

# STUDENT ORGANISATIONS IN AUSTRALIA



**Over 130 years of students getting together to work with Australia's universities to defend student rights and to help students develop skills in leadership, teamwork, representation and social interaction which are invaluable in their careers and in their roles as citizens**

## **At Risk With Anti Student Organisation Legislation**

**NUS Research Background Paper for MPs, Journalists and Other Interest Parties**

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# Contents

## **INTRODUCTION (pg 3)**

## **WHAT DO CAMPUS STUDENT ORGANISATIONS DO ? (pg 6)**

## **WHAT DOES NUS DO ? (pg 12)**

## **HISTORY**

1. Pre-1994 anti-student organisation legislation and the key court cases
2. The Western Australian experience of voluntary student unionism legislation
3. The Victorian experience of anti-student organisation legislation
4. Recent federal legislation and the ACCC case

## **ISSUES (pg 30)**

1. Membership of student organisations and freedom of association
2. Are student organisations completely distinct from university educative processes ?
3. Tendering commercial student services to market-driven providers.
4. Will voluntary fee payment make student organisations more efficient and effective ?
5. Abolishing the last compulsory up front fee ?

## **IMPACT (pg 48)**

1. Student representation and advocacy
2. Student access, participation and welfare
3. International students
4. University sports
5. Arts and popular culture
6. Regional students and their communities

## **MEMBERS OF THE CURRENT PARLIAMENT WHO WERE STUDENT ORGANISATION OFFICE BEARERS (pg 67)**

## **SURVEY OF STUDENT ORGANISATIONS (pg 69)**



**Scenes from the Melbourne University Drama Festival 2004 - the cultural development of students is being at risk by VSU.**

## **Introduction**

It is not just out of self-interest that NUS believes that the yet unseen voluntary student union (VSU) legislation could prove to be the single most important element of the entire set of reforms to higher education put forward by Minister Nelson. There are some in the media who see the issue as a bit of a storm in a teacup - that its just about few student lefties losing their honouraria and students being given the choice of whether they want to support the activities of the fringe left. Actually there is a lot more at stake depending on how poor and short-sighted the legislation is.

- The revenue from the student amenities fees are used to employ over 7,000 staff. By way of contrast universities employ about 77,000 staff across Australia. So this legislation will have a major direct impact on one in twelve of all staff employed at universities. Depending on the exact drafting of the bill the legislation could also spill over to impact more widely on general university staff involved in non-academic service provision.
- A fundamental shift in the university campus life and learning culture towards a narrow vocationalism and credentialism.
- A decline in the participation and completion rates of equity groups as vital support services are withdrawn
- A further decline in community engagement by Australian graduates as the civic education, leadership and teamwork aspects of university life fade away
- Declining public accountability and public debate over government and university policies.
- Australia's market edge in the international student market will be eroded through the decline in international student support services and the attractiveness of the vibrant campus life at many Australian universities. It will also diminish Australia's quality assurance and accreditation processes which will ultimately damage the reputation of Australia's universities.
- The erosion of the hard fought system of assessment rights and support will lead to the greater resort to expensive legal cases over academic decisions
- The erosion of hundreds of millions of dollars of worth of campus infra-structure and facilities that have been developed and paid for by students over the last 130 years.

What has been stunning for such an important decision has been the extremely poor quality of the much of the debate which has rarely risen above sloganeering and largely deceptive media soundbites. Yes, there have been those on our side who have put up the unlikely case that VSU means that all student services and student life will vanish on all campuses. But on the pro-VSU side it seem as if their spin-doctors have been saying keep it simple - just keep saying that its about 'choice' and 'students will pay for services they want' and avoid any rational debate on the complexities and difficulties associated with non-academic student service provision at our post-Nelson reform universities. Even more disappointing are some VSU crusaders who see it as their mission to dig up the dirt on student organisations - lift some policy or expenditure out of all context made some time in the 130 year history of student organisations and then claim that this is typical of what student organisations are about, that they are out of control and the government must do something about it. For the sake of future students and the thousands of jobs on the line we hope that the parliamentary and media debate will rise above the level of undergraduate dirt sheet.

Australia's system of student governance is a large and diverse industry which has been operating for longer than the Commonwealth of Australia has existed. The student bodies at different campuses have elected representatives to run their services and facilities with political views ranging from the Liberal Party to the far left to the apolitical. The fact that some people might disagree with an expenditure or policy decision made at a student organisation somewhere is no more surprising or shocking than that some people disagree with some particular expenditures that a federal or state government makes with its its compulsorily collected taxes. The essential point is not that every student organisation is perfect and that every policy and expenditure decision made over the last 130 years was correct. Rather we are saying to have faith in the democratic processes. Student office bearers who make bad decisions or who are out of touch with student wishes will feel the wrath of the voters. Unlike federal parliament's three year cycle the student body holds annual elections meaning the potential wrath of voters is never too far away. Overarching student democratic control are the regulatory powers that universities hold over student organisations. University Councils need to approve changes to student organisation constitutions, set the student amenities fee level and how much is allocated to student governed organisations, require the organisations to submit fully audited financial statements and in exceptional cases, such as the recent events at University of Melbourne, intervene directly where things are going badly awry. If there are failings in the regulatory system at a particular university then we should be having a debate about that university's regulatory system rather than about national VSU.

While it is understandable that the supporters of VSU have wanted to keep the focus on the issue of freedom of association it really is something of a furphy. NUS completely agrees that student should have the positive right of freedom of association. The freedom of association refers to the positive right of individuals to form associations with anyone whomsoever one pleases. However, what VSU proponents are referring to is something different - the negative right of association (or dissociation) - the right not to be compelled to associate with other person's against one's will. The distinction is important because there is a considerable body of law, human rights conventions and ethical argument in favour of the positive right to form associations, particularly in the context of repressive human rights and industrial laws in countries with oppressive regimes. Many proponents of the negative right of dissociation try conflating their arguments with the widespread support for legal and ethical arguments around the positive right of association. Issues around the right of dissociation from statutory or public associations are very different and should not be conflated with freedom of association. These issues are discussed at length in this paper. Regardless of the complex debate on the freedom of dissociation the universities have largely acquiesced to the concerns of members of the Liberal Party about universal membership and have introduced some form of conscientious objection provision at most universities. If the argument was about membership and freedom of dissociation then perhaps we would be having a debate over whether the membership opt-out mechanisms were too weak or too onerous for students to take out at particular universities.

Certainly if what is being proposed is legislation derived from the WA-style 'free ride' model of VSU in operation from 1997 - 2002 then what is being debated is whether or not there should be some form of universal student contribution for representation and non-academic student services rather than issues of freedom of

dissociation or restrictions or regulations placed on some student expenditures. Our core concern is that as we will explain in this paper is that the WA model is not viable as a long term national model for comprehensive representative and non-academic service provision at our universities. This will deny Australian students the option to choose to have similar welfare, study support, campus experience and personal development opportunities as that enjoyed by students at leading English, European and North American universities. In the long term the international reputation and competitiveness of Australia's public universities will suffer under this compulsory restraint of trade.

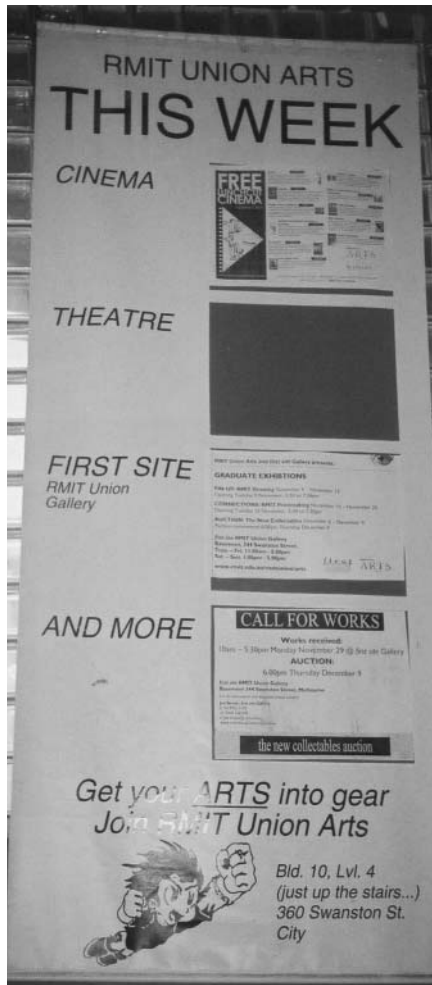
VSU is an entirely artificially constructed issue that has only been taken up in Australia and New Zealand. In England, Europe and North America both the universal membership of student organisations and the universal levying of some fee for student services and representation is the norm at public universities. Oxford, Cambridge and all British public universities operate in this way. America's most prestigious private university, Harvard University, sees its student government structures and services as so important to its education mission that it currently charges a universal annual student services levy of \$US1908 (about \$3000 in our dollars) and this doesn't cover fees for residential board or health services (this puts some perspective on the \$100-\$400 fee typical at Australian universities). Generally the status private universities in the USA have universal membership and levy a much higher fee than Australian universities. It is only when we get to the lower stripped back sector of the private university market that the voluntary (or no) system of student governance becomes the norm. There has recently been some recent debate in the USA about whether to give students the choice to decide what proportion of their fee goes to a particular organisation, while still retaining the universal overall contribution. However, neither the Tories in England or the Republicans in the US have seen any need to push for legislation to force a free ride option on universities that have wanted to levy a universal charge. New Zealand's brief experiment with VSU amounted to a government insisting that each university hold a referendum of its students to see if they wished the university levy to continue. In all but one case the students voted in favour of retaining a universal levy.

Recently the Minister has announced his intention to relax the accreditation and national protocols framework to accelerate the development and entry of new private higher education providers into this country. Without getting into the pros and cons of this reform it is clear that students will be given more choice including those private providers that do not see it as part of their education mission or market edge to offer student representation or student support services. However, what will be denied to students under a nationally imposed WA 'free ride' model is the choice of attending a public university that can offer the comprehensive 'Harvard-Oxford campus experience' style of education (albeit scaled down due to our much lower fee levels). What this paper will argue is that the imposition of the WA model in reality amounts to a centralised prescription for mediocrity that lessens market choice for students and denies them opportunities that are available to students at most leading universities in the world.

The approach this paper will take is the following. After outlining what campus student organisations and NUS do this paper will run through the history of the VSU debate in this country. Then it will address the issues of freedom of association, the role that student organisations play in helping universities meet their education goals, why a national voluntary fee model won't work, and issues associated with compulsory tendering of commercial services to outside providers. Then we will address the impact of VSU on (1) student representation and advocacy services and the flow on impact to university and government decision making bodies, (2) student welfare, participation and access, (3) international students, (4) university sport, and (5) arts and popular culture. To conclude, so that student organisations can be damned or praised for what we actually do, there is a breakdown campus by campus of what the student organisations are there, what fees they charge, what the opt-out arrangements are, and the range of services they provide.

Also for sake of clarity this paper uses the term anti-student organisation legislation (ASOL) as an umbrella term for all types of legislation aimed at restricting student democratic choice over how they spend their money as well as the voluntary student unionism itself which is about whether there should be a universal levy.

# WHAT DO CAMPUS STUDENT ORGANISATIONS DO ?



There is a widespread myth, particularly amongst people who haven't been to university, that student organisations are mainly just about smoking dope and protesting. This myth is exploited by some tabloid journalists in their rants against the evils of compulsory student unionism. The argument usually goes along the line of why should ordinary Australian students be made to contribute a couple of hundred dollar a year to the activities of radical left fringes through universal student fees ?

Like most tabloid myths the reality is somewhat different. So what do campus student organisations actually do ?

## Provision of Services

Student organisations provide a broad range of services to students and the university community as a whole. Analogous to local councils, student organisations receive financial contributions from all students in the form of non-academic service fees. These funds are pooled, and students democratically determine which services are to be funded. It is important to note that many services provided by student organisations are heavily subsidised, and like the provision of welfare services in the municipal context, would be impossible to continue unless all students contribute their rates.

On a typical Australian university students have access to the following services:

### Education Services

An often forgotten aspect of the representative role of student organisations relates to student rights/advocacy on behalf of individual students. Student representatives or staff of student organisations represent thousands of students to the university around academic problems or grievances every year. These include support and advocacy around the following issues:

- o academic rights appeals over assessment, remarks, supplementary exams due to medical or personal hardship, plagiarism or academic misconduct allegations
- o issues affecting enrolment such as admissions, preclusions and exclusions
- o illegal course material fees
- o disability access and support
- o discipline hearings



- o research supervision problems
- o intellectual property disputes
- o degree confirmation
- o applications for recognition of prior learning

### **Equity and Welfare Services**

- o financial counselling
- o income support advice
- o employment services
- o childcare
- o international student support and integration programs
- o personal counselling
- o legal advice
- o mature age and part-time students integration programs
- o sexual harassment advice

### **Cultural/Arts Services**

- o orientation weeks
- o clubs and societies
- o student theatre
- o multi-cultural events
- o bands and other lunch time performers
- o debates of current issues
- o art galleries and exhibitions

### **Student Media**

- o weekly information sheets
- o student newspapers
- o student radio
- o student television
- o student media and art prizes

### **Sport**

- o sporting events and clubs
- o sporting associations
- o participation in inter-varsity sports
- o access to sporting venues
- o subsidised on campus gyms

### **Campus Infrastructure**

- o student lounges
- o bars, taverns and food outlets
- o sporting facilities
- o union buildings
- o meeting rooms
- o religious centres

### **Other services**

- o subsidised food
- o second hand books



- o tool libraries
- o cheap minibus hire
- o computer labs
- o international student peer mentoring schemes
- o study skills programs
- o safe sex programs
- o photocopying and fax services
- o freecall phone and fax for external students
- o locker hire
- o discount ticketing
- o academic dress
- o work rights advice

## Representing Student Interests

Alongside their service provision functions, student organisations act as representatives of students at their institutions and to decision-making bodies at university or the government. Student representation has a long history and vital place in university decision-making structures. University staff and management have long recognised as essential that student views are sought and represented at every level of university decision making. To this end student organisations provide the most democratic and efficient means through which such views can be communicated to the university and its staff.



NUS submits that meaningful representation of student views is only possible if two central conditions continue to exist.

**1. Universal membership of student organisations.** Universal membership ensures that elected student representatives are the legitimate spokespeople for students on campus. In addition, having faced annual elections, student representatives can speak from a mandate, having tested their policy objectives with the entire student body. Universality means that representatives are accountable to the entire student body not just a section of it.

**2. Resourcing of student representation.**

a) Many student representatives sit on several university boards, ranging from university councils and academic boards to facilities committees. In order to represent students' views regarding highly complex matters, student representatives make use of resources provided by their organisations. Student organisations employ research and administration staff to professional support student representative work on university committees.

b) Student organisations provide information to members and student representatives through strong research focus and their positions as the legitimate representative bodies at universities. To this end student organisations provide an avenue for information collection, dissemination and the canvassing of student opinion without which student representation becomes meaningless.



c) Student organisations provide resources, such as access to research libraries, telephones, and computers, funding for clubs and societies and other infrastructure to students on campuses. This allows the flourishing of diverse political debate and activity, as well as the ability for students to represent themselves in many areas of university life. Students have common interests and are part of one university community. However the student population is also diverse with individuals and groups expressing interests in a vast range of issues. Groups like international student associations, Liberal student clubs and Christian clubs make up part of student organisations, and work on different issues of concern to them. Labor students, environment collectives, muslim clubs, faculty associations, indigenous groups and many more work on their interests. This diversity, funded and promoted by student organisations, is the cornerstone of democratic student life. Student organisations proudly support this diversity and model of self-representation. We think that exposing students to this melting pot of ideas and cultures forms a key part about widening the horizons on Australia's graduates. Through this process student representatives have represented student interests effectively and extended their interests on all campuses in Australia. Some examples of policies and initiatives introduced at Australian Universities due to the representative functions of student organisations include:

- o implementation of sexual harassment and other anti-discrimination measures
- o assessment appeal policies;
- o supplementary exam policies;
- o safety on campus measures;
- o special consideration processes;
- o restrictions of charging course material fees, and monitoring faculty adherence to ministerial guidelines

## **Postgraduates**

Quite a few universities have postgraduate student organisations which are separate from the student union or guild, while other universities have postgraduate committees or associations existing within the guild/union structure. In all cases, postgraduate organisations maintain close contact with Schools of Graduate Studies, and usually work closely with Deans of Graduate Studies to ensure that universities' postgraduate programs best serve the needs of postgraduates.

### **Specialist representation of postgraduate-specific issues**

Postgraduate student organisations ensure that the special needs of postgraduate students are met.

Examples of programs and services offered to postgraduates by postgraduate student organisations include:

- o Professional caseworkers to assist research students to establish a good working relationships with their supervisor, and offer advice when problems arise;
- o Seminars on thesis preparation and publication; assistance with material production of theses
- o Support for student-initiated conferences, including interdisciplinary conferences and inter-university conferences;
- o Out-of-hours support and events for coursework students (who often study part-time and out of hours, and suffer a high incidence of isolation)
- o Parent-friendly events (postgraduates are on average in their mid-to-late thirties, and events allowing students to expose their children and partners to university life are always well attended);
- o Disability support (due to their greater age, the incidence of disability amongst postgraduates is proportionately higher than amongst undergraduates), and
- o Specialist representation on university committees and boards of postgraduate students' distinctive voice—postgraduates often have careers, families, carer responsibilities and professional lives which mean their needs are different from the larger undergraduate student body.

Postgraduate student organisations also play an important role in supporting the growing number of inter-

**“The fact that some people object to the way in which some public funds are spent does not mean that they are therefore exempted from paying taxes. The fact that there are some political donations made on behalf of S.R.C.s and A.U.S. that may be abhorrent to some people who have contributed union fees does not mean that we should therefore create a situation whereby all activities including those that are profitable to the people concerned are financially penalised by voluntary payments. The answer is to get students involved and to stop those payments being made in the first place or make some constitutional provision agreeable to those who contribute to the organisation that will ensure that this practice cannot be continued.”**

**Treasurer Peter Costello is his days as a Monash Uni student politician**

national students coming to Australia to study at the postgraduate level. These students often come from tertiary educational backgrounds very different from Australia's, and assistance from their Australian peers makes a big difference in their adjustment to Australian university studies. This is especially true for international students studying toward research degrees in Australia, who can become overwhelmingly isolated without peer support. Most postgraduate associations report international students as their most active members and the biggest users of their facilities and services.

## **Student Engagement With Society**

Very few reasonable people take offence at the notion that the views of students should be able to be represented on matters of direct interest to them to bodies making decisions about the provision, cost and quality of their education. However, the small fraction of student organisation revenue spent at some organisations on progressive socio-political causes has raised the ire of many conservatives ever since small donations were made to Vietnam Moratorium Committees in 1970.

This has led to various attempts over the past 35 years to ban the use of student amenity fees for expenditures on matters not directly affecting students.

Firstly it should be pointed out that most student organisations don't do this and where it does occur the amounts of money involved are almost without exception trivial. They are too small to have anything beyond a negligible impact on student amenity fee levels. So the argument is about symbolism rather than a discernible extra financial impost on students.

However, there is a legitimate ethical debate over the use of compulsorily collected funds on activities that substantial minority of the membership find objectionable (however, symbolic the amount actually is). Many political conservatives would regard this as a self-evident truth.

However, it becomes somewhat rubbery determining what is reasonably constitutes a politically objectionable activity. Universities are a hotbed of ideas and students have sometimes wanted to break out of the confines of vocationalism and credentialism and make some kind of positive impact on the world around them. In many cases students were just a bit ahead of what was later accepted as the norm. Were student organisations in the 1950s wrong to take a stand against the White Australia policy ? Were student organisations wrong to pioneer the development of childcare facilities on campuses - even though there

were a vocal minority strongly opposed ? Were student organisations in the late 1970s wrong to oppose the expulsion of students from their teaching degrees simply for being homosexual ?

Some might point to the so called left excesses of the 1960s and 1970s. But reality is more complicated. First of all the activities of the far student left in the 1960s occurred despite student organisations rather than because of them. The far left groups were self-funded and in some cases wanted to abolish student organisations which saw as bureaucratic and holding students back in official channels. However, as student organisations are democratic the changed political climate at the end of the 1960s produced a general swing to the left for a number of years, at least in the student representative bodies.

However, while they were ahead of conservative thought they were often moving in the same direction as what soon became bipartisan policy. For example the National Union of Australian University Students in 1969, after a three year bitter debate finally adopted a position opposing the Australian military involvement Vietnam War. Yet within two years the Liberal Government announced the withdrawal of Australian troops. In 1971 the new Australian Union of Students provoked considerable controversy for backing national protests against the Springbok rugby tour. Yet within months the Liberal Government decided that it would ban sporting links with the apartheid regime in South Africa. Even the oft-cited Palestinian debates in 1974-5 (see pg 18) are widely regarded as leading to a significant reappraisal of Australia's foreign policy on the Israel-Palestine conflict.

At the end of the day these matters should not be up to a government minister or vice-chancellor to decide what students do with their own pooled money. Students through their democratic processes should decide. Like in the off-campus world it is the responsibility for an aggrieved minority to change policies, activities and student governments they find objectionable through democratic means. Senator Carrick, education minister under the Fraser Liberal Government, summed up the moderate conservative position well in responding to VSU lobbying efforts by some hard-line Western Australian ALSF members, by arguing “*..the cure must originate basically from the members themselves. It is within the student unions to rectify the matter. It is an important problem and I should be happy to discuss it further. In other days I have participated - and successfully too - in the martialling (sic) of student ideas and energies towards the democratic process.*”

**‘The student clubs and societies provide fora in which students mix with students from other disciplines, where they may join together to further a common interest in music or the arts, where they engage in debate on some of the social or political issues of the day. If Universities cease to be the venue for discourse or dissent, the next generation will be supine in the face of authority and our democracy will be a hollow incantation. Therefore membership of a students union has been traditionally regarded as a condition of membership of the University community.’**

*Hon Sir Gerard Brennan,  
Chancellor University of  
Technology, Sydney, 1999, former  
Chief Justice of Australia*

# What Does NUS Do ?

The National Union of Students (NUS) is the peak body for higher education students in Australia.

NUS is the fourth peak national student organisation in Australia. There was an Australian Students Universities Union briefly in the 1920s to give Australian students representation at Imperial Student Conferences in England. The need to set up cheap text book import arrangements and first glimmering of federal involvement in the running of universities (which up to that time had been purely a state matter) led to the creation of the National Union of Australian University Students (NUAUS) in 1937. In the 1950s and 1960s Liberal students were very active and constructively engaged in NUAUS and often held national office bearer positions. When the teachers colleges and institutes of technology were admitted it changed its name to the Australian Union of Students (AUS) in 1971 and for several years swung sharply to the political left. The AUS folded in 1984 after a lengthy campaign by the Australian Liberal Students' Federation, the Fraser Government and state Liberal Governments to destroy it. Students quickly learnt the folly of not having a national voice. The shock caused by the abolition of free education by the ALP led students to set up a new structure. The National Union of Students became fully operational in 1988.

Unlike AUS, which saw itself in the late 1970s as a student 'trade union' made up of individual student members NUS's members are not students directly. Rather it is a voluntary federation of student organisations who through their democratic processes resolve if they wish to be members. Currently NUS has 70 member organisations who have a combined membership of 650,000 students. As well as a national office based in Melbourne NUS also has state /territory branches in the ACT, Qld, NSW, SA, Victoria, WA and Tasmania. The departmental structure of NUS has changed over the years as student priorities have changed. The current NUS Departments are: Education, Welfare, Women's, Queer, Environment, Small and Regional campuses, and Administration. NUS recognises the autonomous National Liaison Committee for International Students (NLC) as the voice for international students and provides it with a grant for the bulk of its funding and a staff member.

