

2.3 MONASH YOUTH COMMITTEE ADVOCACY REQUEST

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Notes the importance of the issues raised by the Monash Youth Committee (MYC) on behalf of their peers in the City of Monash.*
- 2. Notes the impact, highlighted by MYC that changes made by the Australian Government to the Higher Education Support Amendment (Job-Ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students) Bill 2020 will have on young people entering or continuing in the tertiary education system.*
- 3. Supports the letter written by members of the Monash Youth Committee to be sent to the following Federal Members of Parliament; The Hon Scott Morrison MP, The Hon Dan Tehan MP, Senator Stirling Griff, Ms Rebekha Sharkie MP, Ms Gladys Liu MP, Ms Clare O'Neil MP and Dr Katie Allen MP.*

INTRODUCTION

On 19 October 2020 the Australian Government's House of Representatives passed the *Higher Education Support Amendment (Job-Ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students) Bill 2020*.

Contained within the amendments are actions that have been raised and discussed by members of the Monash Youth Committee (MYC) because of the direct impact it will have on their plans as students, and the plans of many of their peers and siblings, who enter the tertiary education system.

The two priority issues that MYC believe will negatively impact them and their peers are the increase in course fees for Arts and Humanities courses, and that first year students who fail more than half their first year units lose their Commonwealth supported place and access to HECS-HELP loans.

In addition MYC believes that the amendments do not encourage students into courses that complement future jobs growth as is being claimed. MYC believes the Government statements also suggest that students are deliberately enrolling in multiple courses simultaneously and are therefore increasing educational cost to the government rather than exploring the systemic adjustments that can be made by institutions to rectify this issue.

On the back of these concerns members of the MYC developed the attached letter to formally communicate their concerns to the Federal Government.

Monash Youth Committee is seeking Council's support to send the attached correspondence to those Federal Members of Parliament that represent the City of Monash as this is an issue of policy direction rather than party politics. Monash Youth Committee also wish to send a letter to South Australian Senators, Mr Stirling Griff MP and Ms Rebekha Sharkie MP, as it was their support that assisted in the passing of the Bill.

BACKGROUND

Monash Youth Committee is a group of young people who come together to share ideas, opinions and discuss needs of all young people. The aim of the group is to be the voice and inspiration of young people in Monash. As such, the group strives to represent the views of young people in Monash entering into the tertiary education system and the impact of passing the *Higher Education Support Amendment (Job-Ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students) Bill 2020*.

DISCUSSION

Monash Youth Committee identified a range of impacts on young people that are a result of the changes to the *Higher Education Support Amendment (Job-Ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students) Bill 2020*:

- Increase of costs for students to study Arts and Humanities courses - increased by up to 113% with the impact being:
 - As a result of Covid-19 many young people are now unemployed and are unable to meet these increased costs.
 - This will also further disadvantage students who are from a low socioeconomic background.
- Removal of safety net for students who may fail more than half of their first year units which is an additional burden for those students who have had disrupted study during 2020 and must now re-negotiate the transition into the tertiary study.
- Impede a young person's liberties to choose a course by forcing students into careers, industries and sectors that have statistically been proven to have lower employment rates.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

MYC believes that the amendments to the Higher Education Bill impact predominately young people, and in particular community members who are more vulnerable or from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. This amendment will reduce educational opportunities for a significant number of young people.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

A Healthy and Resilient Monash: Integrated Plan 2017-2021 identifies the need to have a community that is fair to all and the importance of freedom of choice. *Monash Council has a strong commitment to Access and Equity*, which is guided by the broad principles of International Human Rights and Social Justice.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

CONCLUSION

This is an issue that members of the Monash Youth Committee are very passionate about and they request support from Council to voice their concerns.

The MYC requests that Council notes the importance of the issues raised by the Monash Youth Committee on behalf of their peers in the City of Monash regarding the recent passing of the *Higher Education Support Amendment (Job-Ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students) Bill*.

They seek that Council further notes the impact, highlighted by MYC that changes made by this Bill will have on young people entering or continuing in the tertiary education system.

The MYC requests that Council authorises the letter (Attachment 1) written by members of the Monash Youth Committee to be sent to the following Federal Members of Parliament: The Hon Scott Morrison MP, The Hon Dan Tehan MP, Senator Stirling Griff, Ms Rebekha Sharkie MP, Ms Gladys Liu MP, Ms Clare O'Neil MP and Dr Katie Allen MP.