

Friday 13 November 2009



Media Release No. 15/09

Parliament considers important student equity measures next week

The Federal Parliament will resume debate over important changes to student income support and student services and amenities next week.

“The provision of income support and student services will assist with achieving the national target of 20% of enrolled students being from low socio-economic status backgrounds by 2020,” Universities Australia Chief Executive Dr Glenn Withers said today.

“The improvements to Youth Allowance proposed in the *Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Income Support for Students) Bill* before the Senate will open up opportunities for more students to pursue university study, without undue pressure to undertake excessive paid work commitments detrimental to studies. Previous evidence provided in the *Australian University Student Finances 2006 Report* shows how important this is,” Dr Withers said.

Universities Australia also calls on the House of Representatives to consider the revised *Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services and Amenities) Bill 2009*, for expeditious passage.

“Recent evidence from the United States shows that boosting expenditure on student services and amenities leads to an increase in completion rates, particularly for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds,” Dr Withers said.

“Supporting students through their studies is at the core of building a knowledge economy, so it is important for Australia that both of these measures are passed as soon as possible,” Dr Withers said.

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