



For immediate release

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NUS Welcomes Labor's Commitment to Post-Secondary Education

The National Union of Students welcomes the Labor Party's announcement at the Federal Budget Reply that a Shorten-Labor Government would unfreeze the demand driven system, and provide 100,000 tuition free TAFE places for Australians.

Labor's 100,000 free TAFE places will target trades with the highest skills shortages such as disability, aged care and technology focused sectors. This is in addition to last weeks announcement from the Victorian Labor Government to deliver free TAFE for over 30 priority courses. Both announcements follow on from the Ipsos Global Advisor survey in which 88% of Australians think that education should be free of charge.

"100,000 tuition free TAFE places is an investment into Australia's future by ensuring we have a highly skilled and trained workforce" said NUS President, Mark Pace. "Across the world we're seeing momentum build towards free education. NUS welcomes the Labor Party's announcement and encourages federal politicians to prioritise education and the opportunities it provides for millions of Australians."

Labor has further set a target of 50% women for these 100,000 free TAFE places across the country, addressing the significant shortage of women in trades.

"There's no reason for a shortage of women in our trades. Women want to study technology. Women want to study construction. But they don't want to be priced out of study by this Liberal Government." Says Kate Crossin, NUS Women's Officer, "If we continue with the Liberals future for Australia, we won't see Gender equality for another hundred years."

In December last year the Coalition Government cut \$2.2 Billion in funding by freezing the demand driven system cutting an estimated 200,000 university places by 2032. This was one of the largest cuts to universities in the history of Australia and across the country universities have been axing degrees, cutting teaching staff and student support services.

"Since 2011/12 we've seen \$7 Billion cut from Universities, gutting the opportunities higher education opens for millions of Australians" Said NUS National President, Mark Pace.

"We know the best way to alleviate Australians from poverty is increasing access to higher education, and restoring the demand driven system will ensure higher education is an opportunity for all Australians".

For Further Comment;

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