The following student organisations are affiliated to the National Union of Students:

Australian National University Student Association  
Charles Darwin University Students' Union  
Curtin University of Technology Student Guild  
Edith Cowan University Student Guild Bunbury Branch  
Edith Cowan University Student Guild Churchlands Branch  
Edith Cowan University Student Guild Joondalup Branch  
Edith Cowan University Student Guild Mt. Lawley Branch  
Flinders University Students Association  
Griffith University Students' Representative Council - Mt. Gravatt  
Griffith University Students' Representative Council - Nathan  
James Cook University Cairns Campus Student Union  
James Cook University Students Association (Townsville)  
LaTrobe University Bendigo Student Association  
LaTrobe University Students Representative Council  
LaTrobe University Wodonga Student Association  
Macquarie University Students' Council  
Melbourne University Student Council  
Monash University Student Union (Caulfield )  
Monash University Gippsland Student Union

Monash University Peninsula Students Association  
Monash University Students' Association (Clayton)  
Monash University Victorian Pharmacy College Students' Representative Council  
Murdoch University Guild of Students  
Queensland University of Technology Student Guild - Carseldine  
Queensland University of Technology Student Guild - Garden Point  
Queensland University of Technology Student Guild - Kelvin Grove  
RMIT University Student Union Bundoora  
RMIT University Student Union City  
Southern Cross University Coffs Harbour Student Association  
Southern Cross University Lismore Student Representative Council  
Swinburne University Hawthorn Student Union  
Swinburne University Lilydale Student Union  
Swinburne University Prahan Student Union  
Tasmania University Union  
University of Adelaide Student Association City  
University of Adelaide Roseworthy Agricultural College Student Union  
University of Adelaide WAITE Institute Student Association  
University of Ballarat Student Association  
University of Canberra Students' Association  
University of New England Armidale Student Association  
University of New South Wales Student Guild  
University of Newcastle Students Association  
University of Queensland Union  
University of South Australia Students' Association City East  
University of South Australia Students' Association City West  
University of South Australia Students' Association Magill  
University of South Australia Students' Association Mawson Lakes  
University of South Australia Students' Association Underdale  
University of South Australia Students' Association Whyalla  
University of Sunshine Coast Student Guild  
University of Sydney Student Representative Council  
Orange Agricultural College Student Association  
University of Tasmania Launceston Student Association  
University of Technology Sydney Students' Association  
University of Western Australia Student Guild  
University of Western Sydney Bankstown Students Association  
University of Western Sydney Parramatta and Penrith Students Association  
University of Western Campbelltown Students Association Campus Inc  
University of Western Sydney Nepean Students Union  
University of Wollongong Students' Representative Council  
Victoria University Student Union City  
Victoria University Student Union Melton  
Victoria University Student Union Footscray  
Victoria University Student Union St. Albans  
Victoria University Student Union Sunbury  
Victoria University Student Union Sunshine  
Victoria University Student Union Werribee  
Victoria College of the Arts Student Union

The membership of NUS is determined through the affiliation of campus student organisations to the national body. Membership is determined at the campus level through either a five-day referendum of all students, a student general meeting or a motion at the governing body of the campus student organisation. So for example when the University of Queensland held an affiliation referendum in 1997, 71% of voting students chose to join the National Union of Students. The vast majority of NUS' members choose to join via referenda.

## **The role and activities of NUS**

The most well known aspect of NUS's work has been organising large, high profile student protests against regressive changes made to higher education by federal governments (both ALP and Coalition) since 1987. However, NUS is much more than just a protest group that fights for student interests.

It also acts as a national student parliament. NUS policy is determined at the annual NUS conference attended by delegates elected by and from students of member organisations. Over 200 student delegates meet to determine the direction of the organisation in a democratic manner in the policy areas of education, welfare, women's policy, international students, small and regional university policy, environment, sexuality, disability and income support.

As determined by its members, NUS also acts as the peak body representing student interests to government, universities and the community. NUS plays an important role in communicating the views of students to relevant bodies on a range of issues related to tertiary education. To this end NUS regularly makes submissions to federal governments and other parliamentary bodies and is often called to testify before the parliamentary committees as an expert body. In recent years these have included:

- o Submission to the West Review of Higher Education Financing and Policy 1997
- o Submission to the Senate GST and New Tax System Inquiry
- o Submission to the Junior Rates of Pay Inquiry
- o 1998 – 2000 An alternative Commonwealth budget for Higher Education: Education for all
- o Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training Inquiry into the appropriate roles of Institutes of Technology and Further Education
- o Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education Legislation Committee, Inquiry into the: Innovation and Education Legislation Bill 2001 (PELS)
- o DEST, Submission To The Crossroads ministerial discussion paper, 2002
- o *Realities of Achieving Quality with Equity*: submission to the ministerial review of higher education discussion papers: *Striving for Quality, Setting Firm Foundations, Varieties of Excellence Achieving Equitable and Appropriate Outcomes, Meeting The Challenges, Varieties of Learning*, 2002
- o Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee Inquiry into higher education funding and regulatory legislation (2003) (plus second supplementary submission)
- o Submission to the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee Inquiry into Poverty and Financial Hardship, 2003
- o Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee Inquiry into Student Income Support Measures

NUS also appeared before the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission in the case re: Exclusive Dealing Notification by James Cook University 2002

NUS has campaigned on issues as determined by our membership including:

- o increases to funding and availability of childcare
- o cuts to operating grants to universities
- o quality of education delivery
- o increases in income support for students

- o safety on campus
- o the introduction of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme and the increases in HECS rates in 1997 and 2005
- o up-front fees for local undergraduate students
- o environmental issues
- o more scholarships for regional and indigenous students
- o anti-racism
- o against sexual violence

NUS actively liaises with, is consulted by and has worked in partnership with the following committees and bodies:

- o Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
- o Australian Council of Social Services
- o Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission
- o Australian Council of Trade Unions
- o Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations
- o Centrelink Youth Allowance Reference Group (and formerly the Department for Social Security)
- o Department of Family and Community Services
- o Department of Education, Science and Training (and former advisory bodies such as the Higher Education Council and the National Board of Employment, Education and Training)
- o National Liaison Committee for International Students in Australia
- o National Tertiary Education Union
- o National Youth Coalition for Housing
- o Welfare Rights Centre
- o Network of Women Students in Australia



**Students at an NUS rally at Flinders University in 1989 express their displeasure at ALP Federal Education Minister John Dawkins for replacing free tertiary education with HECS.**

NUS also provides a strong research focus on behalf of its membership. NUS collects and distributes information regarding higher education policy, equity in education, student poverty, as well as a variety of welfare issues to campuses, the media, community organisations and our membership. NUS undertakes original research in the higher education field. The Ancillary Fee Survey, produced in 1998, is an example of vital research in partnership with other members of the university community, relevant to students and the higher education sector as a whole conducted by NUS. The survey provides a comprehensive overview of the nature and breadth of charges and fees levied on students through the duration of their courses.

NUS also runs a service arm which co-ordinates the provision of discounts, deals and give-away competitions for students. The NUS website receives several thousand hits a week. The NUS website is at <http://www.unistudent.com.au/>

# HISTORY PART 1

## Pre-1994 Anti-Student Organisation Legislation and key Court Cases

In the Renaissance period students ran the Italian universities, and for example would shift the university to a different town if rents to students became too high. The first post-Renaissance student organisations developed in Scotland at the end of the 18th century. The first English student union came into existence at Cambridge University in 1815. Similarly the system of 'student government' began to evolve around this time at US universities. There were voluntary student organisations at Australian universities in the 19th century. However, they were aimed at the leisure and sporting activities of a very small number of wealthy students who attended universities back then. In 1906 the University of Melbourne became the first Australian university to charge an annual compulsory levy on students for campus activities other than tuition. This became general across Australian universities by the 1920s. Typically it was the students themselves who banded together to push the universities into levying a small fee to create a student life on campuses beyond lectures and laboratories. Soon they also wanted to have a voice on faculty and university bodies which led to the creation of Student Representative Councils. For five decades there was bipartisan support (ALP and Conservative) for the principle of automatic membership to student organisations. Governments were quite happy to leave the operation of student organisations up to the universities. Like their counterparts at other good international universities such as Oxford, Cambridge, Princeton and Columbia the universal levy was seen as part of a getting a well rounded education. One of the key reports during the Liberal Menzies Government's modernisation of Australian universities in the 1950s and 1960s was the Murray Report. It noted:

*"In universities of the Australian type, the importance cannot be overstressed of the provision of some adequate meeting ground for students from all faculties. The Students' Union should be the focus for extra-curricular activities, both social and intellectual, of the student body. It could prove one of the most potent influences in developing that corporate life which is urgently needed if the modern tendency for the average student to be exposed throughout his university course to nothing but purely vocational interests is to be corrected."* (Murray Report 1957, Sir Keith Murray was Chair of the British University Grants Committee)

The Vice-Chancellors' submission to the Committee stressed the importance of the activities of student organisations:

*"the University Union (is) a significant feature, for it is from the activities of the Union that the average student get much of the benefits of the communal life as are possible for one not in residence. This has been appreciated by university governing bodies and one of the features of Australian student life is the existence of strong Union Boards, active Student Representative Councils, and an extensive series of clubs and societies."*

When the Commonwealth took over the most of the funding and co-ordination of the state governments in 1974 there was a debate on whether or not the Commonwealth should directly fund student organisations so that there would be no fees for study at higher education. However, the Universities Commission took the position that Commonwealth funding had the potential to compromise the important independent advocacy and representative role of student organisations:

*'Student bodies provide basic facilities such as food services, meeting rooms, amenities, commercial services and sporting and recreational facilities which are essential parts of the functioning of the university; and*



*they provide a framework for the social and cultural development of the students...The unions and other student bodies rightfully prize their freedom and independence from political intervention. Moreover by relying on fees as the main source of their income, student bodies retain the power to determine the direction, pattern and extent of their own development and have regard to their own priorities. Accordingly the Commission does not advocate the abolition of fees charged by student bodies...The introduction of recurrent assistance for student bodies would not be justified in the light of other needs and priorities. Moreover the Commission is not convinced that such a form of support would be in the best interests of the bodies themselves as it could, in the long run, lead to direct government involvement in their affairs. The Commission proposes to continue its policy of support for universities in the provision of medical and other student services and for student bodies in the provision of the basic buildings and sports facilities necessary for their operations.” (Sixth Report of the Universities Commission, 1975)*

When the Commonwealth took over the authority to fund higher education it made an agreement with the states governments which included the following undertaking:

*“student representative council, union and sports fees will continue as the responsibility of the student on the understanding that the institutions will make payment of these fees compulsory for all students.”*

The post 1974 framework was that the Commonwealth provided the funding for universities for its core teaching, research and infra-structure activities while the students maintained their independent self-governance over their representation, services and facilities through a universal student amenities fee. Since then the Commonwealth has considerably scaled back the government contribution to running costs from 90% in the early 1980s to around 40% now. Students now contribute through HECS and fees over 40% of the running costs of universities.

The issue of universal student organisation fees did not become controversial because student organisations had suddenly become archaic. Quite the contrary student organisations over the last couple of decades have been less about rugby, beer and debating - and a lot more about welfare, academic rights and having a real impact on university committees. Some have argued that because students need to do more part-time work to get by that students have less time to spend on campus to get involved in campus life. There is some truth in this argument which has led student organisations to increase their employment and welfare services and to have professional support staff to work on behalf of students in dealing with academic rights issues. For example the University of Queensland Union employment service ran job ads for 4,154 employers last year. However, clubs are alive and well. Taking the University of Queensland Union example again the Union reports that 26,074 students joined a student club last year. Students might be less involved in political clubs but the membership of Christian and international student clubs are booming at most campuses.

Certainly there is nothing archaic about the idea of a rich ‘campus experience’ supplementing formal academic processes at what are seen as the best higher education providers in the world. The leading public and private universities round the world such as Harvard, Oxford and Cambridge all continue to charge substantial student organisation fees and require all their students to become members of their student organisations. In fact amongst all the countries whose higher education system is derived from the European-North American style of university Australia and New Zealand are virtually unique in having non-academic service provision at universities being subject to government interference to prevent universal contributions.

The discourse of ‘voluntary student unionism’ is a totally artificial construct which has not been taken up by conservatives elsewhere in the world. So how did Australia end up with its major conservative party stacked full of members with a preoccupation to liberate students from the shackles of compulsory unionism? The controversy began because a minority were aggrieved that some of their student fees were

being used on things they did not agree with. The earlier bipartisan consensus on automatic membership of student organisations began to breakdown in the early seventies when some student organisations wanted to provide some limited financial support to student activists involved in the Vietnam Moratorium Movement and the anti-apartheid campaign against the Springbok Rugby tour in 1971, (bail funds, posters). Supporters of BA Santamaria's ultra-conservative National Civic Council took injunctions out against several student organisations restraining them from making donations to 'political' causes. At La Trobe in 1972 the university froze the Student Representative Council's funds because it continued to regard students, (including the SRC President) who had been expelled following an occupation of the administration building, as members of the SRC.

Contrary to the often cited myth the Australian Union of Students never gave money to the PLO. However, in 1974-5 the Australian Union of Students was forced into a policy debate on whether or not to recognise the General Union of Palestinian Students or the National Union of Israeli Students as the legitimate representative of Palestine/Israel which would be admitted to the Asian Students Association (an umbrella organisation of student unions from the non-communist countries - which AUS was a member). The Middle East policies were referred back to the campuses where large mass (and very heated) meetings debated the policy. AUS did fund a speaking tour by a member of the General Union of Palestinian Students to put the other side of case to the well-organised pro-Israel lobby. While the pro-Palestine policies were eventually defeated by student democracy the fact that sections of the AUS leadership seemed supportive of Palestine was used as battering ram by conservatives against the union. The Australian Liberal Students' Federation, representing the dry right of the Liberal Party, came into existence in 1976. Some believed that the tide on campuses was turning away from the student left and wanted to build a right wing AUS. In 1977 and 1978 the conservatives came within a couple of votes of taking over the leadership of AUS. Others, particularly from WA wanted to destroy AUS.

In response to the perceived 'left wing excesses' and 'un-Australian activities' of AUS a number of Liberal Governments introduced voluntary student unionism legislation. The WA Liberal Party adopted voluntary student unionism as its policy in 1975, and in 1977 got anti-student organisation legislation through parliament. The term voluntary student unionism was misleading. For it did not introduce voluntary student unionism. The major impact of the legislation was prevent student organisations paying membership fees to the Australian Union of Students. Similar legislation was put up in Victoria and in the ACT via the Federal Government. The major target seemed to be AUS because of the success it was seen as having in preventing the Coalition Government from reintroducing up front fees. The student strike in 1976 and the big no fees campaigns of 1981 were followed by renewed attempts to strangle AUS through legislation.

*Acts Amendment (Student Guilds and Associations) Act 1977.* (Western Australia). Passed in 1977. Retained compulsory student fee. Prevented use of compulsory student funds to be used for membership payments to the Australian Union of Students. WA student organisations for a while exploited a loophole in legislation and used trading profits to pay membership fee.

*University of Melbourne (Amendment) Act 1978.* (Victoria) Passed in 1978. Maintained the university's power to levy a compulsory fee but added that the fees had to be spent on bona fide purposes of direct benefit to the university. The Student Representative Council, however, could not use money from the compulsory fee unless 25% of students voted in its elections. When the University Council ruled that AUS provided a direct benefit to the University the Victorian Government moved additional legislation. The university was forced to provide an opt-out of AUS clause on the enrolment forms. Only 15% of students opted out. The Liberals attempts to introduce full blown VSU was defeated when it was chucked out of court (see Kaye No.2).

*Post-Secondary Education (Amendment) Bill 1981 (Victoria)* Bill extended Melbourne Uni provisions to other Victorian campuses. Bill was passed by both houses but had not been enacted by the Governor when the Cain Labor Government was elected which repealed the legislation.

*Australian National University (Amendment) Act 1981; Canberra College of Advanced Education (Amendment) Act 1981 (ACT)* The ACT campuses were under the legislative jurisdiction of the Commonwealth. The Fraser Government passed legislation banning student organisations from paying membership fees to AUS and prohibited the use of the services and amenities fees being used for socio-political activities.

This legislation was repealed as Labor Governments swept into office during 1982-3 federally and in four states.

There were also attempts by conservative students to bring in voluntary student unionism through the courts. There were numerous legal challenges whose main aim appeared to be aimed at preventing student organisations paying membership fees to AUS. The most significant of these were:

*Harrison v Hearn 1972*, NSW Equity Court. Conservative students sought an injunction restraining the Macquarie University Student Council (MUSC) from providing the La Trobe SRC with financial assistance on a legal case (the administration had frozen its funds following a student occupation). The judge ruled that democratic mandate and standard financial accountability were not the only check on the range of expenditures that MUSC could make. The MUSC could only use funds for the promotion of the interests and welfare at Macquarie University. Fortunately the judge ruled that MUSC was allowed to provide funds for the La Trobe SRC's legal case as the issue was of direct interest to Macquarie students.

*Clark v Melbourne University No. 1, 1977*, Victorian Supreme Court. The "Kaye" judgement. Liberal student Robert Clark challenged the power of Melbourne University to collect the student service fee, the right of University Council to pass some of this money on to the SRC, and the right of the SRC to pay some of that money to AUS. Kaye ruled that the student service fee was not a fee for services provided but was in the nature of a levy of a tax or charge. Kaye also ruled that the University was a 'public authority exercising legislative powers' (ie governmental). To levy a tax or charge a public authority requires specific legislative authority from parliament. In the absence of this specific approval it was *ultra vires* (beyond the powers) for Melbourne University to collect a student service fee as a condition of enrolment.

*Farrell v Mulronev and others, 1978*, NSW Equity Court, The "Rath" judgement. UNSW Liberal student Mike Farrell tried putting on UNSW a similar writ to Robert Clark's. Farrell argued that the university could only levy a charge for services provided by the university. The judge ruled that the university was made up of bodies with different interests (students, academics, administration). Therefore a facility provided by a student union was as much a part of the university as a service provided by the university administration. The judge also emphasised the political/representative side of student organisations which he argued were established features of university activity and were clearly part of a 'nexus' consistent with the objects and purpose of the University. The judge ruled against Farrell and awarded costs against him.

*Clark v Melbourne University No. 2, 1978*, Full Bench of Victorian Supreme Court. This case has become the established legal precedent. It overturned the *Kaye* judgement. The Full Court ruled that Kaye had erred in ruling that Melbourne University required specific legislative authority to charge a student service fee as a condition of enrolment. Instead it found that the University was empowered to do everything necessary for the proper maintenance of affairs of the university so long as it did not conflict with existing statutes. The Full Court also rejected Kaye's definition of university governance as being 'governmental' in nature. Instead it exercised powers of self government affecting only those who chose to become members of the university through enrolment or the acceptance of employment or office within the university. In essence the Full Bench ruled that the individual opts to enter the university, in this case through enrolling as a student, and as such accepts the conditions of participation, which includes the student service fee. The element of voluntarism, so crucial to the VSU case was ruled to be at the point of entry to the universi-

ty since no-one is compelled to make that choice.

The defeat of the Liberal students in the *Rath* judgement and the appeal against the *Kaye* judgement put a stop to the wave of juridical action for a time. The Liberals switched their focus to smashing AUS through legislative and political means. The AUS finally collapsed in 1984. The formation of the National Union of Students in 1987 and the predominance of pro-student union ALP Governments saw a couple attempts by conservative students to set a new legal precedent for VSU in the late eighties.

*Harradine v University of Adelaide No. 1*, 1988, South Australian Supreme Court; *Harradine v University of Adelaide No. 2*, 1989, South Australian Full Court. Law student Brendan Harradine, who appears to have been an aggrieved individual rather than a Liberal, argued that the university lacked the power to charge a Union Fee because (a) this constituted compulsory unionism, (b) constituted a tax, (c) contravened the Universal declaration of Human Rights on Freedom of Association and (d) were *ultra vires* because the University had no express power to use its powers over another incorporated body (the Adelaide University Union). The judges rejected Harradine twice and reaffirmed the key points of *Clark v Melbourne University No. 2*, and ruled that the United Nations Declaration is not part of domestic law in any Australian jurisdiction.

*Kenmar v Pritchard and Monash University*, Victorian Equal Opportunity Board, 1989 Stephen Kenmar claimed that he was discriminated against by compulsory student unionism which obliged him to pay fees which were in part payable to the Monash Association of Students which pursued political lines he was opposed to. The University had refused his enrolment because he refused to pay that proportion of the fee that went to the Students' Association. Kenmar's legal representative was Peter Costello (now Federal Treasurer). The EO Board ruled that Kenmar had not been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of his political beliefs. Kenmar's application for enrolment was rejected not because of his political views but because there was a rule that applied to everyone enrolling that they had to pay the prescribed fee. The Board was not satisfied that refusal to join the Students' Association constituted a political activity in itself.

The failure of the Harradine and Kenmar cases led to cessation of litigative attempts for several years. However, the election of Liberal State Governments in Victoria and Western Australia in the early 1990s saw two quite different legislative frameworks emerge.

# HISTORY PART 2

## The Western Australian Experience of VSU

### The Legislation

As discussed previously prior to the 1990s Western Australia had a limited form of anti-student organisation legislation in place from 1978 to 1982, whose main impact had been to prevent payment of membership fees to the national student union of that time, the Australian Union of Students. Shortly before the Liberal government lost power in 1982 it had been looking at legislating for voluntary student fee ('full blown VSU'). This was taken up again in 1993 after the Liberals were re-elected.

*Acts Amendment (Student Guilds and Associations) Act 1994* (WA, so called 'full blown VSU')

- o It is not compulsory for any student to be a member of a student association;
- o It is not compulsory for a student to pay any fees to a student association or any service not directly related to an educational course provided by the university;
- o Criminal penalties for anyone who discriminates against non-members;
- o The removal of the Guild President as a member of University Council

In 1995 and 1996 the Guilds received compensatory 'SOS' funding from the Commonwealth. While the VSU was being debated in WA parliament the ALP Federal Government inserted a section in the *State Grants (General Purposes) Act 1993* to 'protect the right of higher education institutions to decide the most appropriate range and level of services and amenities for their students'. The Commonwealth would compensate student organisations for income lost due to state VSU legislation and also gave itself the power to reduce its grants to the offending state by that amount. This effectively meant that state Liberal governments would themselves be compensating the student organisations for income lost due to the legislation.

In 1995 the SOS funding provided the Murdoch University Guild of Students with \$725,328, the Edith Cowan University Student Guild with \$1.54m and the Uni of WA Guild of Undergraduates with \$1.56m. The corresponding SOS income in 1996 was Murdoch (\$693,657), Edith Cowan (\$1.2m), Curtin (\$1.82m), and the Uni of WA (\$1.66m).

The SOS funding was suspended following the election of the Howard Government, although the payments for 1996 were made to those campuses that got in their applications before the change. The full impact of VSU legislation came into force in 1997. This full VSU regime operated from 1997 until the end of 2002.

A change of government in WA led to a partial and protracted repeal of the VSU legislation. There was a common view amongst Labor MPs that a full repeal would mean that as soon as the Liberals returned to power that they would reinstate full VSU thus putting the Guilds in a state of permanent restructuring. The Liberals remained committed to full VSU but the 2002 repeal legislation was framed in terms of voluntary membership but a compulsory fee with the Guild receiving fee income equivalent to those who chose to join. NUS and CAPA employed a series of VSU project officers and consultants to assist Guild representatives with the lengthy process of the repeal. The final fruit of these efforts was the *Acts Amendments (Student Guilds and Associations) Act 2002*.

*Acts Amendment (Student Guilds and Associations) Act 2002*

- o It is not compulsory to be a member of the Student Guild;
- o An annual amenities and services fee shall be set at an amount approved by the University Council, after receiving a recommendation from the Student Guild;
- o The amenities and services fee is payable to the university council by each enrolled student, except stu-

dents exempted from doing so, or made ineligible by statute;

o The University Council shall pay to the Student Guild a percentage of the amenities and services fee collected that is not less than the percentage of enrolled students who are members of the Guild;

o Regardless of the number of enrolled students who are members of the student guild, the percentage of the collected amenities and services fee paid to the Student Guild must exceed 50% of those fees;

o The part of the amenities and services fee not paid to the student guild is to be spent on student amenities and services in the manner agreed by the Council and the Student Guild

## The Impact

The legislation in place during 1994 - 2002 was full blown voluntary student unionism where students sign opt-in clauses for the Student Guild at enrolment and only pay a Guild fee if they opt for membership.

The initial take up rates in 1995 were:

Curtin	10%
Edith Cowan	13%
Uni of WA	28%
Murdoch	38%

Even before VSU the structure of the student organisations in Western Australia was unusual in that all campuses had unitary Student Guilds (combining representation, commercial services and recreation/sporting clubs in one body) rather than split structures common at many interstate campuses. In VSU terms this provided one advantage in that the student organisations did not have to go through the painful and protracted process of mergers in order to be able to offer students a straightforward membership package combining representation and services.

