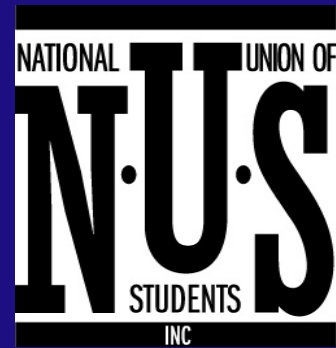


What is the National Union of Students?



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 Teachers' Colleges and institutes of technology were admitted it changed its name to the Australian Union of Students (AUS) in 1971. 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 with a combined membership of 650,000 students. As well as a national office based in Melbourne, NUS also has state and 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:

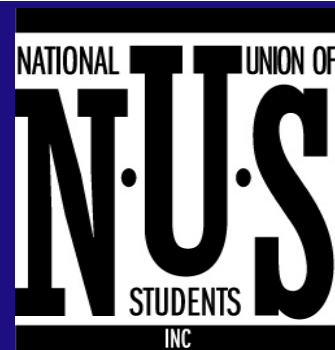


Australian National University Student Association
 Charles Darwin University Students' Union
 Curtin University of Technology Student Guild
 Edith Cowan University Student Guild Bunbury
 Edith Cowan University Student Guild Churchlands
 Edith Cowan University Student Guild Joondalup
 Edith Cowan University Student Guild Mt. Lawley
 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
 - Gardens 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 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 Sydney 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:

Submission to the West Review of Higher Education Financing and Policy 1997

Submission to the Senate GST and New Tax System Inquiry

Submission to the Junior Rates of Pay Inquiry 1998 – 2000

An alternative Commonwealth budget for Higher Education: Education for all

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

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education Legislation Committee,

Inquiry into the: Innovation and Education Legislation Bill 2001 (PELS)

DEST, Submission To The Crossroads ministerial discussion paper, 2002

Realities of Achieving Quality with Equity: submission to the ministerial review of higher education

Striving for Quality, Setting Firm Foundations, Varieties of Excellence Achieving Equitable and Appropriate Outcomes, Meeting The Challenges, Varieties of Learning, 2002

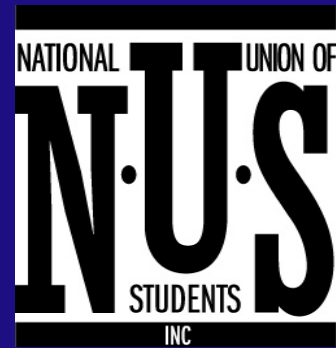
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee Inquiry into higher education funding and regulatory legislation (2003) (plus second supplementary submission)

Submission to the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee Inquiry into Poverty and Financial Hardship, 2003

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

The role and activities of NUS:



NUS campaigns on issues as determined by our membership including:

Funding and availability of childcare
Cuts to operating grants for universities
Quality of education delivery
Level of income support for students
Safety on campus
Increases to rates of HECS (Higher Education Contribution Scheme)
Up-front fees for local undergraduate students
Environmental issues
Scholarships for regional and indigenous students
Racism
Sexual violence

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

Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
Australian Council of Social Services
Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission
Australian Council of Trade Unions
Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations
The Centrelink Youth Allowance Reference Group (and formerly the Department for Social Security)
Department of Family and Community Services
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)
National Liaison Committee for International Students in Australia
National Tertiary Education Union
National Youth Coalition for Housing
Welfare Rights Centre
Network of Women Students in Australia
Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation

NUS also undertakes research on behalf of its membership. We collect and distribute information regarding higher education policy, equity in education, student poverty, and a variety of other welfare issues to Universities, Government, the media, community organisations and our membership. 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 (www.unistudent.com) receives several thousand hits per week.