purchase or otherwise, or sell, real or personal property, and to borrow money on mortgage or debenture or by overdraft for the benefit of the association and to carry out any work or function designed to further the interest of the association.

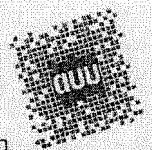
Subject to the provisions of our constitution, each affiliated club is allowed to manage its own affairs and is actively encouraged to do so with administrative support provided by our office staff.

In addition we implement and manage the Student Accident Insurance Policy on behalf of the Student Union and liaise extensively with the University on all other insurance matters such as public liability, property insurance etc.

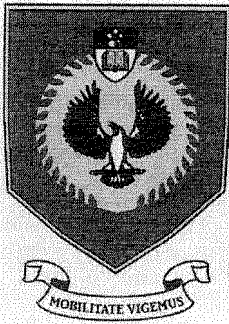
Separately incorporated we are affiliated to the Student Union and derive our operating funding from the statutory fee collected, a proportion of our grounds funding from the university and funding for initiatives from our own endeavours and that of our clubs.

## General

We advocate the retention of a student service-oriented fee from all university students, as we believe that this fee is no different to the taxes residents pay to local council. We all contribute towards schools, libraries and hospitals whether we as individuals use them or not as it for the benefit the community we live in. Many sporting facilities cannot be financially viable as it is impossible to provide football



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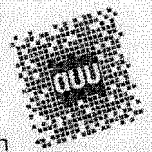
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fields, cricket pitches, soccer fields etc on a 'user pays' basis and a healthy campus requires a range of services and facilities that will not meet the economic rationalist criteria. Students have a choice to come to a particular university and become part of its community and they therefore should contribute to the running of that community. Our Student organisations are in partnership with the university and by virtue of the student services fee provide services, opportunities and activities for all students on campus. Should we expect the university to finance these services when they are already under severe financial restraint to provide adequate academic services?

Organisations such as ours are democratically run and enable any student to be involved in the management of their own services. Who better than the student to decide how their money is spent? Consequently new activities are initiated and old ones are revamped to keep up with the times. Sporting and recreational services comprise one of a number of important apolitical student oriented services being provided to tens of thousands of university students. The impact of the proposed legislation will have significant economic and cultural consequences for both the university community and the wider Australian community especially in regional areas. Our country campus at Roseworthy would be unable to even field one team without the ground funding support we provide. What would be left for students on isolated campuses?

Under the proposed legislation inter-university sporting and recreational opportunities of a national or international nature will for all intents and purposes cease to exist and campus-based opportunities will be greatly affected if they do not cease entirely. This year our Men's and Women's Soccer teams will be representing Australia as part of the inaugural Shayang University International Soccer Cup in China. Over the past two years our university has been represented at the World University Games and various other International events by Anthony Horden, Rugby, Belinda Huff, Volleyball, Victoria Linnell, Diving, Chris Morgan, Rowing in France, Tim Moffatt and Andrew Morris, Water-skiing in Russia, Dale Engler, Cross country in Italy. Scholarships and bursaries offered by this Sports Association have assisted these students take up these opportunities. Many Sports Associations have developed programmes of Sports Bursaries/ Scholarships to assist students who have the potential to develop into national or international level competitors by providing some financial support to help with high level coaching and training, competition costs and medical support.

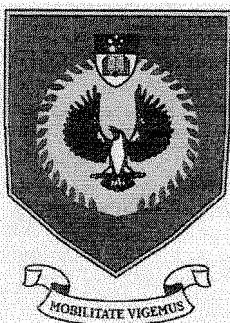


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Western Australian University Sport in recent years was severely affected by the application of this legislation and is a good example of the devastating effects on University sport of the nationwide implementation of the proposed current legislation. Liberal rhetoric tells us how well WA student unions adapted. Our personal knowledge is that sport only survived in one university due to a wise university and government injection of funding into facilities prior to the introduction of the legislation.

