



MINISTER FOR  
EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING  
THE HON DR BRENDAN NELSON MP

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

25 June 2004

MIN 652 /04

### **LABOR A BARRIER TO SLASHING UP FRONT FEES FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS *STUDENT UNIONS SLUG STUDENTS \$153 MILLION EACH YEAR***

Legislation will shortly be debated in the Parliament which will make student union payments voluntary for university students. The Howard Government does not believe that university students who enrol at Australian universities to study for a degree should be forced into union membership and forced to pay compulsory union fees.

In 2003, student unions collected \$153.1 million in compulsory dues from Australian full-time undergraduate students. The list is topped by the University of Sydney, whose 26,580 students were forced to pay \$12.4 million, with yearly fees ranging up to \$577. Monash University students were next, having been forced to pay \$12.4 million in compulsory fees. (*see attached list of all universities*)

Student union representatives regularly claim that compulsory fees fund services. However they do not mention the facilities, allowances and air travel for student union officers which are funded by fees. Many students who are forced to pay these fees would not even realise their fees are going to such activities.

Part-time students and external students, who may never set foot on a campus, are also required to pay compulsory fees for services they do not use.

Everyone should be free to choose whether they will join a union or not.

The National Union of Students repeatedly claims that university students face a burden of fees. This is hypocritical – union fees add to that burden. They are compulsory and must be paid up front – unlike HECS which is a deferred loan repayable when graduates are earning more than \$35,000 a year.

The *Workplace Relations Act 1996* guarantees everyone freedom of association - that is, the choice to be, or not to be, in a union. The collection of compulsory up front fees to fund university student unions, under the guise of a general service fee, misleads students.

I call on Mark Latham to join with the government in freeing students from this financial burden.

Student union membership and compulsory dues should be voluntary – as is the case for every other union in Australia.

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**COMPULSORY UNIVERSITY UP FRONT FEES**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Indicative Maximum Undergraduate Full-Time Fee per year (2004)</b>	<b>Total Full-time Undergraduate Students, 2003</b>	<b>Indicative Total Compulsory Up front Fees Collected</b>
Charles Sturt University	\$272	13,316	\$3.62 m
Macquarie University	\$378	11,994	\$4.53 m
Southern Cross University	\$349.80	5,884	\$2.06 m
The University of New England	\$360	5,961	\$2.15 m
The University of New South Wales	\$453	21,207	\$9.61 m
The University of Newcastle	\$346	13,699	\$4.74 m
The University of Sydney	(commencing) \$577 (continuing) \$470	26,580	\$13.55 m
University of Technology, Sydney	\$405	14,359	\$5.82 m
University of Western Sydney	\$316.80	21,014	\$6.66 m
University of Wollongong	\$347.80	10,690	\$3.72 m
<b>NSW Sub-total</b>		<b>\$56.46 m</b>	
Deakin University	\$260	16,015	\$4.16 m
La Trobe University	\$357	16,259	\$5.80 m
Monash University	\$428.30	28,965	\$12.41 m
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology	\$360	21,531	\$7.75 m
Swinburne University of Technology	\$296	7,646	\$2.26 m
The University of Melbourne	\$382	25,556	\$9.76 m
University of Ballarat	\$258	4,057	\$1.05 m
Victoria University of Technology	\$295	10,965	\$3.16 m
<b>Victoria Sub-total</b>		<b>\$46.35 m</b>	
Central Queensland University	\$252	10,678	\$2.69 m
Griffith University	\$292	19,693	\$5.75 m
James Cook University	\$275	8,142	\$2.24 m
Queensland University of Technology	\$242	23,771	\$5.75 m
The University of Queensland	\$272	23,154	\$6.29 m
University of Southern Queensland	\$330	6,703	\$2.21 m
University of the Sunshine Coast	\$210	2,473	\$0.51 m
<b>Queensland Sub-total</b>		<b>\$25.44 m</b>	
Curtin University of Technology	\$100	20,759	\$2.07 m
Edith Cowan University	\$100	13,127	\$1.31 m
Murdoch University	\$140	7,007	\$0.98 m
The University of Western Australia	\$110	10,728	\$1.18 m
<b>Western Australia Sub-total</b>		<b>\$5.54 m</b>	
The Flinders University of South Australia	\$355.30	7,953	\$2.83 m
The University of Adelaide	\$326.70	10,608	\$3.47 m
University of South Australia	\$297	15,948	\$4.74 m
<b>South Australia Sub-total</b>		<b>\$11.04 m</b>	
University of Tasmania	(commencing) \$297 (continuing) \$236	9,805	\$2.61 m
<b>Tasmania Sub-total</b>		<b>\$2.61 m</b>	
Charles Darwin University	\$216	2,077	\$0.45 m
<b>Northern Territory Sub-total</b>		<b>\$0.45 m</b>	
The Australian National University	\$210	7,287	\$1.53 m
University of Canberra	\$270	5,688	\$1.54 m
<b>ACT Sub-total</b>		<b>\$3.07 m</b>	
Australian Catholic University	\$310	6,938	\$2.15 m
<b>Multi- State Sub-total</b>		<b>\$2.15 m</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$153.11 m</b>	

**NB: The total amounts in this table were calculated on 2003 enrolments and do not include the compulsory up front fees collected by universities from postgraduate or part-time students.**