Interestingly where the Guilds initially tried to recruit members on the basis of being an apolitical service provider (Curtin and Edith Cowan) the take up rates were low, while at Murdoch where the membership drive was more political, based on fighting for student rights, the take up rate was much higher. UWA went with a mixture of both approaches and ended up with the middle range of membership despite having the most extensive range of services.

The full impact of VSU came into force in 1997 after the withdrawal of the SOS funding. Guild membership fluctuated in WA, before stabilising with between 35% to 6% membership rates, Guild fees halved and there was an emphasis on members discounts and price incentives to join the Guild. Membership rates were highest amongst first years and dropped in later years. In 1999, the membership rates were:

Edith Cowan	6%
Curtin	30%
Uni of WA	30%
Murdoch	35%

Most of the commercial services continued to operate after 1997 but the profits were insufficient to continue to the comprehensive range of non-cost recovery services, publications and advice/support normally offered by the guilds.

In some cases the universities had to step in to provide financial assistance to the guilds to ensure the maintenance of a basic level of student services, and in the case of Edith Cowan the university took on a role the role of direct administration after the Guild collapsed. The expense of this is borne by the universities, resulting in reduced funding for core academic programs like teaching and research. The Acting Vice-Chancellor of Edith Cowan University advised a Senate Inquiry that in 1998 the university had provided

\$100,000 to the Guild to support a limited range of representational, social and cultural activities and the orientation program. While this put pressure on funding for its academic program, the university saw no alternative to this expenditure if the university was to remain competitive locally, nationally, and internationally. The university made significant financial commitments to the student newspaper, an education and welfare, research officer, postgraduate support staff, international student council, sport facilities, personal accident insurance, off campus housing advice and student amenities.

The Murdoch Guild of Students, which in 1999 had the highest membership base, told *Campus Review* that its financial status was 'stable but heavily reliant on university income'. The university funded the orientation week, sport affiliations, and also some postgraduate and international student support. At the University of Western Australia the university took over the sport facilities and the women's research/sexual harassment support was integrated into the university's equity office. Curtin University took direct control of campus tours and provided funding for international and postgraduate students.

Impact of VSU on student services at WA universities

### **Curtin University**

Academic Rights Support - reduced  
Welfare Officers - reduced  
Full Programme of Cultural Events - discontinued  
Women's Rooms - discontinued  
Weekly Campus Newsletter - discontinued  
Policy support for student reps - discontinued  
Women's Department - discontinued  
Environment Department - discontinued  
Orientation Camp for First Years - discontinued  
Funding for Clubs and Societies - reduced  
Student Emergency Loans - discontinued  
Disabled Students Department - discontinued  
Sexuality Department - discontinued  
Sport Library - discontinued  
Subsidised Catering on Campus - discontinued  
Student Conference Funding - discontinued  
Student Publications - reduced  
International Student Campaigns and Projects - reduced  
Activities -reduced  
Postgraduate Support - reduced  
Regional Campus Funding -reduced  
Affiliation Fees to NUS - unable to pay  
Affiliation Fees to Sports Peak Body - unable to pay

### **Edith Cowan University**

Academic Rights Support - lost at undergraduate level  
Welfare Officers - retained only through university funding position directly  
Guild Service Centres - discontinued  
Full Programme of Cultural Events - discontinued  
Women's Rooms - discontinued  
Weekly Campus Newsletter - discontinued  
Policy support for student reps - discontinued  
Women's Department - discontinued  
Environment Department - discontinued

Orientation Camp for First Years - discontinued  
Funding for Clubs and Societies - discontinued  
Student Emergency Loans - discontinued  
Sexuality Department - discontinued  
Subsidised Catering on Campus - discontinued  
Personal Accident Insurance - discontinued  
Off Campus Housing Advice - discontinued  
Student Conference Funding - discontinued  
Student Publications - reduced  
International Student Campaigns and Projects - reduced  
Activities -reduced  
Postgraduate Support - reduced  
Regional Campus Funding -reduced  
Affiliation Fees to NUS - unable to pay  
Affiliation Fees to Sports Peak Body - unable to pay

### **Murdoch University**

Academic Rights Support - discontinued  
Welfare Officers - reduced  
Guild Service Centres -discontinued  
Full Programme of Cultural Events - discontinued  
Policy support for student reps - discontinued  
Women's Department - discontinued  
Environment Department - discontinued  
Orientation Camp for First Years - discontinued  
Funding for Clubs and Societies - reduced  
Student Emergency Loans - discontinued  
Sport Library - discontinued  
Subsidised Catering on Campus - discontinued  
Sexual Assault Referral Service - discontinued  
Off Campus Housing Advice - discontinued  
Student Conference Funding - discontinued  
Student Publications - reduced  
International Student Campaigns and Projects - reduced  
Activities -reduced  
Postgraduate Support - reduced  
Regional Campus Funding -reduced  
Affiliation Fees to NUS - unable to pay  
Affiliation Fees to Sports Peak Body - unable to pay

### **University of Western Australia**

Academic Rights Support - reduced  
Welfare Officers - reduced  
Guild Service Centres - discontinued  
Policy support for student reps -  
Women's Department - partly integrated into university equity office  
Funding for Clubs and Societies - reduced  
Student Emergency Loans - discontinued  
Disabled Students Department - discontinued  
Subsidised Catering on Campus - discontinued  
Sexual Assault Referral Service - reduced  
Student Conference Funding - discontinued



Student Publications - reduced

International Student Campaigns and Projects - reduced

Activities -reduced

Regional Campus Funding -reduced

Affiliation Fees to NUS - unable to pay

Affiliation Fees to Sports Peak Body - unable to pay

# HISTORY PART 3

## The Victorian Experience of ASOL

### The Legislation

Victoria had an alternative form of anti-student organisation legislation. When the Kennett government was elected in 1992 it pursued a different path from Western Australia. It still wanted students to pay for essential services but wanted to restrict the range of activities that student organisations undertook, particularly those perceived to be damaging to the conservative governments.

#### *Tertiary Education Amendment Act 1994*

- o Universities and TAFEs still able to charge compulsory student service fee for services, but the services can only be those listed in the Act or specifically approved by the Education Minister;
- o Automatic membership of student organisations is banned;
- o It is unlawful for the university to discriminate against non-members provided they have paid the approved fee;
- o The approved services were: food services, meeting rooms, sports and physical recreation, child care facilities, counselling, health care, legal, health, housing and employment services, visual and performing arts and audio-visual media, academic support and overseas student services.

The regulations required universities to negotiate funding agreements with the student organisations to ensure compliance with the Act. There were provisions in the Act for the list of approved services to be extended but only on recommendation from Victorian Vice-Chancellors.

In 1995 the approved services were expanded by the *Tertiary Education (Student Representation) Regulations 1995* to include the conduct of student elections to university council and its committees, and other management committees of the institution.

The election of the Bracks ALP Government in 1999 did not lead to a repeal of the legislation as the balance of power in the upper house was held by several conservative independents. Instead under the *Tertiary Education Regulations 2000* the list of the approved activities were extended again to include:

- o student publications, including student newspapers that meet generally accepted community standards including accuracy and fairness;
- o clubs and societies for students;
- o student elections;
- o opinion surveys, research, and other facilities, services and activities that provide for the consideration of issues relevant to student welfare.

This was soon superseded by the *Tertiary Education Act 2000* which substantially amended the VSU Act - including removing the section prescribing the list of approved activities. The new arrangements became:

- o post-secondary education institutions are allowed to charge a compulsory amenities fee so long as it was used to provide 'facilities, services or activities of direct benefit to students at the institution';
- o post-secondary education institutions must ensure that a student who does not wish to be a member is provided with an opportunity to do this at the time of enrolment;
- o that the governing body of a post-secondary education institution must ensure that the institution's annual report includes a financial statement about compulsory non-academic charges payable in the preceding financial year.

Note that the landmark VSU court case of the late 1970s *Clark v University of Melbourne* (Victorian Supreme Court) ruled that payment of affiliation fees to a national student union was a service of direct benefit to students at that institution.



## The Impact

The Kennett legislation was in operation from 1995 to 2000 was aimed at student representative activities, particularly areas that might criticise government policy.

**1994 Victorian students protest Kennett Government decision to gag student voice through so called Voluntary Student Representation**

Non sporting clubs, women's support services and newspapers were also excluded. Student representatives argued that this legislation violated the principle of no taxation, without representation. Students still had to pay the fee, but the Government determined what students could do with their own money.

The legislation was implemented in Victoria by universities forcing student organisations to sign funding agreements restricting what they can spend their money on, before the universities hand over the money collected at enrolment. In effect the universities were turned into the watch dogs and enforcers for the Kennett Government.

As in Western Australia the Victorian campuses were initially eligible for the Student Organisation Support Program (SOS) compensatory funding. In 1995, Melbourne University Student Union received \$1.23m, and Swinburne Student Union (\$71,619). In 1996 the Ballarat Students' Association received \$117,133, Victoria University of Technology Western Institute Student Union (\$53,686) and La Trobe Students' Representative Council (\$573,436). Some Victorian student organisations did not get their applications processed for 1996 funding before the Howard Government suspended the program.

Unlike Western Australia after 1996 student organisations generally continued to offer a comprehensive range of services, representation and maintained staffing levels. Voluntary membership in 1996 ranged from 60-70%, with the highest membership rate being at Melbourne University (85%). Some campus organisations have restructured their operations so that students only have minority representation at the top level (for example at Monash). The funding agreements and the extent to which the institutions rigorously enforced them varied from campus to campus. Things that were not on the list of approved activities such student newspapers, honouraria for student representation and payment of affiliation fees to bodies like NUS tended to be funded out of profits generated from commercial activities. Having to draw on commercial profits was restrictive in that there was less revenue available than before and some things were defunded. Victorian representative bodies also were often granted partial fee waivers on their NUS affiliation fees due to the impact of VSU. Nevertheless the campus experience of most students was much less affected than in WA.

# HISTORY PART 4

## Recent Federal legislation and the ACCC case

Universities apart from Australian National University and the Australian Maritime College are established under state and territory acts. Commonwealth Governments have used its funding of universities and its constitutional powers in some circumstances to override state laws to have leverage on these matters. The Liberals first flagged using Commonwealth powers in John Hewson's *Fightback* package for the 1993 election. Then the ALP used Commonwealth powers to provide the SOS funding in 1995 and 1996 and to override state laws forbidding student organisations from receiving these funds. In 1999 the Howard government introduced legislation using Commonwealth funding powers to introduce WA style VSU.

### *Higher Education Funding Bill No. 1 1999*

o Amended the Higher Education Funding Act;

o The institution does not make it a condition of enrolment of a student at the institution that the student be or become a member of an association; and

o The institution does not collect from a student any amount that is required to be paid as a condition of enrolment of the student for an educational course provided by the institution; and is not directly related to the course;

The Bill passed the House of Representatives but the Government did not force a vote on it as it formed part of the GST deal with the Democrats. The Government would have needed the support of two independent senators: Brian Harradine and Mal Colston. When lobbied Harradine indicated that he supported compulsory student unionism. The state Liberal parties in Tasmania and South Australia also opposed the bill and voted in support of state parliament motions opposing the federal legislation. The latest fine-tuning of VSU came out of the Nelson review of higher education. When NUS met with Minister Nelson in 2002 he said that he preferred the Victorian model but the Cabinet wanted a WA style legislation similar to that put forward in 1999.

The Federal Government hoped that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) would remove the need for legislation by ruling that universal student amenities fees were illegal under the *Trade Practices Act*. The act prohibits certain types of anti-competitive conduct. Section 47 of the Act deals with exclusive dealing (a person placing restrictions on another person's freedom to choose who to deal with). 47(6) and (7) of the Act deal with a specific form of exclusive dealing called third line forcing. Third line forcing involves conduct where a supplier supplies goods or services on the condition that the purchaser on the condition that the purchaser acquires goods and services from another person. It was argued that James Cook University may be engaging in unlawful activity by making the membership of the James Cook University Students' Association and payment of the association's services fee as a condition of enrolment at the university (albeit subject to existing exemptions on conscientious and religious grounds). In short it was argued that the James Cook University may be unlawfully coercing its students into being members and purchasing service from another body, the James Cook University Students' Association (This is predicated on the notion that Students' Association is not considered to be part of the university for the purposes of the Act).

James Cook University applied to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) for immunity from possible litigation on the grounds that the public benefit arising from its conduct outweighs any public detriment (notified conduct). The University argued that the Students' Association provided a range of services and activities that were essential to the functioning of the university such as academic support, welfare services, student representation, childcare, legal advice, sport and recreation facilities, meeting rooms and food outlets. The university received a temporary exemption from possible litigation

while the ACCC considered the matter but had an unfavourable initial ruling. NUS, JCUSA and JCU launched an appeal in late 2002 that won. As well as welfare support the key for the ACCC was the independent representation provided by the Association: "Since the draft decision new information was put as to why this conduct is in the public interest, including that there may be benefits in retaining the current arrangements which at least ensure the independence of the James Cook University Students Association in its representation of students."



1999 South Australian students protest against Dr. Kemp's A-SOL legislation threat

The victory in April 2003 was followed in August by new Federal anti-student organisation legislation. The 2003 legislation was specifically entitled *Abolition of Compulsory Up-Front Student Union Fees* in order to highlight the government's case against a possible constitutional challenge. In brief this argument was that the Commonwealth was exceeding its powers by attaching conditions to Commonwealth funding that were unrelated to the use of these funds. Correspondence from the Australian Government Solicitor revealed that the government would have argued that the legislation was constitutional using s.51 (providing benefits to students) and s.81 (appropriations power). The government would have argued that abolishing compulsory up front fees was providing a benefit to students in terms of making education more affordable. This paper makes no judgement about the legal validity of these constitutional arguments.

*Higher Education Support Amendment (Abolition of Compulsory Up-Front Student Union Fees) Bill 2003*  
 o Inserts a section into the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (the new funding act which replaced the *Higher Education Funding Act* from 2005)

*o A higher education provider must not have as a condition of its enrolment of a person with the provider a requirement that the person be or become a member of an association.*

*o A higher education provider must not collect from a person enrolled with, or seeking to enrol with, the provider any amount that: (a) is required to be paid as a condition of enrolment of the person in a course with the provider; and (b) does not relate directly to the course.*

VSU did not form part of the package of higher education changes passed on the last sitting day of 2003 due to the opposition of at least three of the four Independent Senators to VSU. The bill was debated several times in the House of Representatives in 2004 but no vote had been taken when parliament was dissolved for the federal election, thus lapsing the legislation. The legislation was not reintroduced when the new parliament convened late last year. The legislative impact of this bill would have been similar to the fee regime in operation in WA from 1997 – 2002. Two major differences need to be taken into account: all WA student organisations were unitary Guild structures when the legislation was introduced unlike the split between representation and services that is common in other states. Secondly a number of student organisations have had the university or a private company take over their most potentially lucrative commercial income streams such as food and liquor. This may make it difficult to establish the substantial members discounts the WA Guilds were able to offer in order to recruit membership or to have sufficient commercial income to subsidise non-commercial services and representation. The re-elected government has indicated that it will introduce VSU legislation although it is unclear what form it will take given the likelihood of some form of legislation being passed by an outright Coalition majority in the Senate after July 1 2005.

# ISSUES 1

## Membership of Student Organisations and Freedom of Association

*The public character of the association is restricted in that it could only be extended to those who voluntarily chose to become students at that university.”*

**Full Bench of Victorian Supreme Court definitive ruling against so called ‘voluntary student unionism.’**

The most common basic argument in favour of voluntary student unionism is that universal membership causes a public detriment in that it restricts student choice by requiring them to become members of the student association and thereby limits their freedom of association. Anti-student organisation legislation proponents are fond of claiming that student unions are an historical anachronism, the ‘last closed shop’ (conveniently forgetting all the closed-shop professional associations like the Australian Medical Association). Typically ASOL proponents have looked for moral backing for their position by citing United Nations conventions relating to freedom of association. Regardless of a utilitarian approach (such as that Australian Consumer and Competition Commission employed in their 2003 ruling that the public benefit outweighed public detriment) there are fundamental flaws in this style of freedom of association argument.

First of all it is important to be clear what issue is at stake here. The freedom of association refers to the positive right of individuals to form associations with anyone whomsoever one pleases. Strictly what the proponents of anti student organisation legislation are referring to is the negative right of association (or dissociation) – the right not to be compelled to associate with other person’s against one’s will. The distinction is important because there is a considerable body of law, human rights conventions and ethical argument in favour of the positive right to form associations, particularly in the context of repressive human rights and industrial laws in countries with oppressive regimes. Many proponents of the negative right of dissociation try conflating their arguments with the widespread support for legal and ethical arguments around the positive right of association. Issues around the right of dissociation are very different and should not be conflated with freedom of association.

Secondly public associations should be regarded differently from those associations established by individuals. There is a considerable body of case law, particularly in Europe, which draws an important distinction between associations of a private character (including political parties and trade unions) as contrasted to organisations formed pursuant to statute or of a public character. For

example the European Court of Human Rights and other courts have upheld the compulsory membership provisions of various professional associations as they were public institutions, established by legislation to take measures in the public interest. Similar arrangements are in place in Australia, such as the compulsory membership provisions of the Australian Medical Association, which produce the public benefit of ensuring that all doctors meet and maintain professional standards as determined by their peers.

This distinction between public and private associations is critical when considering the negative right of dissociation. If I set up a chocolate appreciation club on campus I could not compel everyone to become a member and pay money to me. If I attempted to I would be rightfully chastised for violating the right of dissociation of my fellow students. However, the student organisations on campus we know as Guilds, Student Associations, Student Representative Councils, Sports Associations or University Unions, are different in that they are public associations established to perform functions for good running the university (and in some cases created explicitly by state government legislation).

While NUS is not arguing that student associations are professional registration associations like the Australian Medical Association there is an important matter of principle transferable to these deliberations. For example the James Cook University Students' Association is clearly a public association (explicitly established by the Queensland Parliament through a division of the *James Cook University of North Queensland Act 1970*). It is also performing public functions delegated to it by the James Cook University Council which in turn performs functions delegated to it by the Queensland parliament (the objects of the Association set out in its constitution are determined by the University Council). In short the James Cook University Students' Association is a public association carrying out delegated public functions. In test cases in Sweden and England the public nature of the student associations has been upheld in courts as a key principle behind the retention of universal membership of student organisations in the face of freedom of association arguments.

Many student organisations are not explicitly created by Acts of state parliament but instead are created by statutes and regulations of University Councils. In

**“ Just as the debate over full fees places was bedevilled by deliberately misleading populist slogans, so too is voluntary student unionism promoted on specious grounds. It is not a question of whether individuals should be forced to join a union, and many supporters of voluntary student unionism are fully aware of that, but use the slogan nevertheless.”**

*Professor Gavin Brown, Vice Chancellor University of Sydney, in Sydney Morning Herald, November 2004*

these cases the public character of these student organisations flows from the powers delegated by state parliaments to university councils. The authoritative legal precedent in Australia is still that set in 1978 by the Full Bench of the Victorian Supreme Court in the *Clark v University of Melbourne* case (dealing with the universal membership provisions of the Melbourne University Student Representative Council). The court agreed that (1) public associations should be regarded differently from private associations for this purpose and (2) that the public character of student organisations could be granted by the university:

*(The) origin (of the University's powers) in an Act of Parliament places them on a different footing from the powers of the Committee of a voluntary association or of a corporation formed by the action of its members, but they have this in common with the latter powers that they cannot touch anyone who does not voluntarily bring himself within their reach.*

*The public character of the association is restricted in that it could only be extended to those who voluntarily chose to become students at that university.*

A third argument is that the retention of universal student membership of student organisations will continue to only confer rights rather than obligations on its members. For example it is a common practice at many Australian universities that students on admission to the university are also automatically made a member of their faculty. This 'compulsory membership' of faculties confers to students the right to elect or stand for election in faculty representative structures. Similarly the universal membership provisions of student organisations confer to members a right to have input into the decision making processes of student organisations or the university including the right to have a say in the nature of student services and facilities provided at the campus. NUS contends that automatic membership does not in itself establish a case that there is a public detriment.

It could be argued that a public detriment could arise if a public association compelled its members to take part in political activities that some of them did not support. There was a legal case in 1989 which sheds some light on this matter. Stephen Kenmar, a Liberal student from Monash University, claimed to the Victorian Equal Opportunity Board that he was discriminated against by compulsory student unionism in a manner that violated the Equal Opportunity Act. Kenmar was represented to the EO Board by legal advocate Peter Costello (now the Hon. Member for Higgins and the Federal Treasurer). During the preliminary conference with the EO Board on 22 April 1989 Kenmar objected to the payment of the general service fee on the basis that the fee was in part payable to the Monash Association of Students (M.A.S.). He based his argument on his political view that both the freedom of the individual to associate with those groups that he chose and his opposition to compulsory unionism put him at odds with the M.A.S., i.e that the M.A.S. pursued political lines and activities he was totally opposed to. Kenmar argued that the University by refusing to allow him the option of paying only that part of the Student Amenities Fee that did not go to the M.A.S. (ie the enrolment fee minus the \$42.34 that was allocated to the M.A.S.) effectively denied him both admission to the university and access to all the facilities of the University. The Commission in dismissing Kenmar's case that he was discriminated against ruled that:

*The M.A.S. is not a political body in the sense that a political party or some trade unions could be said to be in that its very nature of politics is capable of changing from one side of the political arena to the other depending upon the active members within it. The former bodies are inherently representative of one particular view of politics and their bodies reflect this...This feature of the M.A.S. was illustrated by evidence in this case that during 1986/7 the M.A.S. was effectively "controlled" by the Liberal Party of the university and after the elections in the middle of 1987 they lost control to the Labor Party. This very factor points up an essential difference between the M.A.S., a political party or a trade union... We consider that if union membership involves only minor participation in political activity, membership alone may not amount to engaging in political activity within the meaning of the Act...That involvement in the Union's political activities is not compulsory nor does it have any ramifications whatsoever for a student who does*



*not involve himself (sic) in these activities. There are no sanctions upon any member who fails to go to student general meetings or involve themselves in elections or in any committees of the M.A.S.*

The EO Commission contrasted this to a case involving a member of a trade union in a 'closed shop' workplace where the member was compelled against his wishes to make financial contributions to the ALP and to attend union rallies. While this ruling relates to the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act it is pertinent to this case in clarifying whether any real obligations arise from membership of student organisations. NUS contends that the absence of any real obligations arising from membership per se of the student organisations is highlighted by:

- Unlike ALP-affiliated trade union student organisations do not donate money to political parties;
- that student organisations cannot compel its members to take part in its activities or elections;
- the reality that the political make-up of the student organisation elected officers changes from election to election;
- that while individual students may disagree with a particular policy of a student organisation the public nature of the association means it cannot be reasonably inferred that a reasonable person would believe that all members of the association hold that view.

NUS acknowledges that there are some exceptional circumstances where a small number of students may experience a public detriment through universal membership provisions. For example some religions do not allow their adherents to become members of any association apart from their church. NUS recognises that it is appropriate that conscientious objection provisions are in place to deal with genuine conscientious objections to membership but that do not allow a free ride.

In summary NUS contends that as the student organisations:

- (1) are public associations;
- (2) and that universal membership of student organisations confers only rights (such as a right to vote or stand in election) rather than obligations, that there is no real public detriment arising from universal membership (with conscientious objection provisions).

The AVCC has tried to comply with the Howard Government's concerns about freedom of association by adopting a policy that all universities should have some form of mechanism where students can opt out of membership but still pay an equivalent fee (which normally goes to a university service). This meets the needs of those with genuine freedom of association objections without opening up the free ride option. Most universities have adopted some form of opt-out provision. At Western Australian and some Victorian universities the membership opt-out is easy as ticking a box on the enrolment form. The opt out processes at each university is outlined in the survey of student organisations at the end of this document.

Interestingly where the membership opt out provisions are relatively easy, but requiring more than ticking a opt-out box at enrolment (such as writing a letter to the Academic Registrar) that only a handful of students take up the option, Most ALSF members themselves don't take up the option, indicating that being oppressed by being granted universal membership rights itself isn't quite the burning issue made out in the ALSF's magazine *Protege* and their submissions to Government MPs. Despite the rhetoric freedom of association (dissociation) is not the primary issue. The real issue is the right of universities to impose some sort of near-universal fee for the provision of non-academic services, and that some of this money is subsequently passed to student governed organisations. The issue of the fee collected by the universities will be considered in a later section. Freedom of association has been used as a ploy to divert the attention away from complex issues associated with non-academic service provision at universities into a simple ideological choice of being for or against compulsion. While it wins ASOL supporters some easy support from the tabloid press the slogan does little to help a sensible policy debate on the best way to provide non-academic services and representation to students at Australian universities.

