

## **Students get raw deal in Government changes to higher education 1 May 2017**

The Curtin Student Guild has criticised the increase in fees and other changes to higher education funding announced today by the Education Minister Simon Birmingham.

President Liam O'Neill said university students would be hit with a double whammy paying up to an extra \$3600 in fees with the repayment threshold for student loans lowered to \$42,000 from \$51,957.

"Increasing student fees while cutting higher education funding diminishes the value of a University education."

Mr O'Neill said that the Federal Education Minister was selling a raw deal to Australian university students.

"Reducing corporate tax rates while at the same time placing an increased burden on the generation responsible for providing for Australia's economic future does not make sense," he said.

"Students are already facing diminished job prospects when they complete their degrees, a difficult labour market for part-time work to support them through university and now they will be paying higher fees to gain a tertiary education."

According to Mr O'Neill, the reduction of the HECS repayment threshold to \$42,000 was unacceptable.

"The reduced repayment threshold is only \$7000 higher than the minimum wage, nowhere near a reasonable graduate wage that students should expect before they repay their HECS debts."

Mr O'Neill said that the Guild was disappointed that the Government was removing Commonwealth Supported Places from New Zealand citizens including those who were permanent residents.

"This will introduce huge debts to permanent residents from New Zealand who are not Australian citizens. A Curtin University nursing degree for example will jump from \$30,000 to almost \$70,000," he said.

"These changes will close the higher education pathway to many New Zealanders resident in Australia who are seeking to complete their education."

### **Media Contact**

Liam O'Neill  
Curtin Student Guild President  
president@guild.curtin.edu.au  
0402 411 315

### **Note**

Mr O'Neill was born in New Zealand and holds Australian citizenship. While the changes will not impact him, he is happy to speak about his concerns and his own experience. His family moved to Australia with the knowledge that he would have access to affordable higher education.