

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
Legislation Committee

Bills relating to the establishment of Carnegie Mellon University 2005

**Higher Education Legislation Amendment (2005 Measures No.4) Bill
2005 and
Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment Bill 2005**

Submission no: 8

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Submitter: Mr Tim Smith
National Executive Officer

Organisation: The Australian Council for Private Education and
Training

Address: Box Q1076
QVB PO
SYDNEY NSW 1230

Phone: 02 9264 4490

Fax: 02 9264 4550

Email:

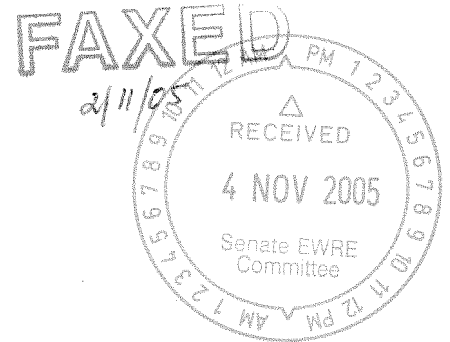


National Office: Box Q1076, QVB PO, Sydney NSW 1230
Suite 12, Level 14, 329 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Ph: 02 9264 4490 **Fax:** 02 9264 4550

28 October 2005

Mr John Carter
Secretary to the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations
And Education Committee
Suite SG52
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Mr Carter

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee inquiry into the *Higher Education Legislation Amendment (2005 Measures No.4) Bill 2005* and the *Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment Bill 2005*.

ACPET is the national industry association for private providers of post-compulsory education and training. Established in 1992, ACPET's membership today has grown to include more than 800 organisations delivering a full range of higher education, vocational education and training and English language courses to Australian and international students in all States and Territories.

ACPET broadly supports the proposed amendments to both Bills as a means of bringing greater diversity to Australia's higher education sector. ACPET welcomes the establishment of Carnegie Mellon as Australia's first foreign university approved under National Protocol 2.

ACPET supports the diversification of the higher education sector through review of the definition of 'university' under the National Protocols, particularly the rigid necessity of research capacity to obtain the status of university, and through the growth of the non-university private higher education sector, that is, non-self-accrediting institutions (HEPs). The number of these institutions varies according to the source, but is anywhere between 110 and 150 across Australia.

Full-fee paying Australian students attending Carnegie Mellon should be entitled to FEE-HELP assistance in the same way Australian students attending public universities and approved higher education providers can.

The FEE-HELP student loan scheme has been the biggest single equity measure in higher education in the past five years. Thirty-four higher education providers have now been approved by the Federal Parliament for FEE-HELP eligibility. Over 50,000 EFTS students are enrolled in Australian higher education private providers. This is the equivalent of the largest university. Access to FEE-HELP will enable this growth to continue.

Queensland: Suite 32, Level 8 Christie Corporate Centre, 320 Adelaide Street Brisbane QLD 4000

South Australia: Suite 29, "Carrington House", 61-63 Carrington Street Adelaide SA 5000

Victoria: Suite 101, Level 1, 126 Wellington Parade East Melbourne VIC 3002

Western Australia: Suite 12, 44 Kings Park Road, West Perth WA 6005

Web: www.acpet.edu.au

Email: acpet@acpet.edu.au

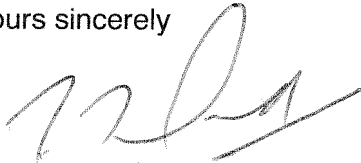
Most of these students are enrolled in fee-paying courses in providers who operate on a commercial basis. It follows there is a market demand for the courses or providers would go broke. There is no sign of any doing so, but the ACPET Student Tuition Assurance Scheme (ASTAS) stands ready to provide 100 percent consumer protection if the need arises.

The requirement of the *HESA 2003* providing the option for students of a full refund places a substantial burden on the private higher education industry. At considerable cost to its members, ACPET has taken out re-insurance through a Lloyds of London syndicate for the ASTAS scheme. This scheme provides tuition assurance or a full refund to students studying with an approved HEP.

While ACPET accepts absolutely the right of refund of fees for students (if a college collapses) it is crucial that the regulations promulgated pursuant to the Act acknowledge the importance of the completion of a course and encourage students to seek relocation as distinct from a fee refund.

ACPET would welcome the opportunity to provide further evidence to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Smith', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Tim Smith
National Executive Officer