## ISSUES 2

# Are student organisations completely distinct from university educative processes ?

**In every university there are essential services and facilities that are provided for students which are both an important element in the social and cultural life of universities and a part of the education process. Such services are often provided by student organisations, some of which have existed for many years, and are considered to be an integral part of university life.**

*from Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee Policy on Student Organisations  
1998. Reaffirmed December 2004*

**The extracurricular activities provided by membership of a Students' Union...provide the opportunity to develop skills in leadership, teamwork, representation and social interaction which are invaluable to students in their careers and in their roles as citizens**

**Former ANU Vice Chancellor, Professor Terrell, 1999**

Recent anti-student organisation legislation has tried to make a division between fees for the course provision (such as HECS and full fees) and fees not directly related to course provision (such as student amenities fees). NUS contends this is a false division. Student organisations act in partnership with the formal academic side of campus life as part of the overall education process associated with a good university practices. As such there is a public benefit from this flowing to all students rather than a few. Some opponents of automatic membership of student organisations try to argue that there is a wall between the academic services provided by a university and the extra services provided by student organisations, like they are an optional premium. This is based on a fallacy that a good university education is just a series of discrete modules that the consumer can just mix and match in any way to come up with the package they wish to purchase.

While students do exercise choice over which university they attend and what degree they enrol in it must be remembered that universities are transformative institutions engaged in a broad process of education. They are more than just vocational and credentialing institutions. Universities have education mission statements where they outline the attributes they aim to be associated with graduates of a university. Typically these features include teamwork, leadership skills and being able to be an active citizen and contributor to the community. Student controlled organisations work in partnership with the formal side of the university to sustain a campus culture where these attributes can develop. Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors went on the public record when the government unsuccessfully attempted to introduce voluntary student unionism in 1999 to highlight the role that student organisations play in the broader education of university graduates:

At a time when the social fibre of the community is being atomised universities provide a valuable vehicle for the development of active citizenship. University student organisations are an example of an institutions which allow citizens to engage in the

debate and activities of direct relevance to them - look at the number of arts community, politicians, journalists, community leaders and sports people who gained their initial experience in student organisations. They act as a social equaliser by allowing people outside of traditional professional circles to get their foot in the door – whether it is putting on a comedy revue, learning layout skills with the student paper, getting up in front of student meetings to argue a point, or becoming treasurer of the cricket club. The lectures are the theory, the participation in campus culture is part of the practice - start of the training for how the future graduate should make a contribution to their society as an active citizen. No university can compel that all its graduates must become active citizens as a condition of enrolment anymore than it can compel its students to attend every lecture and tutorial. But it is an integral part of the education mission of our public universities.

This informal side of university education of the students should be conducted on a universal basis. The experience of VSU in Western Australia was that the bulk of those who took out membership were those from the wealthy backgrounds. The ‘optional extra’ style of argument is really an elitist argument that we should have a first class university education for high aspiring wealthy people to become community leaders and that everyone else should settle for a second class university education as a meal ticket. Such an outcome ends up reproducing generational cycles of privilege.

Some of the educational benefit from student organisations flows directly from the element of ‘student control of student affairs’. Students do not learn to become active citizens by being passive consumers of student services. By allowing an element of ‘student control of student affairs’ the universities are sending the message to their students that they are adults now and should be taking on responsibility for some aspects of their university experience beyond being mere consumers. In short graduates are being taught that they need to take control of their own destinies. They can have an impact through democratic processes. The replacement of student control of most of their services and facilities with paternalistic direct control by the university administration is sending a message that university students should be regarded as children unable to take responsibility for any part of their university experience outside their course choice. Both the graduates and the whole community benefit from breaking down a culture of passivism and paternalism. The nation benefits from the development of community leadership skills of our graduates.

**A university does more in offering education than offer course modules off the shelf. It offers a nurturing and supportive environment in which students can get the maximum benefit from the courses on offer and also from the experience of attending university. The university experience is essentially a community one and students gain life skills as well as academic education. If students at ANU were to get no more from their time than their course-work materials and a graduation certificate at the end, then the university would not have done its job properly...ANU's view is that the full range of services, including those to encourage a healthy lifestyle, should be available, from which students can choose according to their changing needs. The ANU model encourages a wide range of extra-curricular activities to ensure that students are able to access them when and as their interests direct. The choice of which activities they do access is entirely theirs.**

*Former ANU Vice Chancellor,  
Professor Terrell, 1999*



# ISSUES 3

## Tendering Commercial Student Services To Market Driven Providers

Minister Nelson has also floated the idea of going beyond WA-style VSU and tendering out commercial services to private companies such as Spotless. Actually the Minister is at least 20 years behind the time on this one as many universities and/or student organisations have been tendering out some of their commercial services for many years. There is already plenty of experience that shows the pitfalls of legislatively imposing compulsory tendering arrangements regardless of their appropriateness and viability.

Student organisations act as member organisations in the conduct of their commercial activities of rather than existing solely to make profit. They tend to balance profit-making practices alongside other objectives that the members want (even if they sometimes conflict with the maximisation of earnings). For example the members might want the services to be provided in the evening, or in isolated faculties or small associated campuses even though they cannot be delivered profitably. They might want a broader diversity of food even though it would be cheaper to offer a narrow range. Another big issue determining the appropriate range of services that should be kept running during the 4 months of each year when most undergraduate students are not on campus.

Student organisations that are engaged in substantial trading operations are hybrid organisations combining elements of market forces and democratic control by the members. There is a complex nexus between the representational activities of student organisations and the democratic control that students are able to exercise over student service provision.

Experience has shown that an external market-driven service provider does not necessarily deliver 'better services'. The reality has been in many cases that they deliver far fewer services and only at times and locations when it is profitable to do so. The current situation where representatives from the entire student body and associated interests (taking into account the professional advice of trading managers and the democratic input of members) are able to form better judgements about the viability of services or whether they can be contracted out than just leaving it to blind market forces. Student organisations also have a civic role to play in educating their members by acting as responsible employers of casual labour (such as paying award rates, OH&S, and following ethical investment and purchasing policies) as opposed to the dodgy, cash-in-hand black market that many students encounter in their off campus casual employment.

Pure market theory would decree that market-driven student organisations should set out to service the needs of those with the most money. Providing services to the needy would not be the cost efficient option because they often consume more services than the amount of fee they would be able to contribute. Hence they would push the fee level up and cause overall membership rates to drop. It is anathema to pure market theory that the wealthy should subsidise the needy. Services such as cheap or free childcare or welfare or lengthy academic advocacy cases are not efficient according to the market. In 1999 a certain Senator commented that he thought that VSU legislation in WA was good because the childcare service had been replaced by a hairdresser. Fortunately this sort of view is not shared by the bulk of the community. The pure market is not always the most efficient allocator of student service resources. There needs to be room for democratic judgement to find a balance between market forces and what is seen as fair and reasonable equity measures that the invisible hand of the market is blind to. Student organisations end up fixing up a lot of the problems for those who have fallen through the system either due to market failure or government/ university failure. NUS believes that it is quite appropriate for student organisations to try to help the disadvantaged successfully complete their university studies regardless of how much such cross-subsidies end up distorting the operation of pure student market.

Notwithstanding what was said above it is true that in some cases where it has been demonstrated that some student services can be delivered more effectively and cheaply to the members through an external private source then the services are contracted out. For example a typical case is the student association building at James Cook University where the coffee shop, hairdresser, travel agent and post office are run by private contractors. At many campuses the specialist food outlets are contracted out. However, as the student organisations remains in control of the contracts a vital element of democratic control remains. It is the student body that has decided to outsource the services and ensures an appropriate mix of student run/private so that the student organisation building isn't turned into an alienating shopping mall. Student facilities should remain a place where students can hang out without having to be constant consumers and are able to have reasonable avenues to promote their clubs and activities (private operators are notorious for refusing students the right to put out their newspapers, leaflets or posters).



**Many commercial services in university union buildings are already operated by external private providers**

In recent times some university administrations have tried to foist commercial providers onto a reluctant student body with dire consequences. For example Charles Darwin University the experience was that the two private providers tried out by the university raised the prices, cut the quality and then bailed out once they realised that they could not make a profit. The university ended up returning the services to the student organisation as it was the only realistically viable provider.

The Minister has made quite a few comments in the media that the recent troubles at Melbourne University Student Union (where as reported by *The Age* student services were allegedly tendered out to front companies linked to political associates and the services then sold again to off-shore companies) proves the need for commercial operations of student unions to be tendered out to commercial operators. Without in anyway commenting on the specifics of that case (which is currently before the courts) the alleged abuses highlight the opposite of what the Minister contends - a danger that tendering processes may be abused. Tendering out commercial services takes away public scrutiny and buries member control and information under commercial confidentiality provisions. The Minister might argue that the difference is that universities themselves would do the tendering but it is not axiomatic that a university official will never act inappropriately.

The Minister seems to believe that a board made up with a majority of twenty-something year olds can't run commercial services properly. In fact students have been running their organisations for longer than the Commonwealth of Australia has existed and with a far better overall track record of avoiding financial catastrophes than much of corporate Australia.

NUS believes that the element of democratic control the students are able to exercise over their facilities and services forms an important part of the civic education of university graduates. Furthermore it safeguards against the disruption and instability caused by private companies pulling out when the profits drop, and also possible corruption arising from confidential tendering of large commercial services. Student facilities should be seen as a student space, not a privatised shopping mall that just happens to be on a university.

There are other major practical difficulties. Student organisations around the country are very diverse on

matters like ownership of their commercial facilities. In some cases the university owns them. But in many cases the building and facilities are owned by the student organisations and paid for by decades of accumulated student contributions, operating profits and in some cases through direct bequeathments to student organisations. Another common model is where the university owns the bricks and mortars of the building but all the facilities and equipment inside have been purchased and owned by the student organisations.

The problem is fairly obvious despite frantic lobbying around parliament house by some companies hoping to get rich quick by being given control of someone else's property and facilities. Student owned property and facilities are not the government's to privatise, nor are they legally the university's regardless of their close association with student organisations. A requirement that all student organisation commercial facilities be tendered out to external providers is essentially state-orchestrated theft to enrich a third party. In moral terms would be the equivalent of a government seizing family homes to give to a private company to rent out and pocket the profits. Such a move would probably be unconstitutional - it hard to see how the 'providing benefit to students' loop-hole in the constitution could be used to justify the state seizing student's accumulated assets to enrich an external private operator and to prevent profits made from student commercial services being used to subsidise non-commercial activities such as welfare and academic rights services.

Aside from the legal and moral quagmire there is also the problem of the corporate raiders with no long term interest in being associated with the student body at a particular campus. Under the corporate raider model the aim is to win control of other organisation's assets through the tender process by offering the lowest quote through measures like cutting back opening hours, lowering the quality and diversity of food, not paying award rates and not providing for the long-term maintenance of facilities. Then run the facilities to the ground by running many of your off-campus operations through it. Then before a major re-investment in facilities is required then terminate the contract. The corporate raider has made a tidy profit while students are left to sort out the mess. In inter-generational terms a possible short term drop in student organisation fees is more than off-set by student's loss of control of the facilities and profits from decades of accumulated student investment and the future rundown of facilities due to corporate raiders.

The essential point is not being for or against tendering. Some private tenders have led to benefits to students and are a well-established part of campus life that work in partnership with student-run facilities. The mix at each campus is different but have evolved over the decades as a balance between cost-efficiency and the core mission of student organisations. The problem is a government legislating to impose compulsory tendering arrangements regardless of their appropriateness and without regard to the long term consequences for student culture and facilities.

# ISSUES 4

## Will voluntary fee payment make student organisations more efficient and effective ?

### Problems With Creating A Fully Fledged Student Services Market

Proponents of WA style VSU argue that there is a public detriment due to the lack of competition in the provision of student services. Former Commonwealth Education Minister, Dr. Kemp argued in 1999 that VSU will 'improve the quality of services provided on campus. When campus organisations cannot take their customers for granted they will have to provide a better service or they will lose those customers' . Underpinning this style of argument is the belief in a pure student market competition as the most effective provider of student services. This simplistic argument puts forward the contention that under voluntary student unionism that the membership can be won in two ways: on the basis of price or on the basis of quality or product differentiation. If we take the former, price, then the argument goes that the membership fee will presumably adjust downward until the foreseeable benefits of membership exceed cost. An organisation forced to reduce its membership fee on the basis of price competition will either reduce its budget (thus reducing the range of services it has to offer) or accept membership from outside. If we take the latter, quality differentiation, then it would still inevitably be competing on the basis of price, with the purchase decision dependent on the value per dollar provided by the purchase. For example you might choose between a hamburger or a restaurant dinner - you will have purchased food but of different sorts.

One of the biggest flaws is the difficulty any individual would have in making an informed assessment of the costs and benefits of membership at enrolment. While market theory seems to work when deciding between a Big Mac or a Whopper it is much more problematic when trying assess the massive package of services and representative functions on offer from student organisations. It is possible to calculate the cash value of some services: interest free emergency loans, student concessions and discounts, campus entertainment, equipment hire, lobbying to prevent the introduction of a course material fee, etc. But the actual usage of any individual is much harder to predict. Other services are tangible but not calculable: advice on academic problems, help on avoiding preclusion, study skills or safe sex advice. Still others are largely unobserved and incalculable: such as lobbying for a new assessment policy or for more flexibility on essay deadlines. The benefit potentially flows to all but no cash changes hands.

A related issue is the 'feel good - it won't happen to me' factor. It is a common phenomenon that students feel elated at getting into university or at having completed a successful year or two of study previously. Most students don't start the year believing that something will go drastically wrong. Student life is not predictable - just because you feel good at enrolment doesn't mean that something will not go wrong. You can never anticipate that Dr. X will try to hit on to you, or that you will be falsely accused of plagiarism, or that your parent will suddenly die and that you will need to apply for special consideration, or that your course will change half way through the year, etc. How can a student predict their need for a service in the future? It is for this same 'it won't happen to me' factor that drivers are forced to take out third party insurance instead of just relying on voluntary insurance schemes. Similarly Queensland has returned to a compulsory ambulance levy after the failure of the voluntary model.

Both these problems are further compounded by the transitional nature of the student population. While in a workplace over a number of months or years someone might be convinced in cost-benefit terms to join a trade union or staff association it is hard to see how a first year who has never studied at university could make an informed choice of the benefits of membership at enrolment. Roughly 40% of students at a campus in any particular year are studying for the first time. The transitional nature of the student population

makes it very difficult to establish the customer loyalty envisaged by the pure free market approach to student service provision.

Then there is the problem of the free ride. For example many people would agree that government services such as health and education are essential and important but also do everything they can to minimise the personal tax they pay to contribute to the funding of these services. A lot of the non-commercial activities of student organisations by their nature are particularly susceptible to the free ride.

Economists refer to a category of intangible services called 'public goods'. They are non-rivalrous in that the consumption of a particular public good by one person does not reduce the amount to be consumed by another. Campus representational services may be considered a pure public good in that all can benefit irrespective of membership status. Changes to assessment policies would be an example of this. As these goods are non-excludable voluntary membership opens up the possibility of 'free riders' who take advantage of the benefits but do not pay for them. Even with those services which are in theory excludable the cost of enforcing exclusion of non-members more expensive than the revenue collected. Free riders have the effect of putting up the price for those who do thus reducing the number of people who will pay because of price sensitivity. Thus the free ride opens up a vicious cycle which can wreck even the most efficient organisation.

Then there is inter-generational free ride problem. A survey by ACUMA conducted in 1999 found that student organisations had spent \$284.7 million on new buildings over the previous ten years. . Many organisations have substantial debts to universities to pay off these facilities. What happens to these debts now that comonwealth interference is removing any viable mechanisms to pay these debts off. . Also it is sound management practice to take into account generational issues when dealing with long standing assets. The loss of automatic membership would represent a massive generational free ride for student enrolling next year and beyond. On top of that the 'free ride' students get on past generations they would be avoiding making a contribution towards the maintenance of the facilities for future generations of students. In the long term it means badly run down student facilities. If a future decision restored automatic membership it would take an enormous amount to reverse the damage to campus infrastructure caused by a number of years of free riding. Former AVCC President, Professor Niland, correctly argues that the loss of automatic membership would represent an 'assault on our sense of inter-generational responsibility for the quality and diversity of campus life'.

**“It is essential that student organisations continue to contribute to the ethos of the universities in this way. To do so, however, they must have adequate funds at their disposal.”**

*from Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee Policy on Student Organisations  
1998. Reaffirmed December 2004*

**“That this house expresses its concern at the federal Liberal Government's attempts to outlaw compulsory student services and amenities fees and notes the detrimental effect that such a move would have on the ability of student unions to provide a wide range of essential services.”**

*Motion passed with the support of the Tasmanian Liberal Party MPs in Tasmanian House of Assembly, 1999*



**That this house -**

**(a) is committed to ensuring that South Australian university programs and students are not disadvantaged and is therefore opposed to voluntary student unionism; and**

**(b) recognises the valuable contributions that student organisations make to academic studies, acknowledges that university community encourages participation and development of tomorrow's community, social and business leaders and supports the universal contribution of all students in recognition of the services which are provided for the benefit of all students.**

Motion passed with bipartisan support in the then Liberal controlled South Australian House of Assembly, 1999

## **WA VSU model is becoming obsolete**

The Western Australian model of VSU based on voluntary Student Guilds is fast becoming obsolete in light of changes to higher education since 1994. It is no longer viable as a universal mode for non-academic service delivery at post-Nelson reform universities in theory, even disregarding the many practical difficulties faced by guild supporters in maintaining voluntary guilds between 1997 - 2002.

Under the WA model one of the key elements to maintaining a viable voluntary student guild was using profits from substantial commercial services or tenders to cross-subsidise non-commercial services such as welfare and assessment rights advocacy.

Due to partial indexation arrangements universities experienced a funding squeeze on the Commonwealth funding prior to the Nelson reform package (itself only a short-medium term partial relief). This led to some universities to seek new forms of commercial income by taking over direct control of the provision of lucrative food and beverage outlets in student union buildings. This has taken the form of university-run companies or tendering to outside. So for example at Monash University - Clayton, the University of Wollongong, and Griffith University the majority of the student amenity fee goes to a university run company. The new arrangements at University of Western Sydney mean that the bulk of the student amenities fee goes to a company with an equal number of university and student representatives on it. Following the well known meltdown of Melbourne University Student Union the bulk of the student amenities fee and control of the commercial services/tenders has gone to a university run company.

It is hard to see how a voluntary student guild would be viable on campuses where students no longer control substantial commercial services. As discussed above many of the benefits of representative functions (such as winning better assessment policies) are non-excludable and flow to non-members as much as to members. While they might survive in nominal terms it is hard to see such organisations having a sufficient and stable revenue base to be able to employ professional staff (thus denying students access to professional support services).

A second significant factor is the expansion of full fee paying places at Australian universities since the 1994 deregulation of postgraduate fees, the rapid expansion of the international student market and introduction of full-fee domestic undergraduate places. In total the full fee payers now amount to a third of all students. As under



**What will happen to university run non-academic services such as student support services ?**

the Nelson reforms future growth in the system is largely predicated on an expansion of full fee payers this percentage will increase over the next decade. These students are outside the 1974-2004 funding system where the the Commonwealth provided the funding to universities (albeit including a substantial contribution via HECS), and students paid a separate fee for non-academic services. In many cases universities already bundle the non-academic fees in with the academic fees so that international students are charged a single fee. There seems to be little to prevent universities from making similar bundling arrangements for non-commonwealth subsidised domestic postgraduates and undergraduates. Bundling would seem to create considerable legal ambiguity if the wording of the VSU Bill is similar to the previous 2003 version where fees must not be collected as a condition of enrolment for any amount that “does not relate directly to the course”.

The Government could develop a more precise bill that prevents the university from collecting any amount that does not directly relate to the cost of teaching that course. In effect the government could require that a university must unbundle all non-academic services from academic ones. However, this would open up many cans of worms far removed from the ASOL supporters original intent of smashing compulsory unionism. There are many cross-subsidies within university. Do university run equity offices, student counsellors, alumni organisations, and ground maintenance staff fit into academic services or non-academic services. If they are then why aren't welfare and student assessment rights staff in student organisations. Why aren't the Sports Associations which often manage the university grounds. Is the library directly related to the cost of providing a particular course ? What about the salaries of university administration staff and officers, or membership fees to the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee, and so on ? Why not go the next step and start unbundling academic services so that students only pay for the lectures they need to go to pass their exam and not worry with all that frivolous stuff about getting a broad understanding of a discipline? After all it all about creating more choice, isn't it...let's forget about the quality of graduates.

Andrew Norton has some very interesting things to say about bundling and the WA style VSU in the

ALSF magazine *Protege*. Norton is no friend of the student left. He is a former adviser to the previous Education Minister Dr. Kemp, works for the new right think tank, the Centre for Independent Studies and is a crusader for more radical deregulation of higher education. However, he is one of the few Liberals who has publicly tried to move beyond sloganeering to thinking about some of the complexity of non-academic service delivery in the post-Nelson reform higher education sector (albeit from his radical free market viewpoint),

Norton's starting point is that the producer (universities) and the consumers (students) know best what they want. He points out that bundling is common in the commercial world such as the case where telephone, internet and cable tv services are bundled into a single fee. He is opposed to state intervention which would prescribe what services could be bundled into a package to be put on the market. In discussing the WA model Norton goes on to argue that:

*“We are getting a long way here from a simple case of freedom of association. In fact we are proposing a significant restriction on freedom of contract, the right of producers (universities) to offer consumers (students) goods and services and for the two parties to decide the terms and conditions of their transaction.”*

Norton sees some positive benefits from universities bundling their services:

*“In the university context, the most important argument for bundling is that it encourages students to use the services. A sunk cost tuition fee removes financial disincentives for people to go to lectures, use tutors etc; which they may not do if there was a fee for every service (sunk costs are particularly useful where there is short term pain for long term gain; that's why it's better to pay gym fees per month rather than per visit). Similarly, for those universities trying to create a 'campus experience' providing campus services for free or for low cost encourages more participation than would occur if students had to pay each time they used a service.*

*Though encouraging use of services and facilities is the main reason for universities to bundle them, there are other justifications. Wider use of services can create economies of scale, reducing per student costs, flat fees for a range of service can cut transaction costs. Students do not need to incur search costs to find the appropriate service provider; they just use the service the university offers. Universities don't need to monitor usage of services carefully or collect money separately for them; students don't need to waste time paying for each lecture. Though no one individual necessari-*

ly uses all the services in the bundle, packaging them together can make most people better off.”

For Norton the choice occurs through a fully fledged education market in which students determine which bundle they wish to purchase. If they want to go to a status university offering something like a Harvard-Oxford ‘campus experience’ they can do so. If they don’t want that at the other end of the spectrum are new stripped down private providers operating from rented offices and the internet. And there would be many shades of higher education providers in a continuum between the two extremes.

VSU supporters at the status universities become classic ‘rivers of lemonade’ free ride utopians. They want the status and leadership and personal development opportunities of a Harvard-Oxford model of campus life but they also want legislation that effectively prevents the necessary conditions for this to occur. Norton’s argument is interesting in that it highlights the divergence between free marketers and conservative centralists who want to impose mediocrity. While the free marketers embrace the diversity and increased market choices arising from the Nelson reforms (and further subsequent deregulation already flagged by the Minister) on the other hand the conservative centralists are effectively pushing for VSU legislation which prevents any Australian university from aspiring to offer Harvard-Oxford campus-experience model, The non-viability of the WA style model of VSU (discussed below) as a national model dooms campus life at Australia’s public universities to mediocrity and a narrow ‘shopping mall’ experience compared with higher education elsewhere. Perversely what is claimed to be an argument about giving students choice in reality may end up removing student choice.

Norton proposes an alternative model where student association membership is voluntary, that universities be allowed to bundle services as they see fit, but would only be allowed to charge one compulsory charge (ie no separate amenities fee). Norton see that it is desirable that university administration should be able to shift resources between academic and non-academic services as they see fit. To remove the up front problem Norton also proposes that the fees be included as part of the HECS deferred payment arrangements which could be done by an increase in maximum student contribution amount specified in the *Higher Education Support Act*.

