

**STAFF AND STUDENT REPORT FAILS COALITION ON HIGHER  
EDUCATION – LABOR PASSES BUT MUCH MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE**  
November 20, 2007

A report card on the higher education policies of the Coalition and Labor parties released by university staff and students on Tuesday has failed the Howard Government for its record on universities.

The report card, prepared by National Tertiary Education Union, the National Union of Students and the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations, awarded Labor a pass on the basis of the well targeted but limited commitments announced during the campaign and its stated commitment to build on these in office.

At the same time, staff and students are disappointed with several aspects of Labor's approach to higher education, particularly the lack of public investment in universities and the failure to undertake more comprehensive reforms of student income support structures.

Ted Murphy, NTEU Assistant Secretary said:

"It is very clear that the rhetoric about introducing an 'Education Revolution' has not been matched by Labor's announcements for universities during the campaign."

"University staff are particularly disappointed with Labor's failure to commit to a greater level of Commonwealth funding to help universities cover the full cost of educating government supported students and undertaking research."

"At the same time, we recognise that Labor has announced a number of significant, targeted, spending announcements that will benefit the sector. These are in addition to Labor's commitment to remove workplace relations conditions tied to university funding and abolish full fee paying places for domestic undergraduate students."

"While Labor's initiatives during the campaign have been limited, the Coalition has been missing in action altogether in the area of higher education."

Nigel Palmer, CAPA President, said:

"CAPA welcomes the fact that postgraduate issues have come to the fore in the 2007 election campaign. The Greens, Democrats and ALP have all made postgraduate issues a priority. Labor's promise to double the number of scholarships for research students clearly demonstrates they see the importance of today's postgraduates for the future of higher education. Despite the Coalition taking tentative steps toward improving income support for coursework postgraduates this year, they have offered nothing of substance in their campaign to address 11 years of neglect."

"With the exception of Family First, the minor parties have been consistent in their commitment to Australia's postgraduates. With the help of The Greens and Democrats in the Senate, we look forward to Labor taking action on issues like income support and sustainable funding for higher education should they win government."

Michael Nguyen, NUS President, said:

"The Coalition has failed to ensure that young people have the opportunity to go to university regardless of their parent's bank balance. The political parties can be assured that in this election young people will be voting on issues like higher education to ensure that their future is worth looking forward to."

*The report card is attached. A four page brief analysing the findings and examining the higher education record of the Coalition, Labor and the minor parties in the Senate can be downloaded from the NTEU website at [www.nteu.org.au/campaigns/election2007/policyanalysis/reportcard](http://www.nteu.org.au/campaigns/election2007/policyanalysis/reportcard)*

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