

Mr John Carter
Secretary
The Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
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11 July 2007

Dear Mr Carter,

Inquiry into the provisions of the Social Security Amendment (2007 Measures No. 1) Bill 2007 and the Social Security Amendment (2007 Budget Measures for Students) Bill 2007

The Curtin Student Guild strongly supports the Bill's measures to extend Rent Assistance to Austudy recipients and provide income support to Masters students. The following further amendments are recommended to ensure adequate financial support for students:

- Student income support payments (at a minimum) should be increased and indexed quarterly equal to the Henderson poverty line
- The age of independence should be lowered in line with the cessation of the family allowance and family tax initiatives for dependents.
- The parental income test threshold at which benefits begin to be reduced needs to be increased in accordance with average weekly earnings.
- Parental Income and Assets test should not include business assets, farms or superannuation savings.
- The annual threshold for student earnings without incurring penalty should be increased and maintained at the Henderson poverty line, so that students who wish to undertake paid work to improve their standard of living will not be penalised.

The Bill's proposed amendments in conjunction with the aforementioned recommendations would provide prospective students a reasonable option to consider university study instead of dismissing it due to financial disincentives.

Yours sincerely



Lennard Bailey
Curtin Student Guild President