



Wednesday 31st January 2007

Students call on ALP for HECS reductions

NUS today welcomed the ALP's announcement that it would use HECS reductions to encourage students to take up maths and science courses. However, more needs to be done to improve access to university education. NUS urges the ALP to adopt similarly targeted HECS reduction incentives to increase accessibility for students from poorer backgrounds and also to reduce HECS levels generally for domestic students.

Michael Nguyen, National President of the National Union of Students, **"students are being asked to fork out exorbitant amounts of HECS. This is exacerbated by the fact that often students pay a level of HECS that is disproportionate to their future earning capacity."**

Mr Nguyen further said, **"HECS is linked to future earning capacity. This is an assumption that the major parties need to rethink. Many students do not go on to work in their field of study, or choose to work in careers that deliver great benefit to the community but do not give them a high disposable income. Current levels of HECS deter students from taking up positions in socially useful areas, such as community and social work."**

"The ALP clearly understands this and have introduced measures to encourage Maths and Science students to continue working in their fields. The ALP needs to continue to provide HECS incentives in areas of social benefit/skills shortage. This should be coupled with increases in the HECS repayment threshold to ensure that areas of social benefit aren't left behind."

"For example, student need to be able to choose areas of social benefit without being burdened with crippling levels of debt."

Media enquiries contact: Michael Nguyen 0411 606 808

Contact:

**Michael Nguyen
National President
0411 606 808**

NUS National
Suite 64, Trades Hall
54 Victoria St,
Carlton South
VIC 3053
Phone: (03) 9650 8908
Fax: (03) 9650 8906
www.unistudent.com.au