

15 MAY 2024 – MEDIA STATEMENT

SSAF is for Students. Federal Budget places student associations power back into their own hands and takes initial steps in providing much needed relief for students.

The 2024 Federal Budget has taken some initial steps in providing relief to students after years of student campaigning.

The Tasmanian University Student Association (TUSA) welcomes the announcement that student-led organisations will receive a 40% minimum of the Student Services and Amenities Fees (SSAF) from 1st of January 2025.

“SSAF is fundamentally and legislatively student money, and it is only right that the government takes steps to place control of this money back in the students’ hands. Student unions, guilds, and associations around the country are the heart and soul of student life and supports at our universities. Placing a minimum allocation into legislation allows us to move away from the current model of annual bargaining with the University for funding, and allows us to focus on being strategic and getting the student experience back to the front and centre of the University experience.” Stated TUSA President Liam McLaren.

Furthermore, the budget additionally announced a 10 per cent increase in the Commonwealth Rent Assistance, a \$300 rebate per household on electricity bills, an additional \$588.5 million in mental health funding, and changes around medicine costs.

President McLaren says, “These cost-of-living announcements are sorely needed by the broader community, and equally by our university students. They do not go nearly far enough, however they are a small step in the right direction.”

Elsewhere, the budget saw follow-through on prior promises of paid mandatory placements for nursing, midwifery, teaching, and social work students as well as changes to HECS indexation including back dating to last year's record 7.1% indexation, reflecting \$3billion of student debt being wiped.

“The introduction of paid mandatory placements for specified degrees is a real game changer for students, yet we will continue to drive government to expand this access to all degrees with mandatory placements,” reaffirmed President McLaren.

Finally, the budget included a timeline for the proposed reformation of the university funding model to a more needs-based funding from January 2026, seeking to provide per student funding contributions for under-represented students.

“Moving to a needs-based funding system rightfully recognises the unique environment that regional universities and universities outside of the Group of Eight, face in supporting their students,” finished President McLaren

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