



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Windsor to move amendment to Voluntary Student Unionism Bill

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor will next week move an amendment in the Federal Parliament to the Government's Higher Education Support Amendment (Abolition of Compulsory Up-front Student Union Fees) Bill 2005 so that non-political activities can continue to be funded as they currently are and therefore continue to provide services to University students and communities.

"The Federal Government's real agenda is to prevent the use of the 'General Service Fee' for political purposes.

In reality, the other positive uses for the 'Fee' are being thrown out and are based on the incorrect presumption that the market will provide those services.

That presumption will not eventuate at regional universities such as the University of New England.

The Government is therefore throwing the baby out with the bath water on this issue as it is only a small percentage of the General Service Fee that finds its way to the politically active groups with the great majority of it going to the provision of services and facilities for students which if left up to students to voluntarily pay, will not be adequately funded and will therefore no longer exist," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor's amendment is being drawn up to remove only that part of the General Service Fee paid by students to the politically active group at Universities.

"My amendment will reduce the amount of the General Service Fee but it will maintain a contribution that allows services and facilities so important to the functioning of Universities particularly in country areas to continue.

The original Bill is overkill but we must still encourage and support the provision of services and facilities at our Universities.

I look forward to the support of both the Coalition and Opposition to my amendments," Mr Windsor said.

For further information contact Tony Windsor, Ph (02) 6761 3080 or 0427 668868