



For immediate release

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Has the Government Forgotten about Young People?

No Discussion of Students or Young People before Federal Budget 2021

The National Union of Students and its 1 million members still keenly await any news on funding for higher education, announcements for young people on welfare payments, or further discussion on the 113% increase in some course fees over the last 6 months.

The NUS is in Canberra this week to speak to members of Parliament and key stakeholders about the place of young people and students in the COVID-19 recovery, but the absence of any policy discussion from the government about the future of post-secondary education is stark.

The NUS hopes that there will be more than a token gesture for students and young people at a time where thousands of courses have been slashed across the country, and almost two thirds of domestic undergraduate students are worried about their financial situation.

These are **the three main issues** we're calling for action on this week:

1. Investment in COVID-recovery centred education

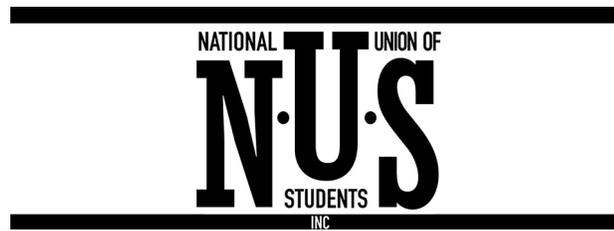
This means free TAFE for priority courses in youth employment areas such as hospitality, an increase of courses eligible for the \$152,700 HELP loan limit to drive R&D and a reversal of the 113% increase in course fees for fields such as counselling and tourism.

2. Support for International Students

International students need a government with a secure plan to bring them home whenever safe, and support them financially when they get here. We're calling for the Government to invest in an International Student recovery plan to assure jobs, housing and free quarantine facilities to students enrolled in Australia.

3. Youth Welfare Assurances

We can't kickstart the economy again while half of the three million people in poverty in Australia are under 24. That's why we're calling for the JobSeeker rate to be increased to 75% of the Henderson Poverty Line, and for the Age of Independence to be decreased to the age that most young people start work or university at - 18. Our #ChangetheAge petition has gained over 11,000 signatures in 2 months, so it's now time to see whether the Government will listen to the voices of its youngest voters.



“Above all else, the Morrison Government this week needs to deliver a plan to save the higher education sector,” said NUS National President, Zoe Ranganathan. “It’s our fourth largest export, and we’re currently on track to lose \$19billion in revenue over the next three years.”

An investment in quality higher education is the only way we can make sure that Australia’s next generation can lift us out of the COVID-19 crisis over the medium term.

For further comment:

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