



Australian Council of Social Service

24 October 2016
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretariat,

Re: Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation (Simplifying Student Payments) Bill 2016

ACOSS welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the *Social Services Legislation (Simplifying Student Payments) Bill 2016* (the Bill).

ACOSS supports this Bill and recommend that it be passed.

Extending the means test to assess interests in trusts and companies for the purpose of determining access to the independent rate of Youth Allowance and Austudy is sensible and rectifies an anomaly within the social security system.

ACOSS strongly supports automatic issuing of health care cards to Youth Allowance (student and apprentice) recipients, which will ensure full coverage of the health care card.

ACOSS also welcomes reform of the treatment of allowances and gifts from family members for youth and ABSTUDY payments to bring it into line with the pension income test.

For more information about youth payment reform, please refer to our submission to the Inquiry into the [*Social Services Legislation Amendment \(More Generous Means Testing for Youth Payments\) Bill 2015*](#).

Yours sincerely,

Cassandra Goldie
ACOSS CEO