There are a number of problems with Norton’s alternative model:

-It undermines the independent representation and advocacy of student organisations who sometimes have to go against the wishes of the administration to further the interests of their members;

-It potentially pits students against staff where a successful wage outcome by academic staff is paid for by cutting for by cuts to student welfare and advocacy support;

-Away from the high status universities students at other institutions will be left with little or no welfare, academic or consumer rights support.

One final point should also be mentioned here. The Minister has been using the argument that the survival of the Guilds in WA during the full blown VSU period shows that the basic services student want or need will continue to exist. However, there are of particular factors which need to be taken into account if one is looking at to a national VSU model based on the WA model:

-The universities were willing and able to provide significant subsidies to maintain things like academic rights and welfare services, orientation programs, international student support, sports and women’s departments. Even if universities are not legislatively barred from funding such student services many will be unwilling to divert tight teaching and research resources into such activities.

-Inter-state student organisations provided subsidies to enable WA students to engage with their counter-

parts at national events through mechanisms such as conference travel VSU levies. NUS waived the entire affiliation fees for all the WA campuses during the full VSU period. Obviously national VSU renders such inter-state student subsidies useless

-As described above the Guilds were already integrated commercial and non-commercial services in a single body. On many campuses in other states the student organisations have split structures which will lead to considerable turmoil in 2006 as are forced organisations liquidate themselves into others.

- The three WA Guilds that survived intact had the benefit of running the major food and beverage commercial services on campus. This is not the case at several major campuses. Furthermore if the Minister legislates to force compulsorily tendering to external providers then the profits made from student use of commercial services will go to some corporation's profit rather than re-invested in the student body to subsidise non-commercial representation and services or to upgrade campus facility infra-structure. This would also render any talk of viable student guilds operating under WA-style VSU as completely irrelevant.

- The Guilds survived through drawing on historic reserves and assets. By 2002 the Guilds had largely exhausted these reserves which would have led to a further major reduction in their activities and services. In the long term the maintenance of the comprehensive range of services maintained by the Guilds could only have continued through significant additional subsidies from the universities,

In short WA style VSU cannot even in theory provide a viable national model for non-academic service provision at Australia's universities.

# ISSUES 5

## Abolishing the last compulsory up front fee ?

The lapsed 2003 legislation was specifically entitled 'Abolition of Compulsory Up-Front Student Union Fees'. The title encapsulates the Minister's argument that making student fees voluntary is an equity measure.

### Deferred Payment Options

Apart from the obvious riposte about the 2003 bill being in the same legislative package that increased student HECS fees by 25% NUS would like to put on record the flexibility of payment options available to students at most Australian campuses. In the majority of cases students are not required to pay an up-front fee.

Student organisations at almost all institutions offer some form of fee relief or staggered payment mechanisms for students who find themselves in financial difficulty. Options for payment available to students include staggered payment over a 12 months period, interest free loans from universities or student organisations and deferment of fees for a period of time.

NUS submits that it is inaccurate to characterise the service contribution as an automatic up-front fee in the majority of cases. There are however a small number of institutions at which students do not have access to other payment options. NUS concurs with Minister Nelson that more flexible payment mechanisms are highly desirable. However, ASOL with its anticipated disastrous impact on the vital services and representation that student organisations provide is in NUS's view an extreme way to respond to the problems experienced at a minority of institutions. Instead NUS submits that student organisations in conjunction with the AVCC and university administrations work towards installing more flexible and responsive payment options for students at all Australian universities.

### Discount contribution provisions for part-time and external students

Special reference has been made in the debate in parliamentary debates about ASOL that part-time and external students not receiving 'their money's worth' from student organisations, due to the limited time they spend on campuses. In the 1999 debate the Member for Sturt, Mr Christopher Pyne has stated that: *"There is an increasing proportion of students who study part-time or externally, yet they are forced to pay for services they cannot or need not access."*

NUS found that of student organisations surveyed the vast majority had taken this into consideration when designing payment levels. The University of Wollongong is the only campus with a flat fee structure for all undergraduates, and notably this is the campus where 85% of the fee goes to university service companies (perhaps highlighting that elected students are more concerned about fairness of fee arrangements than many university administrators). Part-time and external students, with one or two exceptions, are not required to contribute the same amount as their full time on campus colleagues. Where this is not the case NUS again suggests that a more appropriate mechanism for resolving this problem would involve student organisations and university administrations working together to ensure all part-time and external students contribute a discounted student organisation levy.

NUS wishes to make clear its commitment to the provision of representation and services for all students. Mature aged students, part-timers and external students are especially vulnerable to lack of knowledge of

services available, their rights as students, appeals procedures and have a feeling of general isolation. Student organisations have a proud record of easing this isolation through specialist orientation services, and providing information to and advocacy on behalf of these often marginalised students to universities. Distance education students find that having a professional academic rights staff member who is able to act on their behalf on the campus is extremely valuable and often short cuts being bounced around when trying to resolve an issue by phone or e-mail.

NUS submits that part-time students and mature aged students, far from subsidising their full-time on campus colleagues, often receive a cross-subsidisation in their direction instead, given that their contribution to the student organisations is in almost all cases a fraction of the full member contribution.

**from the Deakin University Students'  
Association website**

**New Distance Education Coffee Clubs**  
**Coffee Clubs are a great way to do some serious networking. Networking for learning purposes and for future career opportunities. Meeting with other distance students who understand the problems and issues of studying at a distance, discussing your learning, debating politics, sharing resources and experiences, participating in informal learning groups, finding study buddies, socialising, and maybe having a good old fashioned whinge about life in general.**

**You are not alone! There are 14,000 other Deakin distance students and chances are that there will be other distance students living near or adjacent to your area. As well as being a distance student become an active participating member of of the distance community. Interact online with students from all over the world and meet those student colleagues who are within your locale face-to-face at coffee clubs.**

# IMPACT 1

## Student Representation and Advocacy

**‘The government also needs to be cognisant of the fact that student representation on University committees and hence participation in decision-making, is integral to the effective administration of this institution. The promulgation of the amendments to the Higher Education Funding Act may create an institution which is less informed and thereby less responsive to customer needs’**

**Professor Alan Gilbert,  
former Vice-Chancellor, University  
of Melbourne**

University students have many different views and interests but they do share a common character pertaining to one simple fact - their formal enrolment at a university. A number of other common interests could be reasonably argued to flow from this. For example access to quality teaching or research facilities and programs, or fair assessment procedures. The existence of a universal ‘student body’ corporate has been recognised in the Australian courts. For example the landmark *Rath* judgement (which saw the NSW Equity Court reject a VSU case taken against the University of NSW) stressed that ‘students within these institutions have a corporate interest that differs from that of the teaching staff and the administration’ and that ‘this interest has been run through the operation of an organisation representing student interests.’ In short there is legal recognition of the existence of a universal student body with distinct interests from the university administration and that student representative organisations are the organisational expression of this body.

The most glaring faults of anti student organisation legislation may be its impact on student representation. In the ACCC case in 2002-3 involving James Cook University the Commission acknowledged that a public benefit arises from James Cook University Students’ Association being able to monitor the quality of education and facilities provided to students at James Cook University and providing advice to the university.

University administrators generally value the role that student representatives play providing information to university decision making bodies and taking part in discussions on how to go about making improvements. While there is a role for surveys and questionnaires they cannot replace effective student representation. For example a student member of the Academic Board may alert the Board to a developing problem before it becomes widespread and systemic. Student representation is also needed when formulating policy solutions on matters impacting on students. In many cases student representatives have played a major role in drafting fairer assessment, equal access and university discipline policies that have been adopted by universities. Student representatives are also needed to articulate and fight for interests of the student body when they are sometimes at odds with university administration (such as over HECS and fee levels). Student representation also pro-



vides an institutionalised process for negotiation and compromise between the university administration and the student body. Most critically student organisations have a degree of autonomy and independence from the university. Student representation on University Councils and Academic Boards/Senates allows the top levels of the university administration to be made aware of problems affecting students that may be inconvenient for faculty heads and middle managers.

A related public benefit is the advocacy and professional support for individual students when they have problems on matters such as enrolment, preclusion, appeals over grades or a chance to do a supplementary exam, sexual or racial harrasment, plagiarism and other disciplinary matters. Universities have generally developed quasi-legal processes to arbitrate on these matters and are designed specifically prevent lawyers from getting involved at this stage . This minimises the resort to very expensive legal avenues. The only beneficiaries from the erosion of the sytem of academic righs and support will be lawyers. Student organisations are integral in redressing the power imbalance between the university and individual student. Professional caseworkers employed by the student organisation develop the student's case and turn it into a form suitable for the relevant university arbitrating body. The caseworker also advocates alongside the student at the hearing if the student wishes. There is a further public benefit in the nexus the student advocacy work and student representation. Recurring problems arising from individual casework can be used to identify problems with university policies and procedures.

Supporters of voluntary membership of the student representative bodies argue that the public benefit arising from representation and advocacy will not be affected because students will still be able to join the association, and the student association will still be able to represent the interests of its members to the university.

There are a number of flaws in this view. The reality is somewhat more problematic even if we accept that the university administrations will always act in good faith and will continue to allow the association to speak on behalf of the student body, even if it only has a section of them as its members. For if there is no meaningful association for the students to join then the existence of a formal right to be able to join a student association is purely hollow.

To highlight this lets take the example of Western Australia. From 1997-2002 the legislative framework created the only Australian example of full blown voluntary student unionism (as opposed to restrictions being placed on the range of activities able to be funded out of the universal amenities fee). Unlike the rest of Australia Western Australian students at enrolment decided if they wanted to opt in to become members of the Student Guilds and also did not have to pay any amenities fee if they decided not to join the Guild. The universities acted in good faith in allowing the voluntary Student Guilds to continue their representative functions acting on behalf of the student body. However, the universities do not discriminate between Guild members and non-Guild members when it comes to implementing changes won by Guild representatives to university policies and decision-making. The nature of the public benefit flowing from student representation is essentially a public good and is often intangible in purely economic terms. For example a change to the assessment policies affecting supplementary exams won by a Student Guild must be applied to all students regardless of their membership of the Guild.

While campus culture has been seriously curtailed due to VSU the Guilds have survived at the University of WA, Murdoch and Curtin on the basis of offering a range of services and facilities including academic and welfare support, albeit substantially less than before. Guild representatives found that they had to do much more time marketing the Guild to potential members to keep it afloat than carrying out their normal representative functions. Also the there were insufficient funds to maintain employment of sufficient professional caseworkers to meet demand. In some cases the universities intervned and employed caseworkers directly to keep the quasi-legal system afloat. The collapse of Guild at Edith Cowan University, and the loss of functional student representation, was a warning of what can happen under VSU.

As discussed in ISSUES 3 one kind of ASOL that the Minister has been considering includes tendering commercial student services to private providers. This would prevent student organisations from adopting even the WA Student Guild model for survival. If the university takes over or tenders most of the core services and facilities then the student organisations will be left only offering voluntary student representation and perhaps one or two non-core services not taken on by the university. As we described above as student representation deals with intangible and/or public goods it is likely that only the most strongly community minded will join the association. While the association might survive at best in an extremely limited form, as essentially a voluntary club, it would not have the financial means to act as a stable employer. For example the association would no longer be able to employ professional research staff to assist the student representatives with the advice and submissions they provide to university and government bodies. Also the student organisation would no longer have a structural relationship with the whole student body. This would narrow the scope for the advice that the student organisation would be able to provide to the University Council and its advisory bodies. This issue is particularly pertinent at a multi-campus universities where the collapse of an effective student representative is most likely to be the most severe away from the main campus. The reality of the proposed ASOL will be the loss of any organised and effective capacity for student representation on the campus. At the end of the day the loss of effective student representation will lead the universities to make poorer decisions.



**'How are students' academic and consumer rights in Brendan Nelson's new deregulated and globalised higher education system going to be protected if VSU means that students don't have viable and effective campus and national representative structures ?**

NUS believes that there are deep structural obstacles to the university simply taking over the advocacy functions of student organisations without a major reduction in effectiveness. NUS is concerned that if the university takes over the running of student organisation's academic rights service it risks getting itself into the tangle of representing itself against itself. Under the current arrangements students have the confidence their academic rights advisers are sufficiently independent to be able to consistently advocate on their behalf. Even with the best of goodwill from the university it would be widely perceived to be have a conflict of interest. In some cases student grievances against university decisions lead to legal action. Do the ASOL supporters really believe that a university would be as prepared to support legal action against itself on behalf of an aggrieved student ? Do ASOL supporters really believe that the loss of independence will not lead in practice to a diminishing of the rights of the students? This would also break the nexus between advocacy and student representation to improve university assessment policies and procedures.

The legislation may also have a major impact on national representative structures. Many of the decisions that directly affect students are determined at a national level: university funding, Youth Allowance, Austudy, Abstudy, the regulation of HECS-HELP, FEE-HELP and other fees, postgraduate and equity scholarships, federal equity programs, student loans schemes and international student programs. There are four major national student representative bodies: NUS, Council of Australian Postgraduate Association (CAPA), the National Liaison Committee for International Students (NLC) and the National Indigenous Postgraduate Association Aboriginal Corporation (NIPAAC) . NUS and CAPA are voluntary federations of their member student organisations. The NLC does not charge membership fees and is dependent for the bulk of its funding on grants from NUS. NIIPAC is similarly dependent for its existence on CAPA funding.

The existence of NUS, CAPA, NIPAAAC and the NLC would be put at risk by a form of ASOL that prevented the payment of affiliation fees. Short of specific proscription a voluntary fee regime imposed on member organisations is likely to lead to most of them being unable to pay affiliation fees and the loss of national representation on national matters relating to student education and welfare. While VSU was in operation the Guilds were only able to remain members because NUS waived their entire membership fee. NUS and CAPA are financially dependent almost exclusively on membership fees so federal VSU legislation would mean that they would cease to have a significant income base.

No doubt many government supporters would celebrate the demise of a couple of the government's most persistent and trenchant critics. NUS has had a series of very public fights against the previous Hawke-Keating Government and the Howard Government, particularly over fee increases. However, behind the scenes the reality is a bit more complex. In the past NUS has successfully lobbied the previous ALP Government to lower the age of independent access to financial assistance from 25 to 22, and was a member of the Department of Education's Higher Education Council. NUS continues to be regularly called upon by Senators to appear before Senate committees to provide expert advice on education and welfare matters. Despite the public disagreements on many matters, NUS has been praised in parliament by the current Education Minister for its high level of involvement in the recent review of higher education and Minister Nelson invited the 2002 NUS President to make a presentation on alternative funding models to one of the the final closed meetings of the review committee (which we did). There are areas of agreement between NUS and the current Minister. The Minister invited NUS to take part in consultation process around the new Carrick Institute of Teaching and Learning, and he has also requested that NUS provide an indigenous student representative for the Higher Education Indigenous Advisory Council. Likewise the NLC is currently working closely with government to reform the ESOS Act in order to improve the situation for international students. The NLC President is on DEST's ESOS Evaluation Steering Committee.

There also have been some public benefit benefits arising from the robust political contestation between bodies like NUS and the Government over the future direction of our universities. For example the fierce debates over higher education receive much more attention than TAFE even though twice as many people do a TAFE course each year. In the last three or four years NUS has got much more skilled and diverse in its media strategy and in building links with school P&C groups. NUS receives queries from organisations with far more resources asking us how we maintain such a high media profile. The payoff has been that issues of university study debt, fees and access have moved out from being a discussion amongst specialists and the elites who read *Higher Education Supplement* and *Campus Review*. The media of the people who traditionally haven't seen university as part of their life choices (tabloid papers, talk radio) now give higher education much more attention. This can only help to promote a more informed on-going debate in the community about how we can open up higher education opportunities to those traditionally disenfranchised.

Another example is the final *Higher Education Support Act* (the Nelson reform package). At one stage the Minister and the AVCC had signed off on a deal that was claimed to be the best that the higher sector was going to get. However, NUS kept the pressure up on the Independent Senators who held the balance of power, including meeting their requests for independent (from DEST) research on particular matters. The result was a new deal which became the final legislation. While the legislation sold out students on their core demand of opposing the HECS increases it did include a number of improvements such as additional scholarships and a further increase in the HECS income repayment threshold over and above the initial Minister-AVCC deal. In short NUS's political contestation led to what nearly everyone now agrees is better higher education policy than the original deal.

Another significant area of Howard Government reform has been private tertiary education providers. The proliferation of new accredited higher education providers and the recent extension of FEE-HELP provisions to many of them is creating a significant private higher education sector. The absence of meaningful

student representative organisations in the rapidly emerging private higher education sector should be a cause for concern rather than celebration. Some of the new private providers, undoubtedly are providing quality education tailored to the needs of their niche customers. However, this isn't always the case. The NLC was recently approached by second year international students from an accredited private tertiary education provider with claims of serious dysfunctionality (the students said that previous years assessment grades not still not available or assessment returned, lecturers regularly turning up more than an hour late to seminars ), etc. The NLC took up the case as the students had no where else to go. The NLC made contact with the relevant state government education department and DEST which led to a prompt investigation.

It is very hard for students to get their thousands of dollars back off dysfunctional private providers, even if they are prepared to risk more thousands of dollars in expensive litigation. If we are to adopt market-speak then student consumers need a robust accreditation and quality assurance system to underpin the new private higher education market. However, quality and accreditation departments tend to be small, under-resourced and are little known outside senior higher policy circles. Certainly it is unreasonable to expect students who have been in the country for a few weeks to know the obscure ways of accreditation and quality bodies. It is also naive to assume that a higher education provider's administration would assist these students with launching a complaint which would put the provider's accreditation at risk. Independent student organisations can play a vital link between the aggrieved students and accreditation, CRICOS registration and quality bodies. Possible future student organisations at private universities are likely to look very different from the 'broad campus experience' model at most public universities but there does seem to be a need for some structure that will make student (consumer) rights meaningful.

Already at the public universities the student organisations provide assistance with the quality audits cycles. The Australian Universities Quality Agency's audit teams routinely meet with student representatives to discuss how well or not the university is complying with its stated mission and quality commitments. There is value to AUQA being able to contact student representatives from an independent organisation routinely engaged in the university and faculty decision making processes, rather than just picking any student at random.

The examples of dysfunctional private providers where there are no student rights or organised student voice gives us a disturbing example of what might become much more common in higher education. By contrast it also highlights what student organisations at the public universities have achieved over the last 130 years. The extent to which VSU undermines effective student representation will flow on to the diminishing of student (consumer) rights. In the short term dodgy providers might prosper on the basis of glossy brochures and flash websites. In the long term the whole Australian higher education system will suffer as word gets out across Asia, Scandanavia and North America that the Australian government is more interested in silencing the messenger than building a more robust quality assurance framework to protect consumer rights.

# IMPACT 2

## Student Access, Participation and Welfare

Student organisations have a proud tradition of supporting and enhancing the educational experience of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example the first indigenous students at Australian universities were funded through ABSCHOL, an indigenous student scholarship scheme funded and run by student organisations. It was not until 1969 that the Commonwealth of Australia introduced its own ABSTUDY program. In the 1970s it was student organisations that pioneered childcare services on campus which opened up universities to parents with primary childcare responsibilities ( mainly women). The rapid expansion of the universities over the last three decades has led to a much more diverse student population with much more diverse welfare and support needs. To meet these needs an increased share of the universal contributions from students are channelled into programs specifically designed to increase the chance of particular groups of students succeeding at universities. These decisions are made via the democratic mechanisms of student organisations.

- These mechanisms exist in a variety of forms:
- o provision of interest free loans
  - o financial counselling
  - o income support advice
  - o employment services
  - o childcare
  - o international student support and integration programs
  - o personal counselling
  - o legal advice
  - o mature age and part-time students integration programs
  - o accommodation services



In addition student organisations provide the resources through which students with particular needs can work together to enhance their interests.

### 1. Women's Departments

Women's Departments, made up of Women's Officers and Women's Collectives, run campaigns around a number of issues affecting women students. These range from safety on campus, childcare, sexual harassment campaigns, to information dissemination regarding women's health and sexuality issues. They also provide safe spaces for women students in form of women's rooms.



### 2. International Students Departments

International Students Departments run campaigns around a number of issues relevant to international students. These range from orientation programs, cultural and recreational activities, to lobbying on behalf of international students to universities and government regarding visa requirements and access to low cost housing. .

### 3. Disability Action Collectives

Student organisations resource disability collectives. These collectives organise campaigns around issues like access for students with disabilities, service provision and fair assessment mechanisms. This also includes education for university staff around mental health issues, and their impact on teaching and learning.

### 4. Sexuality Departments

Many student organisations have in recent years responded to queer students' requests for resources through the creation of sexuality departments. These departments, made up of students defining themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, have campaigned around safety on campus issues, against homophobia, violence and discriminatory practices. Some student organisations also provide queer friendly spaces on campuses.

NUS believes that these types of representative and service provisions are play an important role in building an equitable, accessible and fair higher education system in which all students can participate equally. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are often numerically and procedurally marginalised within universities. Some are significantly affected by discrimination and harassment. Student organisations provide the resources for self-representation lobby for improved procedures and access within universities and to government and run particular services for and with students from designated equity groups.

Some VSU advocates such as Andrew Southcott (Member for Boothby) argue that: "Quite obviously, different students place different demands on student services - some students are heavy users of all facilities, and some students use little to none of the services on offer...Free market forces are the key to efficiency, greater welfare and a more sensible allocation of resources to students. A 'user pays' system will always be more efficient in the long run, and be more beneficial to students." (ALSF's *Protege*) If Southcott is proposing that student welfare should be delivered on a sort of fee-for-each-consultation model then he is grossly out of step with community expectations. For it is commonly the case that those most in need have the least capacity to pay. The Howard Government does not expect welfare provision to be made generally to the community on a such a 'user pays' model - why should it insist that student organisations delivering student welfare on a basis which it is not prepared to do. More generally the decision by student organisations in the last couple of decades to create significant cross-subsidies which benefit the most needy and demanding students clearly provides a public benefit. That benefit is helping universities retain students from non-traditional backgrounds.



**Students Association run child-care creche at University of Ballarat**

Actually if we follow the logic of economically rational market-driven voluntary student organisation then it would focus its activities towards recruiting students from wealthy backgrounds who have plenty of spare leisure time as they don't have to support themselves through casual work. Such members would spend more, and draw less on things like welfare. It would be back to days when student organisations were mainly about rugby, beer, rowing and debating.

# IMPACT 3

## International Students

There are approximately 313,000 international students currently studying at Australian education institutions. More than half (186,000 in 2004) were studying at a higher education institution. More than 135,000 are studying in Australia with another 45,000 are studying in courses taught off-shore by Australian universities. The Victorian State Government has estimated that international students are worth approximately \$5.9 billion to the Australian economy. In 2003 international students contributed approximately \$1.7 billion to higher ed institutions in tuition fees and charges, this is approximately 13.8% of total revenue. below is a breakdown of international student financial contribution to universities and state economies.

State economies: higher ed fees and charges	% of uni revenue	state economy	
VIC	\$552,125,000	15.5%	\$2Bil
QLD	\$313,643,000	15%	\$1.3bil
NSW	\$497,446,000	14%	
SA	\$95,599,000	11%	
WA	\$173,554,000	14.5%	
TAS	\$16,935,000	7.2%	
NT	\$2,530,000	1.4%	
ACT	\$43,112,000	6.7%	

### Service provisions for international students

International students are becoming the most prominent users of many on campus services that student organisations provide. The reasons for this include:

- International students are often coming from very different cultures with different education expectations, international students are a long way from networks of family and friend support;
- International students are more inclined to spend time on campus as they are required to show and have most living expense money before they come to Australia and are face the threat of deportation if they breach visa conditions which specify that they can work no more than 20 hours per week;
- Other factors that influence the amount of time international students spend on campus are the services that the student organisations currently provide. So in fact it is a supply –demand cycle situation.

Student organisations provide international clubs. This is for most international students where they meet and make the most important friends they make in Australia, in particular when they first arrive. Without such clubs and societies, many international students would be very socially isolated. The international student services and advice facilities offered by campus organisations are an invaluable service to most international students, as are the academic advice, welfare and advocacy services. The other services most often frequented by international students are the catering services, computer facilities, student accommodation and student lounges.

International student organisations on campus are more than a social club and information provider. International student officers or international student organisations provide representation or advice on almost every campus in Australia to university international education committees and University Councils.

The peak body for international students is the National Liaison Committee for International Students (NLC). The NLC constructively works with various State and Federal Governments and other represen-

tative bodies.

