



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Uni Student fee will help provide better services But not for political purposes

The re-introduction of a university student services fee will help provide much needed services to students, the Independent Member for New England Tony Windsor believes.

According to Mr Windsor, the decision, announced by the Minister for Youth, Kate Ellis, will put much needed funding back into the sector which had \$170m per annum removed from it when the previous Government introduced Voluntary Student Unionism and in doing so, "threw the baby out with the bath water".

"The previous Government was intent on smashing the Student Union movement by removing funding made to it from compulsory student fees.

So instead of addressing that specific issue, it removed the need for students to contribute anything towards on-campus services such as child care, health care, sport and recreation facilities and many other services.

This had the effect of severely curtailing the ability of universities to meet the needs of students and jobs were lost," Mr Windsor said.

In previously trying to overcome concerns about student fees going to support student political activities, Mr Windsor moved an amendment to the Voluntary Student Unionism Bill which prevented such use of student fees.

"I added a number of suggestions to my Amendment from the numerous groups affected by the 2005 Bill that better enabled the delivery of student services and facilities but still achieved the prevention of the General Service Fee from being used for political purposes.

I will be looking closely at the new legislation and if need be introduce a similar amendment," Mr Windsor said.

According to Mr Windsor, following the introduction of the VSU and the subsequent loss of revenue from Universities, the last Federal Government set up an \$80m capital assistance fund which, whilst helping to build new facilities, put another burden on universities' cash-flow.

"Universities were able to access funds to build new facilities but in doing so they also had to budget for their upkeep but from a lower income base.

Now with the re-introduction of a student "service" fee, Universities will be better able to maintain these new facilities as well as provide services to their students, which is what should have happened in the first place," Mr Windsor said.

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