

*** Attention Education Journalists: **Friday April 24, 2009** ***

Clarification on postgrad bonus welcome

The Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA) has today welcomed clarification of postgraduate eligibility for the *Training and Learning Bonus*, as part of the Federal Government's *Household Stimulus Package*.

The announcement by Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard confirms eligibility for \$950 bonus payments for full-time recipients of the following:

- Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA's)
- Australian Postgraduate Awards (Industry) (APA(I)'s)
- Other awards of "equivalent nature and value" including NHMRC awards, and, importantly, university funded equivalents.

"We have been in contact with Government since details of the *Household Stimulus Package* were first announced. This latest announcement represents a significant improvement on the original eligibility conditions. We certainly welcome the Deputy Prime Minister adopting an enlightened approach to bonus eligibility through the administrative scheme approved as part of the package" CAPA President, Nigel Palmer said.

"Originally, eligibility for the *Training and Learning Bonus* was based solely on access to Youth Allowance and Austudy. Due to the vast majority of postgraduates being unable to even apply for these forms of income support, they also found themselves ineligible for stimulus package bonus payments.

"Thanks to the Government and The Greens, amendments to the final version of the package included a 'mechanism to ensure all unemployed and students have access to the bonus payment'. It looked at the time like research students in receipt of an Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) may be eligible, but details of administrative measures associated with the package were still unclear.

"This latest announcement confirms eligibility for roughly 6,500 APA recipients, and also for the estimated 8,500 postgraduates in receipt of equivalent awards. *Training and Learning Bonus* eligibility is important for these groups as, unlike other forms of income, these awards are tax exempt, and recipients are therefore likely to miss out on *Tax Bonus* payments.

"Many postgraduates will still miss out on the *Training and Learning Bonus*, largely due to their lack of access to student income support. A large proportion of those however should still be eligible for stimulus payments as part of the *Tax Bonus*. For research students in receipt of a tax exempt award, this latest announcement certainly represents good news" CAPA President, Nigel Palmer, concluded.

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