

AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN INC.



A • F • U • W

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The Hon. Brendan Nelson MP
Minister for Education, Science and Training
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I write on behalf of the Australian Federation University Women (AFUW) to voice our strong agreement to the representations made by the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee about the Government's bill to abolish voluntary student union fees.

AFUW is a non-government organization affiliated with similar federations in 78 countries and together we form the International Federation of University Women, based in Geneva.

Our objects are to unite the associations of university women graduates in Australia; to promote and encourage the advancement of education and research activities; to encourage university women graduates to apply their knowledge and skills to contribute to solving the problems which arise at all levels of public life, national, regional and international; and to promote understanding, friendship and co-operation among university women graduates of the world irrespective of their race, nationality, religion or political opinions.

As past students at a variety of universities around Australia, we believe very strongly in the present system of compulsory student unionism. The student union bodies are not run in the same way as a traditional trade union. They provide many important social and educational facilities for students.

The passage of the legislation will seriously jeopardize the ability of universities across Australia from being able to maintain appropriate support services for students. These services include health, sport, welfare, recreation, housing, education, counseling and child care facilities.

We acknowledge that students may already opt out of student organizations, but it is vital for the welfare of our higher education system that student organizations are able to continue participating in the life of universities in the way they now do. The legislation, if passed, would deny that opportunity to many current and future students.

Australia has prided itself in the past in having a diverse higher education system. This must be maintained. The legislation would destroy this.

We urge you to withdraw the legislation from debate in the Senate.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rosemary A Everett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a distinct 'A'.

(Ms) Rosemary A Everett
President
10 July 2005

cc Prime Minister of Australia
Opposition Minister for Education, Training, Science and Research
Leader of the Opposition
Leader of the Government in the Senate
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate
Leader of the Australian Democrats
Leader of the Australian Greens