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****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

Exorbitant Postgraduate Fees Rort Australian Students

The National Union of Students (NUS) and the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA) are deeply concerned by the exorbitant tuition fees of postgraduate courses for Australian students, and warn that upfront costs to students will soar under the Government's new proposed changes to student loans.

Today the Department of Education and Training outlined 11 courses which exceed the current FEE-HELP debt cap of \$102k. Students enrolled in these courses are forced to pay large sums of their course fees upfront, or seek private loans to finance the excess costs beyond the existing cap. The courses exceeding the FEE-HELP cap are predominantly postgraduate law and medical degrees costing as much as \$280k at public universities, and up to \$380k at the private Bond University.

"There's no justification for courses to exceed the existing FEE-HELP cap. Universities are seeking fat profits off postgraduate students who are saddled with student debt at levels never reached before," said Mark Pace, NUS National President.

This news comes as the Federal Government is pushing legislation which would see a combined lifetime loan cap, which incorporates undergraduate student debt. This would mean that more students, including many at public universities, would need to come up with large sums of money upfront through any means possible, including by taking private loans.

"A student should not need to make a down payment on their degree at a public university. It is bad enough that young people are locked out of the real estate market; under the proposed legislation, they will also be locked out of postgraduate study unless they can afford tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars upfront," said Natasha Abrahams, CAPA National President.

The Department of Education and Training failed to provide any meaningful advice for students who reach their student debt limit, stating that this is a matter between the student and their university. With no relief from universities, the burden falls on the student to immediately find the money.

For further comment:

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