

MEDIA RELEASE

“Students fight back against fee increases”

Students are gathering today at noon at the University of Newcastle to protest cuts to education and increases in HECS fees. Students are furious that the budget is set to see a 25% increase in HECS fees and lowering of the payback threshold to \$42,000.

NUSA condemns the Federal Government's plan to cut spending in the tertiary education sector and believes in free tuition for all. A 25% increase in HECS is another step in this government's plan towards corporate universities. These arrangements can see thousands of low socioeconomic status (SES) students locked out of tertiary education for generations. Meanwhile, those currently undertaking degrees are left with thousands of additional dollars of debt.

Graduate incomes are falling while the cost of living is increasing. Lowering the HECS payback threshold is a slap in the face for struggling graduates. This budget lacks any method to ease the cost of living and housing affordability issues faced by many young people.

Quotes attributable to Michael Labone, NUSA President

“We will not accept any cuts to our education. The Hunter is already struggling and this will just make things worse.”

Quotes attributable to Rhianon Fennell, NUSA Education Officer

“We stand with the National Union of Students in their call to protest action. We encourage University and TAFE students to stand up for their rights.”

Quotes attributable to Aesha Awan, NUSA Welfare Officer

“This budget is a clear attack on students. It is designed to lock out low SES students from tertiary education. Slowly chipping away at our current system, it's a move towards the corporatized American university system.”

“We should be moving towards free university education for all. It's blatantly hypocritical of this government, many of whom had free education, to now turn around and attack university students with fee increases.”

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