

Young People Balancing Work and Study

- For young people (18-24) the educational opportunities offered by tertiary studies extend beyond the classroom towards experiences that can be culturally and personally enriching.
- Tertiary institutions have a responsibility to provide for the personal development of their students through cultural, sporting and support services.
- The Commonwealth provides financial support for all young people engaged in tertiary education but many young people need to work to cover basic living costs, even while receiving the youth allowance.
- Young people need work opportunities which are flexible and fair, with conditions that respect their dignity and extra support regarding Occupational Health and Safety.

Why is this an issue in 2007?

- Youth Allowance is below the poverty line.
- It is difficult for young people to negotiate in the workplace, especially in casual positions. It is important that workplace laws provide extra protections for young people who are a group of vulnerable workers.
- Under WorkChoices many students have lost the security of Award conditions such as penalty rates for shift work and overtime, public holidays and rest breaks.
- Commonwealth legislation has banned the collection of compulsory non-academic fees that were used by universities to fund student support services and student religious, political, sporting organisations and clubs.

Ask your candidates

- Do you or your party have a plan for introducing new protections for young local and international tertiary students to ensure that they can balance work and study without compromising their well-being?
- What will you do to promote Occupational Health and Safety for young people?
- Do you support Youth Allowance being lifted above the poverty line?
- What is your position on voluntary student unionism?

FAST FACTS

25% of full-time undergraduates regularly miss classes or other study commitments to attend paid employment.

24.5% of Indigenous students regularly go **without food** or other necessities because they can't afford them compared to 12.8% of all other students. (Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, 2006 survey)

The maximum **Youth Allowance** benefit received by a typical student under 25 and living in a share house is **37.9%** (\$245 a fortnight) **below the poverty line** (\$645.15 per fortnight). (National Union of Students, 2006)

Students **have a personal income threshold** (the additional amount one can earn before welfare payments are reduced) of **\$6,100 (frozen since 1993)**. Under normal CPI indexation this would now be over \$8,000.

“If Australia is truly intent on ensuring optimal educational outcomes for Australian university students, it must provide those students with an adequate economic and living platform allowing them to focus on educational achievement.”

Professor Alan Robson,
Chair, Australian University Student Finances
2006, Report Committee 2005.

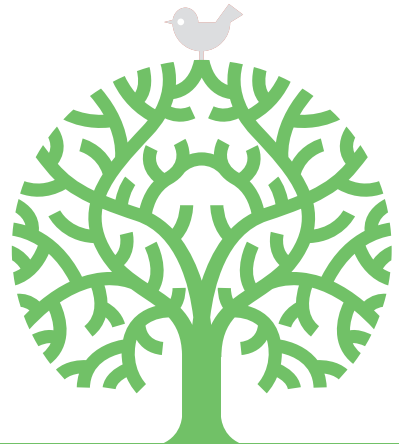


Hot Issues

Federal Election 2007



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growing a nation of hope
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Uniting Church in Australia
National Assembly