



22nd March 2007

Government aims in the right direction but misfires support for students

The Hon. Julie Bishop, Minister for Education, Science and Training today announced an increase to the threshold for repayment of HECS HELP debt to \$39,825.

This announcement comes off the back of the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee's research paper which identified that students were struggling to finance themselves while at University.

Mr Michael Nguyen, National President of the National Union of Students said, "The government is looking in the right direction, but is clearly misfiring in terms of its policy responses to current issues in Higher Education. Alleviating the burden of HECS debt for low-income earners contributes to easing pressures in graduates working lives, however doesn't address the issues of access to higher education and insufficient investment."

"The recent AVCC report showed that students were finding it increasingly difficult to study full-time and to finance themselves while at University. Further, students are taking up an alarming average of \$4720 in private debt to finance themselves while at Uni. Ensuring that students can graduate and enter the workforce and achieve their potential should now become a priority area for the Government."

Contact:

Michael Nguyen
National President
0411 606 808

"The fact that 67.3 percent of students would consider full-time study if their finances allowed is indicative of the impact that work is having on the ability of students to concentrate effectively on getting the skills they need to enter the workforce."

Mr Nguyen went on to say, "More generally, the NUS welcomes the announcement and looks forward to ongoing dialogue to ensure that the government's policies are targeted more effectively at solving issues in the sector in the future."

NUS National

Suite 64, Trades Hall

54 Victoria St,

Carlton South

VIC 3053

Phone: (03) 9650 8908

Fax: (03) 9650 8906

www.unistudent.com.au

For further comment contact: Michael Nguyen 0411 606 808