Each state has many areas for meeting with and working on projects with state governments, below are some examples of these:

### **VIC**

Positioning Victoria consultation reference group  
Victorian Qualifications reference group  
International education week committee  
Victorian Economic Development committee –report on economic contribution by is



**Promoting tolerance and diversity. Multi-cultural Week at the University of Wollongong**

### **SA**

Adelaide City Council eg Safety in Adelaide meetings  
Education Adelaide meetings

### **NSW**

Transport Dept travel concession  
DEST anonymous marking meetings  
Youth Anti racism council  
AUQA meeting re: plagiarism and anonymous marking

### **WA**

CISWA  
Racsim forum in WA – submission sought

### **QLD**

QLD cultural diversity forums  
QLD govt project on part time work for international students  
QLD govt survival handbook project

### **National**

ISANA member of each state branch  
IEAA foundation board member  
DIMIA Slamm Reference group in each state  
ESOS review steering committee  
Migration Agent review submission requested

All states have Multicultural Week – supported by government and universities

The concerns about the stalling of the growth in the international student market have been aired in the media and the dire implications for this on projected funding of Australian universities. The reasons for the tightening of the market are complex such as the rise in the value of the dollar, deregulatory changes in international aid and development market and new emerging competition from Chinese universities. One big advantage that Australian universities have over their Chinese rivals is their robust campus culture.



**Orientation Week at the University of the Sunshine Coast. O-Weeks are particularly vital for students who have just arrived in the country.**



The extent to which VSU weakens this campus culture (Australia's market edge) will impact on Australian university coffers, potentially costing them hundreds of millions of dollars over the next decade. Many, many people in the higher education industry are very interested in what international student organisations have to say about the changes that need to be made to keep Australia's education export industry competitive. It would be a grossly myopic folly to put at risk one of the key financial underpinnings of Australia's universities just to settle a few ideological scores.

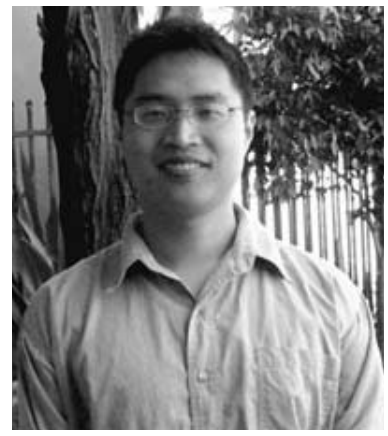
## International Student Associations



**Swinburne ISA**



**Victoria University ISA**



**Sydney University International Postgraduate Students Network**



**International student delegates at the annual NLC National Conference**



**La Trobe ISA trip to Great Ocean Road**



**Induction session for new students run by Edith Cowan Uni International Students Council**

# **IMPACT 4**

## **University Sports**

**I recently had the pleasure of welcoming back our Olympian and Paralympian athletes and celebrating their exploits in Athens. This is but one manifestation of the outstanding sports program which is in place at the University of Sydney. There is a delicate balance to be achieved.**

**We encourage elite performers through a comprehensive scholarship program and we provide facilities for all students to participate in sport.**

**It is stretching language to use 'we' because Sydney University Sport is an autonomous body, funded by compulsory student subscriptions. The university provides assistance, as do many benefactors and volunteer supporters, but Sydney University Sport is fundamentally run by students for students, and paid for by students.**

***Professor Gavin Brown, Vice Chancellor, University of Sydney in Sydney Morning Herald, November 2004***

**Sports' Associations are also under attack from anti-student organisation legislation. The familiar 'why should students who don't play sport have to subsidise those who do' argument is being used to argue for a voluntary fee model. The issue of cross-subsidies is handled elsewhere in this paper. But what would be the impact of such a model on student sport and recreation and the Australia's wider sports-interested community.**

**(extracts from Australian University Sports submission to VSU Senate Inquiry, 1999)**

**Impact of anti-student organisation on University Sports if voluntary fee model adopted;**

**Female participation in sport will be detrimentally affected**

University club-based sporting and recreational opportunities provide a basis for 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 to compete in quality competitions. While more research is required, anecdotal evidence reveals that young women are returning to sport after completion of their secondary schooling.

**University club involvement in community sport will be curtailed which will impact negatively on most mainstream sporting organisations.**

University clubs also integrate heavily into community sporting fixtures – from First Grade or Division 1, to a wide variety of social grades. A case in point is Rowing, 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 with substantial support and activity provided by clubs from UTS, the University of Sydney, UNSW, Adelaide University and the University of Melbourne (among many others). The sports of Rugby and Touch Football are other beneficiaries of the efforts and activities that take place within university sport.

University sport is also playing an increasingly significant role in the development of Australia's elite sporting men and women. The most significant group participating in national and international university sport is between the ages of 18 – 24. This age group correlates with the peak performance of many of the nation's elite athletes and neatly combines athletic prowess with career development.

Currently, university sport plays a significant role in developing general community participation in sport. It does so by providing and maintaining quality facilities for many non-university/community-based teams. These teams avail themselves of university facilities on weekdays and weekends. Again, this is all supported by universal contributions made by generations of students to the provision of sporting infrastructure.

**University sport contributes to the multi- billion international student market and greatly assists with the "selling" of Australian universities internationally.**

Quality student-oriented sporting and recreational services are part of the showcase of services currently available to prospective international university students. It forms part of the global selling strategy for Australian universities, a market that contributes billions to the Australian economy each year. These facilities are not government funded facilities and it is Australian University Sport's view that governments should be looking to support and maintain this vital component of the Australian economy.

**There will be a considerable and negative impact on the ability of sport and recreation associations and student organisations generally to recognise and assist elite and developing athletes.**

Over 300 university sporting scholarships are provided annually to aspiring athletes, many of them became successful Olympic medal winners. In most instances it is university sporting associations and various student organisations that provide the financial support for these scholarships. This is all underpinned by universal student contributions. Under the proposed current legislation the ability of sport and recreation associations and student organisations to recognise and reward excellence will be greatly undermined (if not lost completely). The financial contributions themselves are at times at levels that rival and complement the Government's own contributions made through the Australian Sports Commission – however, the origin of these funds is not from Government, but rather from the universal student contributions that are levied on all students at all Australian campuses.

**University sport and recreation allows for the development of skills in administration, management,**



**The Australian University Games has grown to be Australia's largest annual multi-sport event. Held each September / October, the Games are renowned for providing a friendly but competitive environment for Australia's university sporting elite. Owned by Australian University Sport (AUS), the peak governing body of university sport in Australia, the Games is the flagship event on the university sporting calendar. Recognised as the perfect opportunity for student athletes to compete in a national multi-sport event against world-class competitors, including many of Olympic standards, the games has built up a reputation as an event not be missed, attracting close to 6 000 competitors each year. This year, the 2005 Australian University Games are being hosted in Brisbane, Queensland.**

**decision-making, committee responsibilities, officiating and of course, in athletic prowess.**

The proposed legislation in its current form will reduce this opportunity, especially nationally and internationally. 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 becoming involved in sport. Developing 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. These are important attributes for future leaders and the sporting environment at university is an ideal opportunity for students to hone these skills.



**The Sports Association at Flinders University runs the Sports and Fitness Centre which includes a weights room, circuit room, aerobics room, 3 squash courts and a sports hall. All of these facilities are fully air conditioned and heated.**

In addition, university sport plays a significant role in a student's social development. Lifelong friendships are born through sport in the general Australian community and university sport is no different in this regard. University sport is as important to campus life as sport is to community life.

The complementary nature of sport and academia has been a strong part of the platform of the Federal Government through the Australian Sport Commission's Athlete Career Education (ACE) program over many years. The ethos of the ACE program has been that education is an integral component of developing a "balanced and complete" athlete. The program dictates that all Australian Institute of Sport scholarship holders undertake study or work. University sport provides a natural and important link for students pursuing their athletic careers. Governments should be working to support these linkages.

**The legislation would decimate the Australian University Games, the flagship event for university sport in this country.**

The Australian University Games is the largest annual multi-sport participation event currently held in the country. It provides sporting opportunities in a games atmosphere to over 5,000 students each year. Over 20 sports are generally on offer with participants drawn from all campuses nationwide. The economic impact of the event to a region or state has been measured at \$4.1 million (1997) and in excess of 26,000 bed nights taken up by athletes over the week long event. The introduction of this legislation will decimate these Games and the economic activity that surrounds them. Interaction between athletes and the opportunities for students to learn about other cities and communities will be lost.

**Australian University Championships will cease.**

Without the support and oversight of Australian University Sport, 20 national sporting competitions held as championships each year in university sport will cease. These events involving up to 2,000 participants annually are rotated around the country and stimulate interest and activity in a multiple of local communities and amongst university participants.

**Most regional university games (held in July throughout the country) will be severely impacted.**

Regional inter-university sport currently provides direct sporting competition to over 10,000 students annually. The regional games are complemented by a number of regional championships. All will be greatly impacted by this legislation. Equally, local communities/business centres will miss out on the significant economic activity that surrounds these events. In some instances this may be as high as \$1.5 – \$2 million annually.

**There will be no central agency for the coordination, regulation and control of national university sport.**

The agency known as Australian University Sport will disappear.

**Australia's strong reputation in international university sport will be lost.**

Without a national organisation, Australian university sport will be unable to affiliate with the International University Sports Federation (FISU). Australia's reputation, currently held in high regard, will be lost and our ability to influence the direction of International university sport will disappear. Australia's ability to attract World university sporting events and conferences to this country will be greatly diminished.



**Australian student athletes, many of whom are elite national performers, will not be able to participate in FISU-endorsed international university sporting competitions.**

Under current arrangements, Australian teams are eligible to participate in FISU-endorsed sporting competitions. Under the proposed legislation this will not be possible. More importantly, as a consequence of the change, individual athletes will be unlikely to be able to obtain sufficient financial support from universities to supplement their own funding to participate at these events. As many of these performers are aspiring champions in Australian sport, another exposure to activities of a Commonwealth Games and Olympic Games nature will be lost. (The World University Games are considered second only to the Olympic Games as the most important multi-sport event in the world. Over 6,000 competitors from in excess of 160 countries compete in this event. Competition standards are world class.)

**University infrastructure planning and development will be significantly undermined by this proposed current legislation, especially in rural areas.**

Universities currently provide more than \$160 million worth of sporting and recreational infrastructure on campuses throughout the country. Universal contributions by students for sporting and recreational services at a campus level have, over many years, been the source of funds for the development of these sporting facilities. This revenue services much of the debt on infrastructure projects relating to buildings and grounds of a sporting/recreational nature. How will this debt be serviced in the future under the proposed

legislation? Who will take on responsibility for these loans (one estimate has the total at \$60 million)?



**Sports clubs signing up members at RMIT O-week 2005**

Should the sport and recreation associations/guilds/unions cease to exist? How will future facility development be funded under the proposed current legislation? In rural areas the impact on facility development will be significantly magnified.

Furthermore, the significant cost-benefit of maintaining and extending university sporting and recreational infrastructure has already been recognised by Government. A Government Committee Report - Rethinking the funding of community sporting and recreational facilities: A sporting chance - reviewed the provision of national sporting and recreational infrastructure, and recognised university facilities as a great opportunity for the community. It acknowledged that university facilities were already being used extensively by the community and that further contributing to them provides for a very cost-effective means of providing improved facilities for community as well as student use.

**3,270 jobs are directly under threat by this legislation, many of them involving students themselves.**

University sport is a major employer and is professionally managed. Australian University Sport members collectively employ 3,270 staff (530 full time, 222 part time, and 2,518 casual).

**Indirect employment and business activity will be reduced, particularly in rural Australia.**

The impact of this legislation on employment levels will not be confined to the employment of university sport-service industry staff. The scaling down of activity in the university sport sector will have significant implications for employment in the construction and maintenance industries associated with the provision of \$160 million worth of campus-based sporting and recreation facilities. Furthermore, local businesses providing sport related clothing (estimated at \$750,000 annually), sporting equipment (estimated at \$1.1 million annually), student accident insurance (estimated at \$800,000 annually), and sport related travel and accommodation (estimated at \$2.5 million annually) will all be losers from this legislation. This will be especially obvious in rural areas of Australia and the flow-on effect to local businesses will be significant.

**UPDATE:** Australan University Sports 2004 Member Census provides updated data:

About 100,000 people are members of Australia's 1500 university sporting clubs playing in community-based sporting competitions. 80,000 are students (university staff who are members of these clubs are required to pay a membership fee).

University sporting organisations employ 953 full time staff and 2,333 part-time staff.

# IMPACT 5

## Arts and Popular Culture



Back in 1994 when the Kennett Government introduced a form of anti-student organisation legislation restricting the use of the compulsory fees to list of legislatively approved functions. The original list excluded student run arts facilities. The effects of the legislation on campus culture became a prominent focus. Much of Melbourne's cultural community rushed to the defence of student organisations. The legislation would have effectively cut off the funding to the student run theatres, art galleries and newspapers.

For example Melbourne University has nurtured three generations of playwrights, actors and directors who have dominated the national arts scene. Well known comedians, Steve Vizard, Rob Sitch, Michael Veitch, Marg Downey all got their break in student comedy revues at university. The newspaper, *Farrago*, has spawned many of the leading names in Australian journalism. Satirical writer Kaz Cooke declared that she opposed the law "designed to make student unions half dead and dead boring. It might be the required state for politicians, but it's not a good look for universities." Rob Sitch from the comedic *D-Generation* said that the Government should lighten up. He believed that the *D-Generation* and other comedic talents would never have been able to gain the mass audience that they did without the financial support of the student union and the intellectually supportive environment of a university.

The legislation caused such a stir in the arts, music and comedy community that *The Age* devoted four pages of the weekend features section and its editorial to pillor the Kennett Government for its cultural vandalism. Shortly after the government backed down and added arts and cultural facilities to its list of services that could be funded from the compulsory student service fee.

The Victorian College of Arts Student Union provides an excellent example of the support given to help Australia's next generation of artists, dancers and film makers reach their potential:

- o Cultural Activities Grants. The Student Union administers Cultural Activities Grants, where students may apply for financial assistance for cultural activities that are not part of course requirements.

**'There is a great myth about universities that you go there to learn about chemistry and physics, but that is all rubbish. It is the farting around in between that you learn things from. I am stunned at how serious everyone has to be now when growing up. They have denigrated the process of farting around. It is an important part of the Australian psyche and if you can't do that, then you are talking about a really narrow, dry view of what is allowable and important in universities.'**

*D-Generation and Frontline  
comedian Rob Sitch*

- o accident insurance (vital for dance students)
- o Referral to Arts Funding Bodies
- o Sponsorship Assistance for Productions / Exhibitions
- o Film nights and Performances
- o PROUD (a major exhibition of student work, awarding several prizes)
- o *Soundout* (a compilation CD of the best work produced by music students)

Student newspapers despite their sometimes notorious 'undergraduate humour' reputations can play a vital role in building a sense of community and identity at a university as well as being a forum for debate on topical issues of the day. Their quality is uneven but more than a few are very good and have the respect in the journalistic community. This can be seen by the number of people who have been employed by the mainstream press after stints as student newspaper editors over those who have only studied in journalism courses.

There may also be a spinoff effect onto the live music scene. The campus gigs have become more important to sustaining the live music industry as the spread of pokies in recent years has seen many hotels abandon their role as regular live music venue. No one is arguing that ASOL would mean there would be no more live music at campuses. But if it is done through the big private off campus promoters the acts will be mainly the lucrative well established acts. Reduction in regular campus gigs and loss of student radio would mean that there are a lot less opportunities for newer and alternative music bands, and viability of events like the National Campus Band Competition would be in doubt without professional campus activities officers to organise it.

At the moment it is unknown what form of ASOL is coming up but if it kills off student run cultural institutions at our universities, or the robust culture that underpins them, then the Australian public will be denied one of the richest veins of talent.

**“If you survive life on a uni paper , you can do anything as a journalist and editor. I still come across my *Farrago* mates and most of them are working - very successfully - in the media.”**

*Kathy Bail , former editor  
Rolling Stone*

**Some of the many prominent artists and organisations who came to the defence of the cultural activities of student organisations when they were under threat from Kennett Government**

**Hunters and Collectors  
Barry Humphries  
Steve Vizard  
Magda Szubanski  
Bell Shakespeare Company  
The Melbourne Comedy Festival  
Mick Malloy  
Rod Quantock  
Judith Lucy  
John Clark  
Max Gillies  
Deborah Conway  
Jane Kennedy  
Santo Cilauro  
Tom Gleisner  
3RRR  
Melbourne Theatre Company  
Kaz Kook  
Stuart Koop  
Theatreworks  
Playbox**



# **IMPACT 6**

## **Regional Students and their communities**

Universities in rural and regional areas play a crucial role in the community as providers of services, infrastructure, cultural events and employment. Student organisations are currently responsible for the provision of a large percentage of these functions. While VSU would have a devastating effect on all universities and students, these effects would be exacerbated in regional communities. Student organisations are major employers within regional areas. Many of these job opportunities would be lost in areas where unemployment is already unacceptably high.

Many facilities like banking, sporting grounds, childcare centres, health services, cinemas and cultural activities are currently provided by student organisations, and are open to the local community. At times these types of services are only available to these communities as a result of their provision by student organisations to their membership and by extension the public. These facilities may no longer be provided under national VSU.

In rural areas young people often have little access to cultural or other social activities. Student organisations currently fill this gap. These services may not survive under VSU. For example when similar VSU legislation was proposed in 1999 the Monash University Gippsland Student Union (MUGSU) submitted:

"The impact of a WA style VSU in particular on small and regional campuses would be severe. MUGSU for example is located in a town of six thousand people; we employ 12 effective full-time staff and around fifty casual staff. We contribute in excess of a million dollars to the local economy in terms of wages and the purchase of goods and services; the Leisure Centre and Sports and Recreation are dependent on monies raised from the student body; Pooh Corner [a local childcare centre open to students and the community] is subsidised by MUGSU - peoples livelihoods are at stake. The effect of a WA style VSU on MUGSU would constitute a substantial blow to the local and regional economy, which should be of some concern to regional authorities."

There are many examples of the way in which local regional communities benefit from student funded services:

The UNE Students Association is the sole administrator of the student employment database and works with the regional community in finding jobs for students. UNESA provides assistance with resumes and interview preparation skills. In the context of a struggling regional economy the existence of such a service helps develop the local economy. The UNE Union in partnership with the Armidale Ex-Services Club, constructed and operates the local cinema, a facility used by the whole community.

The student staffed radio station 2UNE broadcasts to the Armidale region seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Radio 2UNE is one of Australia's oldest regional community radio stations

The USQ Guild's Clive Berghofer Recreation Centre provides students and the wider Toowoomba and Darling Downs community with their only easy access to Olympic standard sports and training facilities.

When Minister Nelson introduced VSU legislation in 2003 the Australasian Campus Union Managers Association (ACUMA) undertook a survey of the the major regional campus student organisations to determine the impact of WA-style VSU. The organisations covered were:

Bendigo Students Association (La Trobe)  
Charles Darwin University Students' Union  
Central Queensland University Students Association  
Charles Sturt University Students Association - Albury  
Charles Sturt University Students' Association - Bathurst  
Charles Sturt University Students' Association - Wagga  
James Cook University Students' Association (Townsville and Cairns)  
Monash University Gippsland Student Union  
Tasmania University Union  
University of Ballarat Students' Association  
University of New England Union  
University of Southern Queensland Student Guild  
University of Tasmania Students' Association - Launceston

The survey found that the organisations received \$15.5m of student amenity fee income, which along with their commercial revenue, was used to service 135,000 regional students. The organisations employed 1,854 professional staff and also provided casual employment for over 725 students. ACUMA conservatively estimated that the introduction of WA style VSU would lead to the loss of 550 jobs in regional towns. The figures understate the case as there are many other smaller student organisations that are regional sites of large metropolitan universities that were not surveyed.

While profitable, commercial activities would survive in some places the following student organisation activities were likely to cease:

Clubs and Societies  
Personal Accident Insurance  
Welfare/Academic Support  
Student Leadership Programs  
Information Services  
Subsidised Health Services  
Sports and Recreation Facilities  
Theatres and Galleries  
Resource Centre (Computer Labs)  
Student Loans  
Distance Education Support  
Legal Services  
Scholarships  
Radio Stations  
Cinemas  
Taxation Advice



**Gippsland's Pooh Corner Child Care Centre is a fully accredited centre which provides day care on a full time, part time or occasional basis. Newly renovated to accomodate 45 children in separate rooms, 0-2, 2-3, 3-5. Pooh Corner is operated by the Student Union. It places an emphasis on the relationship between staff, children and parents. The centre is located within the grounds of Monash University Gippsland in Churchill and is open to all families from the local and regional community, as well as staff and students of Monash University.**

## Members of the Current Parliament Who Were Student Organisation Office Bearers



Hon. Tony Abbott  
Minister for Health and Ageing  
(Liberal) Member for Warringah  
**President of Sydney  
University Students'  
Representative Council**



Hon. Peter Costello  
Treasurer  
(Liberal) Member for Higgins  
**President of Monash  
Association of Students**



Michael Danby  
Opposition Whip  
(ALP) Member for  
Melbourne Ports  
**President of Melbourne  
Student Representative  
Council**



Kate Ellis  
(ALP) Member for Adelaide  
**General Secretary of  
Students' Association of  
Flinders University**



Michael Ferguson  
(Liberal) Member for Bass  
**General Secretary of  
NUS-Tasmania**



Julia Gillard  
(ALP) Member for Lalor  
**President of Australian  
Union of Students**



Hon. Joe Hockey  
 Minister for Human Services  
 (Liberal) Member for North  
 Sydney  
**President of Sydney  
 University Students'  
 Representative Council**



Chris Pyne  
 (Liberal) Member for Sturt  
**Vice-President of  
 Students' Association of  
 University of Adelaide**



Senator Kerry Nettle  
 (Greens) NSW  
**Environment Officer  
 UNSW Student Guild**



Hon. Senator Eric Abetz  
 Special Services Minister  
 (Liberal) Tasmania  
**President of Tasmania University  
 Union**



Tanya Pilbersek  
 (ALP) Member for Sydney  
**Women's Officer of  
 University of Technology,  
 Sydney University  
 Students' Association**



Senator Natasha Stott  
 Despoja  
 (Dem) South Australia

**President of Students  
 Association of University  
 Adelaide**

**Women's Officer of  
 Students Association of  
 University Adelaide**

**Women's Officer of NUS-  
 South Australia Branch**



Hon. Kim Beazley  
 Opposition Leader  
 (ALP) Member for Brand  
**President of Uni of WA  
 Undergraduate Student Guild**



Senator Penny Wong  
 (ALP) South Australia  
**NUS National Executive**



NSW students campaigning in favour of universal student unionism

# **SURVEY OF CAMPUS STUDENT ORGANISATIONS**



From Melbourne University Drama Festival 2004

# Australian Catholic University

## **Student Organisations:**

Australian Catholic University National Students Association (overall university, member of Australian University Sport)

McCaulay Student Representative Council (Brisbane)

McKillop Student Representative Council (North Sydney)

Strathfield Student Representative Council (Mt St Mary, NSW)

Singadou Student Representative Council (Canberra)

St. Patricks Student Representative Council (Melbourne)

Aquinas Student Representative Council (Ballarat)

**Fee Levels:** \$40 per unit (\$320 for normal full time year), \$55 per semester for distance students (\$110 for normal full year) - 2005

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Is requirement of enrolment but can opt out by writing letter to Manager, Student Fees

## **Services Provided:**

(18 of the AVCC 's 45 servic categories):

Sporting Facilities

Student Lounges

Leisure Activities

Student Development Courses

Concerts

International Student Services and Advice

Student Employment Service

Welfare Services

Representation on University Bodies

Social Activities

Campus Sports

Facility Upkeep and Maintenance

Interest Clubs and Societies

Sporting Clubs and Societies

Bars and Bistros

Conference and Meeting Rooms

University Games

Academic Advice and Advocacy

# Adelaide University

## **Organisations:**

Adelaide University Union

Students Association of University of Adelaide (NUS member)

International Students Association (NLC member)

Postgraduate Student Association (CAPA member)

Sports Association (AUS member)

WAITE Insitute Students Asociation

Roseworthy Agricultural Campus Student Union Council



**In 2004 the Adelaide University Union set up the Computer Resource Centre which incorporates the Resource Centre and a general computing suite. Newly renovated and boasting state of the art equipment, the Computer Resource Centre provides a number of services useful to students – all are very cheap, or even free.**

