

*** Attention Education Journalists: **Tuesday November 17, 2009** ***

Important student income support reforms before the Senate

The Federal Senate looks likely to vote on a range of important student income support reforms this week. For postgraduates, the student income support reform package announced in the 2009-10 Federal Budget includes the long overdue change allowing access to Youth Allowance and Austudy for all masters by coursework postgraduates (from 2012). Also included in the package are important reforms to the treatment of scholarships, and the introduction of an annual \$2,254 start up scholarship for Abstudy recipients and for the small number of postgraduates who are currently eligible for Youth Allowance or Austudy.

“CAPA has been lobbying for improvements to the income test assessment of scholarships for many years, and we join with other higher education groups in applauding the Government’s decision to exempt university and private equity scholarships as assessable income. CAPA also welcomes The Greens taking up CAPA’s recommendations on improvements to the package, and also welcomes the support expressed by other senators on the cross-benches.

“This is a very well designed package, with some very important reforms. It is unfortunate that a lot of time has been taken up by poorly informed debate on the Bill. We encourage the Senate to ensure this bill is passed during the current sitting of Federal Parliament. We also encourage the Government to take on board some of the more sensible recommendations made in the course of the Senate Inquiry into the student income support changes” CAPA President, Nigel Palmer concluded.

Full details are available at: www.capa.edu.au/mediarelease/2009/important-student-income-support-reforms-senate

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