



Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
the council of Australia's university presidents

Media Release

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AVCC report strengthens call for a compromise

The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) has today released a report on the *Higher Education Support Amendment (Abolition of Compulsory Up-front Student Union Fees) Bill 2005*.

AVCC Chief Executive Officer said that the report, which is to be submitted to the Senate Enquiry, made a very strong case for a compromise on the Bill, which in its current form would decimate services and amenities on university campuses.

"A university education is much more than just study, it should also develop students' broader capacity to be part of their society and assist in the development of that society," Mr Mullarvey said.

"For this reason universities strongly encourage students to participate in clubs and societies, cultural and artistic events, and sporting activities that provide opportunities for students to interact with each other and the wider community.

"Universities and student bodies also support students through a wide range of services and amenities such as child-care, legal services, health and employment services, assistance with accommodation and welfare, services food outlets, and advocacy in internal university matters affecting the student," he said.

"The sad truth is that if the Bill is passed in its current form, universities are unlikely to have the resources to offer these services and amenities.

"That is why the AVCC is strongly recommending to the Senate Enquiry that a compromise be reached that allows universities to have a services and amenities charge," Mr Mullarvey said.

In its submission to the enquiry, the AVCC is recommending that the Bill be amended to incorporate the following six elements:

- 1 membership of student organisations of any form should be voluntary;
- 2 a university can levy a charge for student services and amenities which is payable by all on campus students on a pro-rata (based on study load) basis;
- 3 the student services and amenities charge can go towards funding of services, facilities and amenities. The services and amenities would include at least health, welfare, dental, sporting, cultural and artistic and specific international student services. The funds cannot be used to support student political activities;
- 4 allowing for internal student representative and advocacy functions to be funded;
- 5 the university would collect the money as a condition of enrolment; and
- 6 the university would be responsible for the effective use of the funds raised whether through its direct provision of the services or contracting them to another body best capable of delivering the services, facilities and amenities.

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