



AUSTRALIAN
ANTHROPOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Anthropological Society Condemns Uni Fee Hike

24 June 2020

The Australian Anthropological Society, which represents anthropologists around Australia, has released a statement condemning the Australian Government's plan to increase the cost of Bachelor of Arts degrees by 113%.

"This appears to be the government shifting the cost of education from themselves onto new students, who will be entering university during the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression", said Dr Lisa Wynn, Associate Professor of Anthropology at Macquarie University and President, Australian Anthropological Society.

"Arts graduates play a central role in businesses across Australia - from large multinationals to start-ups, from local non-profits to the world's biggest charities. Making arts degrees less affordable hurts students and hurts business.

"Consider COVID-19. We need biologists to understand the virus, healthcare professionals to treat the sick, and engineers to build respirators. But viruses don't spread themselves. Humans spread viruses through social interaction.

"If we want to understand how to stop a pandemic, we need anthropologists and other social scientists to study human society, how we interact with each other, and what it will take to change unsafe behaviours. There is no safe Australia without social science and the humanities.

"This new policy is not based on market demand. The government claims that the new policy will encourage students to go into 'job-ready' majors, but Australian government research shows that graduates who majored in arts, humanities, and social sciences are actually *more employable* than science and maths graduates, and their median salaries are also higher", concluded Dr Wynn.

View the full statement here: <https://www.aas.asn.au/hass-degree-fees>

MEDIA CONTACT: Hayley Conway, 0484 313 466