Student Services and Amenities Fee creates uncertainty for student organisations

Results from a survey conducted by the National Union of Students has revealed many student organisations have been left in the lurch, with universities failing to commit to specific funding under the Student Services and Amenities Fee.

While some universities have been supportive of their student organisations, others have been reported as either hostile or reticent to commit to a specific level of funding.

This has left student organisations around the country uncertain as to what student support services and projects will be given the go ahead.

President of the National Union of Students, Donherra Walmsley said it was a disappointing reflection on universities that the majority of student organisations were yet to sign a funding agreement.

“This kind of instability makes it very difficult for student organisations to deliver high quality services because they’re unable to plan for the year”, Ms Walmsley said.

The survey also revealed several universities were either refusing to provide funding which would allow the expansion of student run services, or attempting to take over services currently run by student organisations.

“Students are paying this fee, they have the right to have a say in how the fee is spent.

“Democratically elected, student controlled organisations are best placed to respond to the changing needs of the student body and provide vital services such as representation, advocacy, clubs and societies”, Ms Walmsley said.

The 2009 Bradley Review of Higher Education found that student retention and engagement levels were suffering as a result of the decline of campus life under Voluntary Student Unionism.

“The SSAF provides universities with the opportunity to revitalise campus life, and the legislation clearly intends for students to play a key part in that process. Universities must act in the spirit of the Bill and support their student organisations”, Ms Walmsley said.

For further comment:

0411 606 808

Donherra Walmsley

National President

Donherra Walmsley
National President | National Union of Students
Mobile: 0411 606 808
Work: (03) 9650 8961
Fax: (03) 9650 8906