

Thousands of students from working-class families face considerable hardship because they don't qualify for the full amount.

The federal government should accept proposals made by student councils around the country:

- That TEAS be immediately increased to the level of the single unemployment benefit as a first step to increasing it at least to the level of the poverty line.

- That the TEAS means test be abolished.

- That TEAS be indexed so that inflation does not erode its real value.

Overseas students have been singled out for especially severe treatment by the federal government. They must now pay 30-40 per cent of the cost of their courses.

The Overseas Student Visa Charge has increased by 65 per cent since it was introduced five years ago. It costs \$2500-\$3350 a year.

This has increased hardships for overseas students and their families, cut off educational opportunities for many students from poor families, and forced some students to return home without completing their courses.

Trained people are desperately needed by the countries of South-East Asia. The Australian government can find millions of dollars for military aid to dictatorial governments in the region, but has a miserly attitude towards educational aid which could help improve the lives of the ordinary people.

The federal government should abolish all fees and quotas for overseas students.

The measures outlined above could easily be funded by cutting war spending and increasing taxes on wealthy companies whose only concern is to maximise profits at the expense of the wellbeing of the vast majority.

Education should and can be a right for all, not a privilege for the wealthy.

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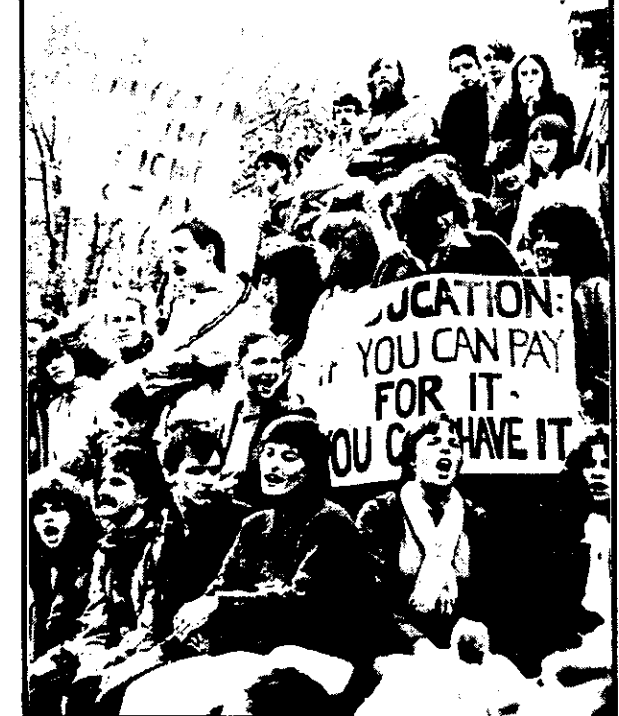
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vote Socialist Workers Party

Education for all



Australia's education system is in crisis. In every state schools are starved of funds and short of teachers and equipment. Classes are overcrowded. There aren't enough libraries or books.

Specialised services, such as intensive language courses for migrants, are neglected.

Small wonder that Australia has one of the developed world's lowest retention rates for secondary students.

The tertiary and adult education sectors are not in much better shape. In desperate need of funds for capital expenditure, they have been forced to cut back in all areas, lowering the quality of education, as well as restricting student numbers. Some colleges have been forced to close.

The present federal government's policies have contributed to these problems. Funding for universities and public schools has been cut while subsidies to private schools have been increased. Additionally, overall education funding has been cut while the government has made huge payouts to companies such as BHP.

The direction of Labor's policies has been to make quality education the preserve of a wealthy few.

Before coming to power Labor promised to phase out funding for the most wealthy private schools. Private school funding was to be on the basis of need. Government school funding was to increase by 10 per cent by 1986. All of these promises have been repudiated.

Instead, the government has discovered "an historic recognition of a dual system of schooling in Australia. . . with a common basis for the recurrent funding of all schools, private and government."

Concretely this means that next year private schools will receive commonwealth funding of at least \$265 for each primary student and \$420 for each secondary student. They will receive about the same from state governments.

Government schools, on the other hand, are guaranteed commonwealth funding of only \$148 and \$163 per child in 1985.

By 1992 federal funding for government schools will have increased by \$156.6 million, compared to an increase of \$400 million for non-government schools.

All private schools will receive this money. In



this year's federal budget almost \$50 million was allocated to wealthy private schools. Thirty-four million was set aside for the disadvantaged schools program — both private and public.

The Socialist Workers Party considers that the only way to raise education standards and to ensure equal opportunity for all is to massively increase funding of government schools.

The millions presently allocated to wealthy private schools should be redirected to the public system.

Government schools should be in a position to provide the very best education possible. They can't do that while they remain short of teachers and facilities.

The problems of higher education are equally severe. The federal budget for 1985 allocated funds for only 1300 more student places in all universities and colleges of advanced education.

A similar increase was allowed for Technical and Further Education courses. But this paltry rise will mean that hundreds of qualified students will be turned away.

Universities and colleges should be open to all who want to undertake higher education. Colleges that have been closed should be reopened.

Extra funding is urgently needed to compensate for years of neglect and cutbacks.

Government moves to end funding to residential colleges is a step in the wrong direction. Surveys have shown that many college residents are from low-income families and country areas.

Withdrawing the government subsidy will cause a fee increase that will force many students out of the colleges and probably into sub-standard housing. Low-cost, quality housing — houses, flats or colleges — should be available to all students who need it.

Nowhere is the bias towards the wealthy more obvious than in the area of student allowances. The Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme is totally inadequate — almost \$15 below the adult unemployment benefit. It is means-tested so rigorously that only a small minority of students are eligible for the full amount.