

GW



ANZSSA Inc.

AUSTRALIAN & NEW ZEALAND STUDENT SERVICES ASSOCIATION INC.

Promoting the well-being and development of students and staff in Higher Education

3 November 2010

The Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Submission re the Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services and Amenities) Bill 2010

The Australia and New Zealand Student Services Association (ANZSSA) is a leading professional association for people with an interest in the provision of support services to students in post secondary education in Australia and New Zealand – please see <http://www.adcet.edu.au/Anzssa/> for further information about the association. As President of ANZSSA, I submit the points below with respect to the Student Services and Amenities legislation.

1. ANZSSA supports this legislation in that it acknowledges the key role that student services and amenities have in student success and persistence. In the time since the introduction of VSU, we have observed that support services in higher education have been under increasing pressure as universities have had to respond to the loss of services previously provided by student associations. Formal measures to address this are to be applauded.
2. Subsection 4, paragraph (r) refers to “orientation”. ANZSSA submits that it would be more useful to employ the term “orientation and transition”. Orientation can often be interpreted to mean an event held over a relatively constrained time period – usually approximately a week. The transition needs of incoming students are best met over a more extended period, beginning with pre-enrolment contact with the university and persisting well into their first period of study. The addition of the term “transition” would go some way to addressing this.
3. We have a concern that some institutions may view the Amenities and Services Fee as a replacement for existing funding models for the services listed in Subsection 4.

ANZSSA submits that many student support services are seriously under-resourced at this time, and that the Amenities and Services Fee should be directed at supplementing and extending existing services.

4. The services listed under Subsection 4 are all worthwhile activities that make a difference to student success. The history of different universities has resulted in some significant resourcing differentials between these services from one institution to another. ANZSSA submits that attention should be given to ensuring that all services meet minimum benchmarking standards – that is, it is important to address the historical differentials in resourcing.
5. We note that students who meet citizenship or residency requirements will be entitled to SA-HELP. We have two concerns with respect to this:
 - a. We would like to see some clarification of the circumstances under which students may apply for remission of this debt.
 - b. Presumably International students will be required to pay the Amenities and Services Fee on enrolment. This incurs an additional financial burden at a time when there is already significant pressure on this demographic group. We urge the government to consider ways of ameliorating this.

We trust that this submission is of assistance in the consideration of this legislation.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Jim Elliott
President
Australia and New Zealand Student Services Association