

Supporting Services, Amenities and Representation for Australian University Students

FACT SHEET

The Commonwealth Government will undertake the following policy initiatives to ensure that higher education students have access to the amenities and services they need, and access to independent and democratic student representation:

1. Require higher education providers that receive Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding to meet National Access to Services Benchmarks that require the provision of information on, and access to, basic support services of a non-academic nature for students in line with the current requirements for overseas students. Also require higher education providers to meet student National Student Representation and Advocacy Protocols to ensure independent student representation and advocacy.
2. Introduce compliance with these requirements and protocols as a condition of funding for 2010 onwards after consultation with the sector.
3. Allow higher education providers to set a compulsory fee for amenities and services and student representation and advocacy up to a cap of \$250 per full-time student per annum (indexed annually) by amending the *Higher Education Support Act 2003 (the Act)*. This fee would be used to provide services and amenities over and above the National Access to Services Benchmarks and the National Student Representation Protocols.
4. Provide eligible students with the option of taking out a loan for the fee under a HECS-like scheme, the new Services and Amenities-HELP (SA-HELP).
5. Allow Higher education providers to charge the fee and implement the new SA-HELP element from 1 July 2009.
6. Require Universities to meet the National Access to Services Benchmarks National Student Representation Protocols irrespective of if they levy a fee, ensuring access to basic services and representation for all students.
7. Develop a set of Guidelines outlining the range of services and amenities for which a compulsory fee could be used to fund (list of possible services/amenities is attached).
8. Enhance the objectives of the Capital Development Pool (CDP) program to allow eligible higher education providers to apply for grants to build or undertake major refurbishments of student amenities. The program provides grants to support capital development projects and the 2008 funding round will incorporate the enhanced objectives.
9. Ensure that the provision in the legislation that prohibits a university from requiring a student to become a member of a student organisation remains.

PROPOSED SERVICES AND AMENITIES GUIDELINES

The list below describes possible services and amenities that could be supported by the higher education provider related to the provision of:

- (a) food and beverages
- (b) meeting rooms
- (c) sports and physical recreation
- (d) child care
- (e) counselling
- (f) legal services
- (g) health care
- (h) housing
- (i) employment
- (j) visual arts, performing arts and audio visual media
- (k) debating
- (l) libraries and reading rooms
- (m) student newspapers, media and internet publications
- (n) academic support
- (o) personal accident insurance for students
- (p) orientation information
- (q) support for overseas students (over and above those required by the ESOS Act)
- (r) infrastructure for student services and amenities