**Fee Levels:** student service fee weighted by enrolment load: full time annual fee \$326.70 (2004)

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Is requirement of enrolment but can opt out by writing a letter to Student Association President, decision by majority of fee committee

**Services Provided:**

(39 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

- Student Accommodation
- Binding Services
- Catering and Food Service
- Student Theatre
- Sporting Facilities
- Student Lounges
- Computer Facilities
- Shower, Change and Locker Facilities
- Leisure Activities
- Student Development Courses
- Concerts
- International Student Services and Advice
- Student Employment Service
- International Clubs
- Campus Radio or TV
- Travel Service
- Trips and Tours
- Discount Ticketing
- Function Spaces
- Welfare Services
- Representation on University Bodies
- On Campus shops
- Social Activities
- Photocopy Service
- Campus Sports
- Gymnasiums
- Cinemas and Theatres
- Facility Upkeep and Maintenance
- Interest Clubs and Societies



**The Adelaide University Cricket Club has teams playing in competitions ranging up to the A-Grade District (the highest competition in SA). The Sports Association administers the university's comprehensive network of sporting grounds for cricket, football, soccer, lacrosse, hockey, tennis and rowing**

Information and Enquiry Service  
Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
University Diary  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Legal Services  
Sporting Clubs and Societies  
Bars and Bistros  
Conference and Meeting Rooms  
University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy

## **Australian National University**

### **Organisations:**

ANU Students Association (NUS and NLC member)  
Postgraduate and Research Students Association (CAPA member)  
ANU Sports and Recreation Association (AUS member)  
ANU Union

**Fee Levels:** General Service fee full time annual for 2005 is \$220

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not requirement of enrolment, advise associations of objections

(33 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Binding Services  
Catering and Food Service  
Student Theatre  
Sporting Facilities  
Student Lounges  
Shower, Change and Locker Facilities  
Leisure Activities  
Concerts  
Student Employment Service  
International Clubs  
Travel Service  
Discount Ticketing  
Function Spaces  
Dental Services  
Welfare Services  
On Campus shops  
Social Activities  
Photocopy Service  
Campus Sports  
Gymnasiums  
Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
Recreational Libraries  
Computer Facilities  
Interest Clubs and Societies  
Art Galleries  
Information and Enquiry Service



**The living heart of the campus - ANU Union Building and Courtyard**



Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Legal Service  
Sporting Clubs and Societies  
Bars and Bistros  
Conference and Meeting Rooms  
Academic Dress



**The University of Ballarat Students' Associations runs professional daytime childcare facilities for children aged 0-6 at the Mt.Helens campus**

## **Ballarat University**

### **Organisations:**

University of Ballarat Students' Association (NUS, NLC and AUS member)

**Fee Levels:** 2005 Annual Fee is \$258 for full time, \$106 for part-time and \$63 for limited time

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not requirement of enrolment, opt out tick box on enrolment form

### **Services Provided** (32 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Catering and Food Service  
Student Theatre  
Sporting Facilities  
Student Lounges  
Computer Facilities  
Shower, Change and Locker Facilities  
Leisure Activities  
Concerts  
Student Employment Service  
International Clubs  
Childcare  
Trips and Tours  
Discount Ticketing

Welfare Services  
 Representation on University Bodies  
 On Campus Shops  
 Social Activities  
 Photocopy Service  
 Campus Sports  
 Gymnasiums  
 Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
 Interest Clubs and Societies  
 Art Galleries  
 Information and Enquiry Service  
 Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
 University Diary  
 Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
 Sporting Clubs and Societies  
 Bars and Bistros  
 Conference and Meeting Rooms  
 University Games  
 Academic Advice and Advocacy

## Canberra University

### Organisations:

UC Students' Association (NUS and NLC member)  
 UC Union (AUS member)  
 Clubs and Societies  
 Postgraduate Association (CAPA member)

**Fee Levels:** \$135 per semester (\$270 per year), external students \$37 per year (\$74 per year) - 2004

### Membership Opt-Out Provisions:

Requirement of enrolment but can opt out  
 by letter to Director, Student  
 Administration

**Services Provided** (35 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Student Employment Service  
 Catering and Food Service  
 Student Theatre  
 Sporting Facilities  
 Student Lounges  
 Shower, Change and Locker Facilities  
 Leisure Activities  
 Student Development Courses  
 Concerts  
 International Student Services and Advice  
 International Clubs



**University of Canberra Students' Association provides free academic rights, welfare and legal advice to UC students**

Campus Radio or TV  
 Childcare  
 Discount Ticketing  
 Function Spaces  
 Dental Services  
 Welfare Services  
 Representation on University Bodies  
 On Campus shops  
 Social Activities  
 Photocopy Service  
 Campus Sports  
 Gymnasiums  
 Cinemas and Theatres  
 Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
 Interest Clubs and Societies  
 Information and Enquiry Service  
 University Diary  
 Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
 Legal Services  
 Sporting Clubs and Societies  
 Bars and Bistros  
 Academic Dress  
 University games  
 Academic Advice and Advocacy



**Orientation Week at U Can. Over 50 sporting, religious, cultural, faculty, social and political clubs vie for members**

## Central Queensland University

### Organisations:

CQU Students' Association (CAPA, AUS and NLC member) operating from Brisbane, Bundaberg, Gold Coast, Emerald, Gladstone, Mackay, Melbourne, Noosa, Sydney, and Rockhampton. The university also has campuses in Fiji, Singapore and Hong Kong

### Fee Levels:

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Is requirement of enrolment but there are opt out provisions

**Services Provided** (26 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Catering and Food Service  
 Student Lounges  
 Leisure Activities  
 Concerts  
 International Student Services and Advice  
 Student Employment Service  
 International Clubs  
 Trips and Tours  
 Discount Ticketing



**In 2003 the CQU Students' Association won the Rockhampton Regional Development & Ergon Energy Business Excellence Awards. In 2002 it won the Rockhampton Chamber of Commerce Award for a 'Not for Profit Organisation'**

Function Spaces  
Welfare Services  
Representation on University Bodies  
On Campus shops  
Social Activities  
Photocopy Service  
Campus Sports  
Interest Clubs and Societies  
Information and Enquiry Service  
Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Legal Services



**Graphic design students exhibit their work at The Charles Darwin University Students' Union Art Gallery**

Sporting Clubs and Societies  
Bars and Bistros  
Conference and Meeting Rooms  
University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy

## Charles Darwin University

### **Organisations:**

Charles Darwin Student Union (NUS and CAPA member)  
Sports Association (AUS member)

Operate at Casaurina and Palmerston campuses

### **Fee Levels:**

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** is a requirement of enrolment, no opt out provision

Services Provided (16 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)  
Catering and Food Service  
Computer Facilities  
Shower, Change and Locker Facilities  
Leisure Activities  
Welfare Services  
Representation on University Bodies  
On Campus shops  
Social Activities  
Photocopy Service  
Gymnasiums  
Cinemas and Theatres  
University Diary  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Sporting Clubs and Societies  
University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy



**The National Campus Band Competition organised by student organisation activities officers around the country hits Darwin.**

# Charles Sturt University

## Organisations:

Charles Sturt University Students' Association including campus associations at Canberra, Dubbo, Wagga Wagga (Rivcoll), Albury-Wodonga and Bathurst (is CAPA, AUS and NLC member)

**2004 Fee Levels:** \$34 per 8 units (internal and external), \$272 full time annual fee

## Membership Opt-Out Provisions:

Requirement of enrolment, but can opt out on grounds of genuine conscientious objection

**Services Provided** (29 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Catering and Food Service

Student Lounges

Leisure Activities

Concerts

International Student Services and Advice

Student Employment Service

International Clubs

Campus Radio or TV

Trips and Tours

Function Spaces

Welfare Services

Representation on University Bodies

On Campus shops (Including second hand bookshop)

Social Activities

Photocopy Service

Campus Sports

Facility Upkeep and Maintenance

Interest Clubs and Societies

Art Gallery

Information and Enquiry Service

University Diary

Campus Media/Student Newspapers

Legal Services

Gymnasium

Sporting Clubs and Societies

Bars and Bistros

Conference and Meeting Rooms

Academic Dress



**Beach Party at the very landlocked Wagga Wagga campus tavern (The Crow Bar). The university has a high number of residential students. The social events put on by campus bars play an important role in breaking down the isolation felt by students who have recently moved to a regional town.**



**New Students' Association building at Thurgoona campus. In conjunction with the Chaplaincy service, CSUSA provides an emergency food supply outlet at both Albury and Thurgoona campuses. The service is designed to help students who, for various reasons have no access to food in the short term.**

## **Curtin University**

### **Organisations:**

Curtin University Student Guild (NUS, AUS, NLC and CAPA member)

**Fee Levels:** Annual Fee at Bentley, City, Kalgoorlie or Northam campuses is \$110 for full-time students and \$70 for part-time students; annual fee at Joondalup, Margaret River, Albany, Esperance, Geraldton is \$70 for full-time and \$45 for part-time, external students pay \$45

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not requirement of enrolment, can opt out on form accessible on university website

(note while the fee is compulsory the Guild only receives fee income in proportion to the number of students who decide to be members, the University retains the rest)

### **Services Provided** (35 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Student Accommodation  
Binding Services  
Catering and Food Service  
Student Lounges  
Computer Facilities  
Leisure Activities  
Student Development Courses  
Concerts  
International Student Services and Advice  
Student Employment Service  
International Clubs  
Childcare  
Travel Service  
Trips and Tours  
Discount Ticketing  
Function Spaces  
Welfare Services  
Representation on University Bodies  
On Campus shops  
Social Activities  
Photocopy Service  
Campus Sports  
Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
Computer Facilities  
Interest Clubs and Societies  
Information and Enquiry Service  
Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
University Diary  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Legal Services

Sporting Clubs and Societies  
Bars and Bistros  
Conference and Meeting Rooms  
University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy

## Deakin University

### Organisations:

Deakin University Students Association (CAPA, AUS and NLC member) at Melbourne, Geelong, Waterfront and Warrnambool sites

**Fee Levels:** \$130.50 per semester full time internal (\$261 full time annual), \$83.60 per semester part time internal, external domestic \$82.60 per semester, external overseas \$170.90, summer semester \$39.70

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not requirement of enrolment but Student Association must be satisfied that objection is conscientious

### Services Provided (27 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Student Accommodation  
Binding Services  
Student Lounges  
Leisure Activities  
Concerts  
International Clubs  
Campus Radio or TV  
Childcare  
Travel Service  
Trips and Tours  
Discount Ticketing  
Welfare Services  
Representation on University Bodies  
On Campus shops  
Social Activities  
Photocopy Service  
Campus Sports  
Interest Clubs and Societies  
Information and Enquiry Service  
Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
University Diary  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Sporting Clubs and Societies  
Bars and Bistros  
University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy  
Other



**For many students starting university is associated with moving away from home. Deakin University Students Association employs professional housing advisers at its Burwood, Waurm Ponds, Waterfront and Warrnambool campuses to provide students with expert advice to address their housing needs.**



# Edith Cowan University

## Organisations:

Edith Cowan Student Guild (NUS, NLC and CAPA member)

ECU Sports and Recreation (AUS member)

**Fee Levels:** \$100 full time annual, \$50 part time annual, \$30 external

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not a requirement of enrolment, there are opt out provisions, Student Guild receives proportion of fee equivalent to students who do not opt out

**Services Provided** (15 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Student Theatre

Leisure Activities

Concerts

International Clubs

Welfare Services

Representation on University Bodies

Social Activities

Campus Sports

Interest Clubs and Societies

Art Galleries

Information and Enquiry Service

Service

Campus Media/Student

Newspapers

Sporting Clubs and Societies

Societies

University Games

Academic Advice and

Advocacy



**ECU International Student Induction Session**

The Edith Cowan University Postgraduate Association hosts the annual postgraduate student awards for staff excellence each year in order to give students the opportunity to nominate staff for excellence, and also to ensure that good staff receive recognition for their outstanding performance. Students can nominate staff for one or more of the following categories:

- (1) Excellence in Research Leadership.
- (2) Excellence in Research Supervision.
- (3) Excellence in Coursework Tuition and Supervision.
- (4) Excellence in Postgraduate Support

# Flinders University

## Organisations:

Flinders University Union,

Students' Association of Flinders University (NUS member)

Postgraduate Association (CAPA member),

Clubs and Societies Association

International Students Association (NLC member)

Sports Association (AUS member)



The Students' Association of Flinders University runs Australia's last student-run commercial printing press. Many classic and notorious political and music posters and album covers have been printed here since the late 1960s.

**Fee Levels:** \$362.80 full time annual,  
\$216.60 part-time annual, \$68 external

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Is requirement of enrolment but opt out provision for genuine conscientious objection

**Services Provided** (38 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Binding Services  
Catering and Food Service  
Sporting Facilities  
Student Lounges  
Computer Facilities  
Shower, Change and Locker Facilities  
Leisure Activities  
Student Development Courses  
Concerts  
International Student Services and Advice  
Student Employment Service  
International Clubs  
Campus Radio or TV  
Childcare  
Discount Ticketing  
Function Spaces  
Dental Services  
Welfare Services  
Representation on University Bodies  
On Campus shops  
Social Activities  
Photocopy Service  
Campus Sports  
Gymnasiums  
Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
Recreational Libraries  
Interest Clubs and Societies  
Information and Enquiry Service  
Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
University Diary  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Legal Services  
Sporting Clubs and Societies  
Bars and Bistros  
Conference and Meeting Rooms  
Academic Dress  
University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy



**Students from South Australia's three universities collaborate to put together the evening Student Radio component for Radio 5UV.**

## **EMPLOYMENT SERVICE**

**The Flinders University Union operates an Employment Service to assist students in finding casual and part-time work all year round. This service has an excellent track record placing thousands of students in touch with job vacancies each year. The service can take up to 3,000 job requests each year and of course many jobs have more than one vacancy. Consequently, it is not unusual for the service to make over 5,000 successful placements a year.**

**Organisations:** Student Representative Council (Logan, Mt. Gravatt, Nathan, Southbank) (NUS, CAPA, NLC member), Gold Coast Student Guild (AUS member)

\*Campus Life Charge component of student service fee at Brisbane campuses does not go to a student run organization. Campus Life is run by the university administration.

**Fee Levels:** FULL TIME BRISBANE AND LOGAN: Campus Life Charge \$84 per semester, Student Representative Council Charge \$36 per semester; PART TIME BRISBANE AND LOGAN: Campus Life Charge \$42 per semester, Student Representative Council Charge \$18 per semester; EXTERNAL BRISBANE AND LOGAN: Campus Life Charge \$10 per semester, Student Representative Council Charge \$7 per semester; FULL TIME GOLD COAST: Student Guild Charge \$128 per semester, PART TIME GOLD COAST: Student Guild Charge \$64 per semester, EXTERNAL TIME GOLD COAST: Student Guild Charge \$18 per semester. (full time annual Brisbane and Logan \$240, Gold Coast \$256)

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not requirement of enrolment, can opt out by applying to Registrar

**Services Provided** (38 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Student Accommodation (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)

Binding Services

Catering and Food Service (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)

Sporting Facilities (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)

Student Lounges

Computer Facilities

Shower, Change and Locker Facilities (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)

Leisure Activities (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)

Student Development Courses

Concerts

International Student Services and Advice

Student Employment Service

International Clubs

Childcare (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)

Travel Service (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)

Trips and Tours (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)

Discount Ticketing

## CENTRELINK ON CAMPUS

**Officers from the Centrelink Student Services Unit have been based on campus at the Gold Coast Student Guild office for the last few years. They access a direct on-site linkup to Centrelink database, enabling records to be adjusted, forms submitted and general queries answered. In between times the Education and Student Support staff can organise a phone link-up on special direct numbers to Centrelink who will answer queries and give advice. Documents can be faxed to Centrelink from the Student Guild free of charge.**



**2004 O-Week Concert at Griffith University  
Nathan campus**

Function Spaces (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)  
Welfare Services  
Representation on University Bodies  
Social Activities  
Photocopy Service  
Campus Sports (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)  
Gymnasiums (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)  
Cinemas and Theatres (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)  
Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
Recreational Libraries  
Interest Clubs and Societies (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)  
Information and Enquiry Service  
Bookshops and Retail Outlets (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)  
University Diary  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Legal Services  
Sporting Clubs and Societies (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)  
Bars and Bistros (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)  
Conference and Meeting Rooms (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)  
Academic Dress (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)  
University Games (run by Campus Life at Brisbane campuses)  
Academic Advice and Advocacy

## James Cook University

**Organisations:** James Cook University Students' Association (Townsville and Cairns) (NUS, CAPA, AUS and NLC member)

**Fee Levels:** \$275 full time annual, \$137 part-time annual, \$77 remote residence and Holmes College, Mackay and Mt Isa students

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** is requirement of enrolment, can opt out by applying to Students' Association

**Services Provided** (36 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Student Accommodation  
Catering and Food Service  
Student Theatre  
Sporting Facilities  
Student Lounges  
Shower, Change and Locker Facilities  
Leisure Activities  
Concerts  
International Student Services and Advice  
Student Employment Service  
Childcare  
Discount Ticketing  
Function Spaces

Welfare Services  
 Representation on University Bodies  
 On Campus shops  
 Social Activities  
 Photocopy Service  
 Campus Sports  
 Gymnasiums  
 Cinemas and Theatres  
 Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
 Recreational Libraries  
 Interest Clubs and Societies  
 Information and Enquiry Service  
 Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
 University Diary  
 Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
 Legal Services  
 Sporting Clubs and Societies  
 Bars and Bistros  
 Conference and Meeting Rooms  
 Academic Dress  
 University games  
 Academic Advice and Advocacy  
 Other



**La Trobe SRC runs a very cheap book-binding service for students**

## La Trobe University

### Organisations:

La Trobe Union  
 Student Representative Council (NUS member)  
 Bendigo Student Association (AUS member)  
 Postgraduate Association (CAPA member)  
 Sports and Recreation Association (AUS member)

**Fee Levels:** ALBURY-WODONGA full time annual \$190, 40-75% load \$95, up to 40% load \$52.50; BENDIGO full time annual \$325, 40-75% load \$200, up to 40% load \$100; BUNDOORA full time annual \$360, 40-75% load \$270, up to 40% load \$144; CITY full time annual \$195, 40-75% load \$150, up to 40% load \$95; MILDURA full time annual \$195, 40-75% load \$95, up to 40% load \$50.00; MT.BULLER full time annual \$212, 40-75% load \$106; OTHERS \$70

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** not requirement of enrolment, opt out provisions

### Services Provided (25 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Student Accommodation  
 Catering and Food Service  
 Sporting Facilities  
 Concerts  
 International Student Services and Advice  
 Student Employment Service  
 International Clubs



**The La Trobe SRC offers an on-line second hand bookshop. This enables students to list, browse and buy books similar to E-bay.**

Childcare  
Welfare Services  
On Campus shops  
Social Activities  
Photocopy Service  
Campus Sports  
Gymnasiums  
Cinemas and Theatres  
Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
Recreational Libraries  
Interest Clubs and Societies  
Information and Enquiry Service  
Campus Media/Student  
Newspapers  
Legal Services  
Sporting Clubs and Societies  
Bars and Bistros  
Conference and Meeting Rooms  
Academic Advice and Advocacy



**Student Refectory at Macquarie University**

## **Macquarie University**

### **Organisations:**

MUSC - Macquarie University Student Council (NUS and NLC member)  
SAM - Students at Macquarie (former Macquarie University Union)  
Sports' Association (AUS member)  
MUPRA - Postgraduate Association (CAPA member)

### **Fee Levels:**

Undergraduate Annual Full Time and Part Time: \$356 (\$174 to SAM, \$142 to Sports, \$40 to MUSC)  
Postgraduate Full time and Part Time: \$360 (\$174 to SAM, \$142 to Sports, \$44 to MUPRA)

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Is requirement of enrolment but there are opt out provisions. Students opt into SAM membership by ticking box at enrolment

### **Services Provided** (28 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Binding Services  
Catering and Food Service  
Sporting Facilities  
Student Lounges  
Computer Facilities  
Leisure Activities  
Student Development Courses  
Concerts  
International Clubs  
Childcare  
Discount Ticketing  
Function Spaces  
Welfare Services

On Campus shops  
Social Activities  
Campus Sports  
Gymnasiums  
Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
Interest Clubs and Societies  
Information and Enquiry Service  
Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
University Diary  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Legal Services  
Sporting Clubs and Societies  
Bars and Bistros  
Conference and Meeting Rooms  
University Games

## Melbourne University

**Organisations** :In transition. Currently the new model involves a university run company doing commercial services and an interim student-run undergraduate student representative body.

Melbourne University Sports (AUS affiliate)  
University of Melbourne Postgraduate Association (CAPA affiliate)  
Victorian College of the Arts Student Union

**Fee Levels:**(Parkville) \$392 for full time, part-time rate is \$49 per subject

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Opt out on enrolment form

**Services Provided** (44 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Student Accommodation  
Binding Services  
Catering and Food Service  
Student Theatre  
Sporting Facilities  
Student Lounges  
Computer Facilities  
Shower, Change and Locker Facilities  
Leisure Activities  
Student Development Courses  
Concerts  
International Student Services and Advice  
Student Employment Service  
International Clubs  
Campus Radio or TV



**2005 O-Week Student Services Carnival. Melbourne University student organisations are up and running after the problems of last year.**



**Monash University International Students Service Orientation BBQ for newly arrived students. International student organisations provide a wide variety of the support, social and advocacy for the 150,000 international student studying in Australia.**

Childcare  
Travel Service  
Trips and Tours  
Discount Ticketing  
Function Spaces  
Welfare Services  
Representation on University Bodies  
On Campus Shops  
Dental Service  
Art Galley  
Social Activities  
Photocopy Service  
Campus Sports  
Gymnasiums  
Cinemas and Theatres  
Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
Recreational Libraries  
Interest Clubs and Societies  
Information and Enquiry Service  
Bookshops and Retail Outlets



University Diary  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Legal Services  
Sporting Clubs and Societies  
Bars and Bistros  
Conference and Meeting Rooms  
Academic Dress  
University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy  
Other

## Monash University

### Organisations:

Monash Student Association (Clayton) (NUS and NLC member)  
Monash University Student Union (Caulfield and Peninsula) (NUS member)  
Overseas Student Service (Caulfield and Peninsula) (NLC member)  
Monash University Gippsland Student Union (NUS member)  
Monash Union of Berwick Students  
Monash Postgraduate Association (CAPA member)  
Victorian Pharmacy Student Association (Parkville)

\*note at the main Clayton campus the bulk of the student amenities fee goes to a university run service company that has minority student representation. The bulk of the remaining fraction of the fee goes to the Student Association.

