

# Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education  
References Committee

## **Inquiry into student income support**

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In my role as a youth and community worker, I wish to bring to your attention the following matters of concern for students in relation to their cost of living:

- The high and increasing level of expense of the direct costs of education (cost of text books; computer hardware, software and internet access; stationary; photocopying, transport, fees, etc..)
- The high level of indirect costs associated with education (costs of accommodation where students need to live in smaller houses conducive to study and the high rental associated with these accommodation requirements – (ie. they can only share dwelling and costs with a smaller number of people).
- Youth Allowance, Abstudy and Austudy are inadequate to meet the general cost of living (without the additional costs associated with study) and as such students increasing need to supplement their income by working part-time and casually. This is often identified as being a primary cause of missing lectures, tutorials and late assignments, as well as a significant contributor to stress and its associated health and relational impacts.
- Older students (aged 25 years +) face the economic disadvantage of not being able to receive rent assistance through Centrelink.
- Student anxiety associated with level of future debt associated with HECS.
- Parental anxiety associated with Centrelink requirements of needing to support their young adult dependents up to the age of 25 years. Because of this, some lower income parents have attempted to limit their young adult offspring's choices to avoid this prolonged period of dependence/support (ie. refuse to support them as students, forcing them to seek employment instead).