

STATEMENT ON THE PROPOSED RESTRUCTURE OF UNIVERSITY FEES

The Professional Historians Association (NSW & ACT) stands in solidarity with our colleagues around Australia in expressing our deep concern regarding the Minister for Education the Hon Dan Tehan's proposal to restructure funding for university undergraduate courses, with the explicit aim of a crippling increase in humanities course fees.

The Minister for Education's proposed reform is based on misplaced assumptions about the labour market and the value of humanities education. The study of history, for example, encourages critical thinking, problem solving, strong research and communication skills, as well as creativity and innovation. These skills are hugely valuable in times of uncertainty and crisis, and are highly sought after by employers, as is evident on the government's own website: <https://australianjobs.employment.gov.au/jobs-future/skills-future>

We need graduates with these transferrable skills to become the community and business leaders of the next generation. By raising university fees for humanities courses those students who choose to study them will be saddled with a large debt. Shrinking their numbers will lead to less diversity of experience and perspectives among graduates and will impoverish Australian society.

In a democracy like Australia, it is appalling to think that the government would act to curtail choice in such a fundamental right as education, especially in a way that will not deliver the outcomes it strives for: an innovative and flexible workforce.

Australia needs a much more considered discussion about the future of humanities in this country. That is why the Professional Historians Association (NSW & ACT) has endorsed the Value of History Statement, which sets out seven ways in which history is essential to society's wellbeing. <https://historycouncilnsw.org.au/about/value-of-history-statement/>

We call on the government to consult widely and think systematically about reform in the university sector and to make its funding decisions based on a more profound appreciation of the contribution humanities make to our society.

To our PHA members and all humanities graduates:

- We encourage you to speak out on this issue by writing to the Minister for Education, members of the Australian Senate and your local member.
- Share your experience as a professional, history as a career, and the importance of history for our society and for our nation.
- Feel free to use the letters and list of senators below to inspire your own advocacy.

[Professional Historians Australia statement](#)

PHA NSW & ACT



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[Australian Historical Association statement](#)

[Professional Historians Association Victoria](#)

[Parliament of Australia – List of Senators](#)

[Minister for Education, the Hon Dan Tehan MP](#)