### Fee Levels:

Full Time Annual Fee at Main Clayton Campus: \$428.30  
Rates for full-time students (adjusted for part-time students according to enrolment load)  
Berwick \$93.60 per semester  
Caulfield \$179.70 per semester  
Clayton \$214.15 per semester  
Gippsland \$187.40 per semester, off campus students \$65 per semester  
Parkville \$50 per semester  
Peninsula \$179.70 per semester

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not a requirement of enrolment, can opt out by ticking box on enrolment form

### Services Provided (39 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Student Accommodation  
Binding Services  
Catering and Food Service  
Sporting Facilities  
Student Lounges  
Computer Facilities  
Shower, Change and Locker Facilities  
Leisure Activities  
Student Development Courses

Concerts  
International Student Services and Advice  
International Clubs  
Childcare  
Travel Service  
Trips and Tours  
Function Spaces  
Welfare Services  
Representation on University Bodies  
Social Activities  
Photocopy Service  
Campus Sports  
Gymnasiums  
Cinemas and Theatres  
Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
On Campus Shops  
Student Radio (web-based)  
Interest Clubs and Societies  
Information and Enquiry Service  
Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
University Diary  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Legal Services  
Sporting Clubs and Societies  
Bars and Bistros  
Conference and Meeting Rooms  
Academic Dress  
University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy  
Other

## **Murdoch University**

### **Organisations:**

Murdoch University Guild of Students

### **Fee Levels:**

Full Time Annual Fee at Murdoch; \$140

Full Time per semester: Murdoch \$70, Rockingham \$35

Part-Time per semester: Murdoch \$35, Rockingham \$17.50

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not requirement of enrolment, can opt out through completion of a form. Student Guild receives proportion of fee equivalent to students who do not opt out



**Student Tavern at Murdoch**

**Services Provided** (21 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Catering and Food Service  
Sporting Facilities  
Student Lounges  
Shower, Change and Locker Facilities  
Leisure Activities  
Student Employment Service  
International Clubs  
Representation on University Bodies  
On Campus shops  
Social Activities  
Campus Sports  
Gymnasiums  
Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
Interest Clubs and Societies  
Information and Enquiry Service  
Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Legal Services  
Sporting Clubs and Societies  
University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy

## **New England**

**Organisations:**

University of New England Students' Association (NUS, and NLC member)  
University of New England Postgraduate Association (CAPA member)  
University of New England Sports Association (AUS member)  
University of New England Union

**Fee Levels:**

On-campus Student Annual Fee: \$370

University General Service Fee is \$185 per semester for on-campus students; \$80 per semester for off-campus students

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not requirement of enrolment, students can opt out by letter

**Services Provided** (42 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Student Accommodation  
Catering and Food Service  
Student Theatre  
Sporting Facilities  
Student Lounges  
Computer Facilities  
Shower, Change and Locker Facilities  
Leisure Activities

Student Development Courses  
Concerts  
Student Employment Service  
International Clubs  
Campus Radio or TV  
Childcare  
Function Spaces  
Dental Services  
Welfare Services  
Representation on University Bodies  
On Campus shops  
Social Activities  
Photocopy Service  
Campus Sports  
Gymnasiums  
Cinemas and Theatres  
Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
Computer Facilities  
Interest Clubs and Societies  
Information and Enquiry Service  
Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
University Diary  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Legal Services  
Sporting Clubs and Societies  
Bars and Bistros  
Conference and Meeting Rooms  
Academic Dress  
University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy  
Binding Services  
International Services and Advice  
Trip and Tours  
Discount Ticketing



## Queensland University

### Organisations:

University of Queensland Union  
University of Queensland Sport

### Fee Levels:

Full Time Annual Student Service Charge: \$272

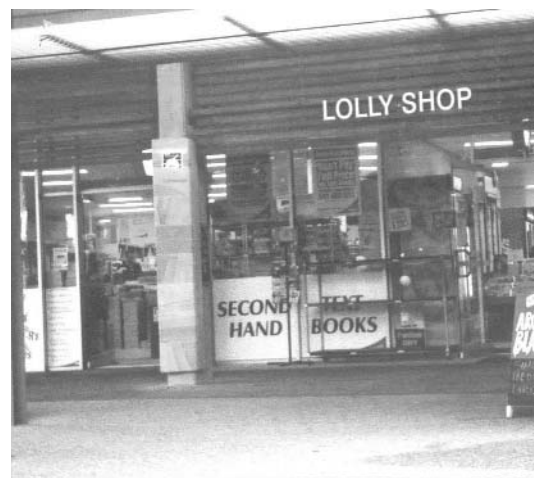
Full time per semester: \$136

Part-time per semester: \$68

External: \$21

Summer semester full time \$44

Summer semester par time \$22



**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not a requirement of enrolment, must inform Student Associations

**Services Provided** (38 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Student Accommodation

Binding Services

Catering and Food Service

Student Theatre

Sporting Facilities

Student Lounges

Shower, Change and Locker Facilities

Leisure Activities

Student Development Courses

Concerts

International Student Services and Advice

Student Employment Service

International Clubs

Childcare

Travel Service

Trips and Tours

Discount Ticketing

Function Spaces

Dental Services

Welfare Services

Representation on University Bodies

On Campus shops

Social Activities

Photocopy Service

Campus Sports

Gymnasiums

Cinemas and Theatres

Facility Upkeep and Maintenance

Interest Clubs and Societies

Information and Enquiry Service

Bookshops and Retail Outlets

University Diary

Campus Media/Student Newspapers

Legal Services

Sporting Clubs and Societies

Bars and Bistros

Conference and Meeting Rooms

Academic Advice and Advocacy



**Opening Ceremony and water polo match from Northern University Games held in Toowoomba. QUT were the 2004 champions. Every year the Northern University Games (NUG) are held during the June/July holidays. The Games includes sports such as: AFL, baseball, basketball, golf, hockey, netball, rugby union, soccer, squash, tennis, touch, volleyball and water polo. In 2005 the games will be held in Cairns. A similar event is held in Southern Australia leading to the Australia-wide university championships to be held on the Brisbane campuses this year.**

## **Queensland University of Technology**

**Organisations:**

QUT Student Guild (NUS, CAPA, NLC and AUS member) at Kelvin Grove, Gardens Pt and Carseldine campuses

**Annual Fee Levels:**

Full Time: \$242

Part Time: \$141

External: \$48.40

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Is a requirement of enrolment but there is membership opt out provision by advising the Director, Student Business Services

**Services Provided** (42 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Student Accommodation

Binding Services

Catering and Food Service

Sporting Facilities

Student Lounges

Computer Facilities

Shower, Change and Locker Facilities

Leisure Activities

Student Development Courses

Concerts

International Student Services and Advice

Student Employment Service

International Clubs

Childcare

Travel Service

Trips and Tours

Discount Ticketing

Function Spaces

Dental Services

Welfare Services

Representation on University Bodies

On Campus shops

Social Activities

Photocopy Service

Campus Sports

Gymnasiums

Cinemas and Theatres

Facility Upkeep and Maintenance

Recreational Libraries

Interest Clubs and Societies

Information and Enquiry Service

Bookshops and Retail Outlets

University Diary

Campus Media/Student Newspapers

Legal Services

Sporting Clubs and Societies

Bars and Bistros

Conference and Meeting Rooms

Academic Dress

**YOUR WORK, YOUR RIGHTS**

**Students are more and more reliant on casual work to supplement their meagre incomes. Many students are taken advantage of by unscrupulous cash-in-hand operations. The RMIT Student Union runs a comprehensive student work rights website which informs students about their rights as workers, how to find out about their awards, what to look out for, how to get help and for international students on their obligations under DIMIA's student visa conditions on work.**

University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy  
Other

## Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

### Organisations:

RMIT Student Union (NUS, CAPA and NLC member)

RMIT Union (AUS member)

### Fee Levels:

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not requirement of enrolment, opt out by ticking box on enrolment form

**Services Provided** (43 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Student Accommodation

Binding Services

Catering and Food Service

Student Theatre

Sporting Facilities

Student Lounges

Computer Facilities

Shower, Change and Locker Facilities

Leisure Activities

Student Development Courses

Concerts

International Student Services and Advice

International Clubs

Campus Radio or TV

Childcare

Student Employment Service

Travel Service

Trips and Tours

Discount Ticketing

Function Spaces

Welfare Services

Representation on University Bodies

On Campus Shops

Art Gallery

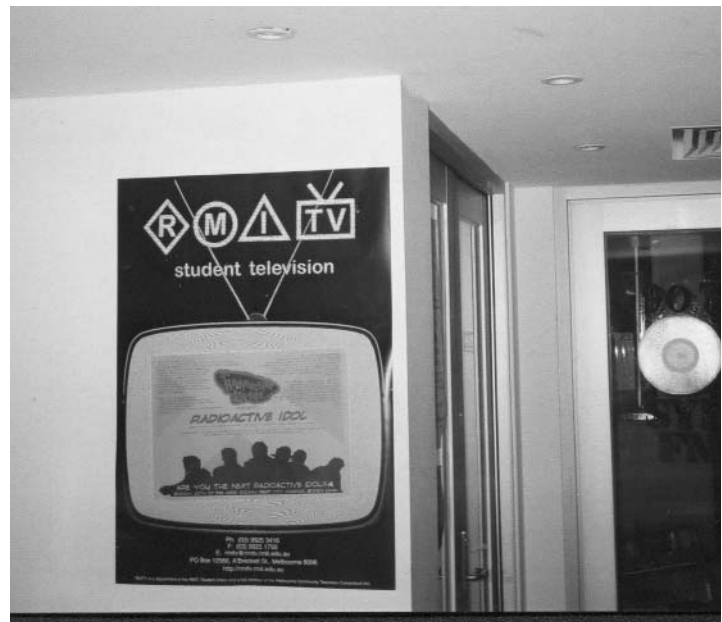
Social Activities

Photocopy Service

Campus Sports

Gymnasiums

Cinemas and Theatres



Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
Interest Clubs and Societies  
Information and Enquiry Service  
Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
University Diary  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Legal Services  
Sporting Clubs and Societies  
Bars and Bistros  
Conference and Meeting Rooms  
Academic Dress  
University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy  
Other

## South Australia

### Organisations:

University of South Australia Students Association at City-East, City-West, Mawson Lakes, Magill and Whyalla (NUS, CAPA, NLC and AUS member)

**Fee Levels:** (2004) full time annual internal \$273.50, external \$95.40. Fee level varied depending on enrolment load.

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** not requirement of enrolment, opt out by letter to Director, Student and Academic Services

### Services Provided (38 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Student Accommodation  
Binding Services  
Catering and Food Service  
Sporting Facilities  
Student Lounges  
Computer Facilities  
Shower, Change and Locker Facilities  
Leisure Activities  
Student Development Courses  
Concerts  
International Student Services and Advice  
Student Employment Service  
International Clubs  
Campus Radio or TV  
Childcare  
Trips and Tours  
Discount Ticketing  
Function Spaces  
Dental Services



Welfare Services  
Representation on University Bodies  
On Campus shops  
Social Activities  
Photocopy Service  
Campus Sports  
Gymnasiums  
Cinemas and Theatres  
Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
Interest Clubs and Societies  
Information and Enquiry Service  
Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
University Diary  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Sporting Clubs and Societies  
Bars and Bistros  
Conference and Meeting Rooms  
University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy

## Southern Cross

### Organisations:

SCU Students' Association – Coffs Harbour  
SCU Students' Association – Pt. Macquarie  
SCU Students' Association – Lismore (NUS member)  
SCU Campus Central (formerly the University Union) (AUS member)

### Fee Levels:

Lismore: Full Time Per Semester, \$174.90  
Part-Time \$116.60, External \$52.80  
Coff's Harbour: Full Time, \$99 Part-Time  
\$79.20, External \$52.80  
Pt. Macquarie: Full Time, \$85.80 Part-Time \$66,  
External \$52.80  
Tweed Gold Coast: \$52.80

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Is requirement of enrolment but can opt out by letter to Director, Student Services

**Services Provided** (38 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Student Accommodation  
Binding Services  
Catering and Food Service  
Sporting Facilities  
Student Lounges



**O-Week Ball put on by the Southern Cross Uni Students' Association**

Shower, Change and Locker Facilities  
 Leisure Activities  
 Student Development Courses  
 Concerts  
 International Student Services and Advice  
 Student Employment Service  
 International Clubs  
 Childcare  
 Travel Service  
 Trips and Tours  
 Discount Ticketing  
 Function Spaces  
 Dental Services  
 Welfare Services  
 Representation on University Bodies  
 On Campus shops  
 Social Activities  
 Photocopy Service  
 Campus Sports  
 Gymnasiums  
 Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
 Interest Clubs and Societies  
 Art Galleries  
 Information and Enquiry Service  
 Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
 University Diary  
 Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
 Sporting Clubs and Societies  
 Bars and Bistros  
 Conference and Meeting Rooms  
 Academic Dress  
 University Games  
 Academic Advice and Advocacy



**Graduation at Southern Cross University. At most universities the student organisations provide for the hire of academic dress for graduation.**

## **Southern Queensland**

### **Organisations:**

University of Southern Queensland Student Guild

### **Fee Levels:**

Full time internal annual fee: \$340.40

Students resident in 4350 (Toowoomba) postcode \$45.10 per unit

All other domestic students \$26.40 per unit

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Is requirement of enrolment but can opt out through letter to Registrar

**Services Provided** (31 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Student Accommodation

Binding Services  
 Catering and Food Service  
 Sporting Facilities  
 Shower, Change and Locker Facilities  
 Leisure Activities  
 Student Development Courses  
 Concerts  
 International Student Services and Advice  
 Travel Service  
 Trips and Tours  
 Discount Ticketing  
 Representation on University Bodies  
 On Campus shops  
 Social Activities  
 Photocopy Service  
 Campus Sports  
 Gymnasiums  
 Cinemas and Theatres  
 Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
 Recreational Libraries  
 Interest Clubs and Societies  
 Information and Enquiry Service  
 Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
 University Diary  
 Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
 Legal Services  
 Sporting Clubs and Societies  
 Bars and Bistros  
 University Games  
 Academic Advice and Advocacy



## Sunshine Coast

### Organisations:

University of Sunshine Coast Student Guild

### Fee Levels:

Full time annual General Service Fee: \$210



### O-Week fun on the Sunshine Coast

General Service Fee: Full time \$105 per semester, part-time \$52.50 per semester, on-line postgraduate coursework students are not charged a fee

\*note the General Service Fee includes a university access levy and a university administration component as well as a Guild charge

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not a requirement of enrolment, can opt out by applying to Deputy Vice-Chancellor

**Services Provided** (20 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Accommodation

Catering and Food Service  
 Employment Service  
 Sporting Facilities  
 Student Lounges  
 Leisure Activities  
 Welfare Services  
 Representation on University Bodies  
 On Campus shops  
 Social Activities  
 Campus Sports  
 Cinemas and Theatres  
 Interest Clubs and Societies  
 Information and Enquiry Service  
 Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
 University Diary  
 University Games  
 Legal Service  
 Academic Advice and Advocacy  
 Other



**Student Union caf at Swinburne**

## **Swinburne University**

### **Organisations:**

Swinburne Student Union (NUS, CAPA and NLC member)

Swinergy (Sports and Recreation) (AUS)

Operating at Croydon, Hawthorn,  
Healesville, Lilydale, Prahan and Wantirna

### **Fee Levels:**

General Service Fee: \$304 for full time students but half price discount for health care card concession holders



**Swinburne Multi-Cultural Week**

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not requirement of enrolment

### **Services Provided** (33 of the AVCC's 45 service categories):

Catering and Food Service  
 Sporting Facilities  
 Student Lounges  
 Computer Facilities  
 Shower, Change and Locker Facilities  
 Leisure Activities  
 Student Development Courses  
 Concerts  
 International Student Services and Advice  
 International Clubs  
 Campus Radio or TV  
 Discount Ticketing

Function Spaces  
Welfare Services  
Representation on University Bodies  
On Campus Shops  
Social Activities  
Photocopy Service  
Campus Sports  
Gymnasiums  
Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
Interest Clubs and Societies  
Information and Enquiry Service  
Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
University Diary  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Sporting Clubs and Societies  
Bars and Bistros  
Conference and Meeting Rooms  
Academic Dress  
University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy  
Other

## Sydney University

### Organisations:

Sydney University Postgraduate Association (CAPA member)  
Student Representative Council (NUS member)  
University of Sydney Union  
Cumberland Student Guild  
Student Association of Sydney College of the Arts  
Sydney University Sport (AUS member)  
Orange Student Association  
Conservatorium of Music Student Association

### Fee Levels:

Undergraduate: Full Time \$481, Part-Time \$373 (undergrads do not pay for postgrad association)  
Postgraduate: Full Time \$351, \$243 (postgrads do not pay for SRC and sports)

\*note only \$66 goes to SRC and \$80 to SUPRA  
\*\* there are different rates at smaller campus sites

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not requirement of enrolment, there are opt out provisions

**Services Provided** (42 of the AVCC's 45 service cate-

## UNION CREATIVE GRANTS

The Creative Grants programme provides \$20 000 worth of funding for a wide range of cultural activities annually. All Union Members who are currently students are eligible to apply for a grant. In the past, applicants have used grant money to help produce films, plays, concerts, exhibitions and magazines.

The aim of the grants is to promote excellence in the arts and cultural practice, by providing and encouraging the provision of opportunities for members to practice the arts and culture

Applications are judged on the basis of their artistic, innovative, inventive and collaborative value, with their viability and relevance to Union members also taken into account.

Applications go through a peer review evaluation as well as an arms length evaluation by arts professionals, who bring their experience and expertise to the committee.

gories)  
Student Accommodation  
Binding Services  
Catering and Food Service  
Student Theatre  
Sporting Facilities  
Student Lounges  
Computer Facilities  
Shower, Change and Locker Facilities  
Leisure Activities  
Student Development Courses  
Concerts  
International Student Services and Advice  
International Clubs  
Campus Radio or TV  
Childcare  
Trips and Tours  
Discount Ticketing  
Function Spaces  
Welfare Services  
Representation on University Bodies  
On Campus Shops  
Dental Service  
Art Galley  
Social Activities  
Photocopy Service  
Campus Sports  
Gymnasiums  
Cinemas and Theatres  
Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
Recreational Libraries  
Interest Clubs and Societies  
Information and Enquiry Service  
Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
University Diary  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Legal Services  
Sporting Clubs and Societies  
Bars and Bistros  
Conference and Meeting Rooms  
Academic Dress  
University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy  
Other

## **Tasmania**

### **Organisations:**

Tasmania University Union (Hobart) ( NUS, CAPA, NLC and AUS member)

Launceston Student Association (Launceston, Cradle Coast, Inveresk) (NUS, CAPA, NLC and AUS member)

**Fee Levels:** full-time \$122 per semester, for part-time, distance and 19 categories of students with substantial off-campus placements there are fee reductions

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Is requirement of enrolment but can opt out through letter to Registrar

**Services Provided** (36 of the AVCC's  
45 service categories)

Student Accommodation

Binding Services

Catering and Food Service

Sporting Facilities

Student Lounges

Computer Facilities

Shower, Change and Locker Facilities

Leisure Activities

Student Development Courses

Concerts

International Clubs

Travel Service

Trips and Tours

Discount Ticketing

Function Spaces

Welfare Services

Representation on University Bodies

On Campus shops

Social Activities

Photocopy Service

Campus Sports

Gymnasiums

Cinemas and Theatres

Facility Upkeep and Maintenance

Interest Clubs and Societies

Art Galleries

Information and Enquiry Service

Bookshops and Retail Outlets

Campus Media/Student Newspapers

Sporting Clubs and Societies

Bars

Conference and Meeting Rooms

Academic Dress

University Games

Academic Advice and Advocacy



**University of Tasmania is now carving out a niche attracting many students from the mainland. For students who need a break or want to see the breathtaking sights of Tasmania the TUU owns a ski hut with 17 beds which is offered at a very subsidised rate to members**

**University of Technology Sydney**

**Organisations:**

UTS Students Association (NUS, CAPA and NLC member)

UTS Union (AUS member)

**Fee Levels:**

Full Time Annual \$420

\$210 per semester (\$135 to Union, \$34 to Student Association, \$33.50 accommodation levy, \$7.50 student ID card, \$33.50 student accommodation levy)

External students do not pay fee, no extra charge for third summer semester

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not requirement of enrolment, opt out provisions

**Services Provided** (37 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Binding Services

Catering and Food Service

Student Theatre

Sporting Facilities

Student Lounges

Computer Facilities

Shower, Change and Locker Facilities

Leisure Activities

Student Development Courses

Concerts

International Student Services and Advice

International Clubs

Childcare

Trips and Tours

Discount Ticketing

Function Spaces

Welfare Services

Representation on University Bodies

On Campus shops

Social Activities

Photocopy Service

Campus Sports

Gymnasiums

Cinemas and Theatres

Facility Upkeep and Maintenance

Interest Clubs and Societies

Art Galleries

Information and Enquiry Service

Bookshops and Retail Outlets

University Diary

Campus Media/Student Newspapers

## Community Law and Legal Research Centre

The UTS Community Law and Legal Research Centre provides a free, accessible legal advice and referral service for UTS students and staff on a variety of issues. The Centre also provides community legal education and works on law reform projects, which students can get involved in. The Centre is recognised and respected as a professional legal and community assistance service. In 1999, it was awarded the UTS Equity, Social Justice and Human Rights Award in recognition of its efforts in law reform. The Centre's legal service is funded by the UTS Union. The Centre is also funded and supported by the UTS Students' Association and the UTS Faculty of Law.

The Centre is also a place of practical legal education for UTS law students. Each week 25-30 students volunteer at the Centre. They perform a variety of tasks including interviewing clients, doing legal research, providing para-legal assistance to the solicitor, and working on socio-legal research projects.



Legal Services  
Sporting Clubs and Societies  
Bars and Bistros  
Conference and Meeting Rooms  
University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy

## Victoria University

### Organisations:

Victoria University Student Union (NUS, CAPA, NLC and AUS member)

### Fee Levels:

General Service Fee \$300 full time annual  
adjusted according to enrolment load

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not requirement of enrolment

**Services Provided** (29 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Binding Services  
Sporting Facilities  
Student Lounges  
Leisure Activities  
Student Development Courses  
Concerts  
International Student Services and Advice  
Student Employment Service  
International Clubs  
Campus Radio or TV  
Childcare  
Trips and Tours  
Discount Ticketing  
Dental Services  
Welfare Services  
Representation on University Bodies  
On Campus shops  
Social Activities  
Photocopy Service  
Campus Sports  
Gymnasiums  
Facility Upkeep and Maintenance  
Information and Enquiry Service  
University Diary



**Bringing together students from around the world. Victoria University International Students' Association social event**

Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Conference and Meeting Rooms  
University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy  
Other

## Western Australia

### **Organisations:**

University of WA Student Guild (NUS, CAPA, NLC and AUS member)

### **Fee Levels:**

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not requirement of enrolment, can opt out by filling out a form.  
Student Guild receives proportion of fee equivalent to students who do not opt out

### **Services Provided** (30 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Catering and Food Service  
Sporting Facilities  
Student Lounges  
Computer Facilities  
Shower, Change and Locker Facilities  
Leisure Activities  
International Clubs  
Function Spaces  
Welfare Services  
Representation on University Bodies  
On Campus shops  
Social Activities  
Photocopy Service  
Campus Sports  
Gymnasiums  
Computer facilities  
Interest Clubs and Societies  
Art Galleries  
Information and Enquiry Service  
Bookshops and Retail Outlets  
University Diary  
Campus Media/Student Newspapers  
Legal Services  
Sporting Clubs and Societies  
Bars and Bistros  
Conference and Meeting Rooms  
Academic Dress  
University Games  
Academic Advice and Advocacy  
Other

# Western Sydney

## Organisations:

In transition due to restructure arising from university mergers

Students' Association

Postgraduate Association

\* note the bulk of the 80% of the fee goes to a not for profit company called uwsconnect which operates at Bankstown, Blacktown (Nirimba), Campbelltown, Hawkesbury and some services at Parramatta. There is opposition to the structure at Penrith. It has an equal number of university and elected student representatives in its board of management. As well as doing the commercial serviced it also runs sports and leisure.

## Fee Levels:

Full Time Annual Fee: \$364

Full time per standard semester: \$182, part-time \$122, external \$63.50

Non-standard enrolments: \$91 full time, \$61 part-time, external \$31.75

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Not a requirement of enrolment, opt out by applying to Student Associations

## Services Provided

Being restuctured

# Wollongong

## Organisations:

WU Students Association NUS and NLC member)

WU Postgraduate Association (CAPA member)

\* note that over 85% of the annual fee goes to University Recreation and Aquatic Centre Ltd (a university run company) and Wollongong Uni Centre Ltd (another university run company with only minority student representation)

## Fee Levels:

Full Time Annual Fee: \$351.60

(Uni Centre \$199.10, University Recreation and Aquatic Centre, \$104, WU Student Association \$48.50, WU Postgraduate Association \$57)

Wollongong Campus: Undergraduate \$351.60, Postgraduate \$360; Shoalhaven Campus \$180; Access Centres \$55; External Postgraduates \$57, Bachelor of Indigenous Health \$48.40

**Membership Opt-Out Provisions:** Is requirement of enrolment but can opt out by applying to SAS

**Services Provided** (36 of the AVCC's 45 service categories)

Binding Services

Catering and Food Service

Sporting Facilities

Student Lounges

Computer Facilities

Shower, Change and Locker Facilities

Leisure Activities

Student Development Courses

Concerts

International Student Services and Advice

Student Employment Service

International Clubs

Childcare

Trips and Tours

Discount Ticketing

Function Spaces

Dental Services

Welfare Services

Representation on University Bodies

On Campus shops

Social Activities

Photocopy Service

Campus Sports

Gymnasiums

Cinemas and Theatres

Interest Clubs and Societies

Information and Enquiry Service

Bookshops and Retail Outlets

University Diary

Campus Media/Student Newspapers

Sporting Clubs and Societies

Bars and Bistros

Academic Dress

University Games

Academic Advice and Advocacy



**Even hard-working postgraduates have got to have some fun some times - Wollongong University Postgraduate Association puts on the postgraduate ball.**











