



Supporting university students Investing in the future

Fighting the fees | Reducing students' debt burden

University students face more barriers to education than ever before. The Labor and Liberal parties have increased student debt and class sizes, while cutting student support. The Greens have the courage to back students and make high-quality university education accessible to all Australians.

We have continually seen both the Coalition and Labor parties walk away from providing support to university students. Whether it's allowing the continual rises in course fees, or turning Student Start-Up Scholarships into a HELP loan, it's clear that neither party is committed to providing high-quality and accessible university education to all Australians.

With the Coalition committed to deregulation, studying at university will likely become out of reach for students from lower-income or disadvantaged backgrounds. HELP debts could grow to the size of a housing deposit – or more. Instead of increasing the debt burden on students, we must better support them, so they have minimal debt as they enter the workforce.

The Student Start-Up Scholarships are critical for low-income students from disadvantaged or low income backgrounds, allowing them to purchase the textbooks and equipment they need to study, and for many it is the difference between being able to pay their rent or buy groceries, and not.

> FIGHTING THE FEES

The Greens believe that all Australians are entitled to free, well-funded and high quality, life-long education and training. The Greens will continue to fight against higher fees for students by:

- reducing students' HELP costs by 20%; and
- reinstating the Student Start-Up Scholarships as a grant.

> BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

This package has been fully costed by the Parliamentary Budget Office. These measures will cost \$1.403 billion per annum, over the forward estimates. However, we've found a way to make this cost neutral.

To offset the costs associated with these measures, the Greens are committed to continuing the 'deficit levy' on a permanent basis for those earning over \$180,000 per year, raising an additional \$1.55 billion per annum over the forward estimates.

This way, students' debt burden is borne by those who can most afford it.

> STUDENTS LEFT HIGH AND DRY BY OTHER PARTIES

The Coalition has been pushing to deregulate course fees since their first budget in 2014. Legislating this change would see \$100K degrees become a reality and would make it increasingly difficult for young people to enter into the housing market and invest in other significant life decisions. The Greens have played a vital role fighting against - and blocking - these fee increases, which have been a blatant cost-shifting exercise by the Coalition.

Labor once stood up for students, but it is clear in recent times that things have changed. In the 2012-13 budget, Labor pushed for \$2.3 billion in cuts to the university sector. Late last year it teamed up with the Coalition to turn the Student Start-Up Scholarships into a loan, lumping over 250,000 low-income students with more HELP debt, an average increase of \$6,000 for a three year degree.

> THE VISION TO INVEST IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Unlike the Coalition and Labor, the Greens have the courage to adequately boost investment in the university sector, taking action to implement reforms that will bring down student fees and make high quality university education accessible to all Australians.

> LIFE TIME OF LEARNING

The Greens believe that investment in public education is essential to ensure a fair Australia and to support the transition to a sustainable new economy. Fighting the fees and reducing students' debt burden forms a part of our Lifetime of Learning policy that includes support for schools, students with a disability and the tertiary sector.