We would be very surprised if it was the intention of the current government to destroy University sport in Australia but it could be a definite consequence of this legislation.

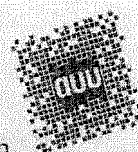
## **The Future of Australian Sport**

At a time when Australia is striving towards Commonwealth Games 2006 it is astounding that this bill could curtail student participation, particularly among women and undermine the sporting prowess and hinder opportunities that universities have to contribute to the nations future sporting potential

University club based sporting and recreational opportunities provide a basis for a greater female participation than the community norm. With 53% of the broader university population being women, the loss of a vibrant sport and recreation industry within the university sector will undermine further the opportunities available to women. The tertiary opportunities provided by university sport are an important vehicle for increasing women's participation. 40% of the AU Games participants are women and it is clear that university clubs contribute to the health of the nation through the comprehensive range of sporting/recreational opportunities being offered. All this is underpinned by universal student contributions.

University clubs also integrate heavily into community sporting fixtures from A grade to social grade. An example is the Rowing fraternity where success in this sport is largely a product of the education system in this country. University rowing is a major contributor to these athletes' development.

Kate Slatter, Olympic Gold medallist for Rowing and Allison Davies, World Rowing silver medallist started their path to glory through joining our Boat Club as first year students. Amber Halliday, one of our scholarship holders went on to row in Athens Olympics 2004. On a user pays basis these talented women in sport would never have got their feet wet but I am sure our politicians will glory in any medals gained in



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internationally without a single thought for the first tentative strokes they made on the River Torrens in Adelaide.

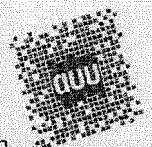
In short university sport not only provides important opportunities for developing participation in community based sport, it also provides and maintains quality facilities for a great many non university/community based teams who avail themselves of these facilities on weeknights and weekends. Former Judo International medallist Chelisa Chester and Bronze World Police Games medallist Sara Chester are both associate members of the Adelaide University Judo Club together with Paralympic Gold Medallist Anthony Clarke who is visually impaired and an inspiration to us all. Their success brings enormous benefits back to the club and students.

## **Cultural Diversity at Campus Level**

We believe the application of this legislation will undermine the richness and cultural diversity of University life and in particular the role Sport plays in facilitating this. Cultural diversity and the feeling of community are developed at a campus through non-academic activities. Sporting activities enhance and broaden the experience of students. In fact it serves to extend the university environment beyond a students studies and helps create a positive dimension to university life. Where else do the different faculties and broader community mix on an equal footing, doctors with art students, lawyers with factory workers than on a level playing field? Social development and lifelong friendships are developed through sport. Students not only acquire physical skills through university sport but professional attributes that extend well beyond the development of sporting prowess. There are many skills that a student acquires as a result of playing, administering and generally being involved with sport. Skills in decision-making, in management, in committee roles and in officiating are all opportunities available to those who are active in the administration of University sport.

They can even learn how to make mistakes and rectify them without too much recrimination. These are important skills for future leaders and the sporting environments at university is an ideal opportunity for students to hone these attributes before they are unleashed on the community as a whole.

## **Facility Maintenance and Safety**



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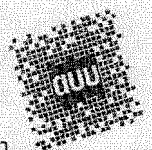
Vast amounts are spent on facility maintenance annually and clubs are required to meet strict safety requirements and conform with best and safe practices within their sport. This cost of policing is currently borne by the Sports Association, who will ensure a continuing comprehensive maintenance and safety programme under the proposed legislation?

## In Conclusion

In conclusion Adelaide University Sports Association Inc. advocates the retention of a student service-oriented fee from all university students. We believe it is not unreasonable for all students to be asked to make a contribution to the services available to them. Moreover, we believe it is paramount that student sporting and recreational services continue to be adequately resourced.

Yours faithfully,

Gloria Chester  
Executive Officer  
For and on behalf of  
Board of Management  
Adelaide University Sports Assoc. Inc.



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