

To: Committee Secretary,
Senate Education and Employment Committees

Re: Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment (A More Sustainable, Responsive and Transparent Higher Education System) Bill 2017

My family and I are very concerned with respect to implication of the proposed Higher Education Reform changes introduced with the 2017 Federal Budget.

My family and I are Permanent Residents and were eligible to apply for Australian Citizenship on June 11, 2017 until the proposed changes were brought forward on April 20th, 2017 and as a consequence, we will be impacted significantly by the proposed changes to Higher Education.

The proposed bill states that permanent resident students already enrolled will be able to maintain Commonwealth Supported Place. Our daughter is in a guaranteed entry program for medicine and Griffith University. Her program is made up of two degrees. She finishes her "fast-tracked" 3-year Bachelor of Medical Science in 2 years and will then start her Medicine degree in January 2018. If these degrees are considered separate courses then we would be unable to afford her tuition fees with the potential loss of Commonwealth support. This change would be very unfair as her decision to accept the place to study medicine at Griffith University was based on the conditions of our Permanent Residency that were granted on June 11th, 2016. There was no indication at the time our Permanent Residency was granted that any changes were being considered.

Our youngest son graduates from high school in Queensland in 2017 and would no longer have access to Commonwealth Support for his university education. Again, the massive financial impact of this change seems very unfair as we planned around this condition and our future Australian Citizenship based on the conditions provided to us upon receiving our Permanent Residency.

We were forced to send our oldest son back to Canada for university based on the International Tuition rates in Australia being unaffordable. He dreams of returning to Australia for employment in Finance or Accounting when he completes his Bachelor of Commerce.

I worry the proposed legislation changes to Higher Education and Citizenship will alienate hard-working taxpayers making it very difficult to achieve Australian Citizenship and afford a University education in Australia.

Thank-you for considering families like ours,

Patricia Balshaw