

**Inquiry: the Higher Education and Research Reform Amendment Bill 2014.**

Honourable Members,

This will be a short submission.

I work as a student Counsellor at a large Victorian University, although this submission is purely private and has no connection with that institution, and in my day to day work, I see many students already suffering various mental conditions caused in large part by financial difficulties.

Increasing the cost of university degrees will not only exacerbate these difficulties and their concomitant emotional and mental issues, but will make university education unaffordable for many potential students.

In my experience, a great number of high achievers come to university from low socio-economic circumstances (many of these Indigenous students) and pricing them out of university will be not only unfair to those students, but will deny our country access to a pool of potential leaders in many fields of endeavour. In addition, it will make my job somewhat harder, but this is not my prime concern.

Please examine carefully this short-sighted and divisive proposal and seek to maintain a system that is fair and inclusive for the good of the country.

Thank you.

Dr. A. Bryan Fricker JP