



Fares Fair PTV Campaign

7 December 2018

The Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Minister for Public Transport
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Dear Minister

I write on behalf of the Australian Council of Graduate Research Inc which is the peak body for those with institutional responsibility for graduate research programs and support in each Australian university. Our members are committed to improving the quality and accessibility of higher degree by research training and addressing the barriers to participation for these students who are Australia's future research leaders.

We are therefore fully supportive of the Fares Fair PTV campaign and particularly keen to seek the extension of transport concession to all full-time research postgraduate students in Victoria.

In 2018, the federal government provided over \$1.03 billion through the Research Training Program to support higher degree by research provision to 44,000 domestic students in Australia. Upon graduation, these doctoral and masters by research candidates go into leadership and research positions in all sectors of industry and public service and contribute significantly to the development and strengthening of our nation's economy and innovation. The nation clearly believes that this is an important and necessary investment in Australia's future.

However, during candidature, most are full time students and existing on either part time work or a living stipend scholarship which is little more than the national poverty line. According to a Universities Australia report¹, among domestic students, 12.8% of postgraduate research students regularly go without food or other necessities because they are unable to afford them. Specifically in regard to transportation, 57% of full-time domestic postgraduate students and 66% of full-time international postgraduate students have difficulty affording study-related transport costs.

¹ Bexley et al., University Student Finances in 2012: A Study of the Financial Circumstances of Domestic and International Students in Australia's Universities



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Victoria is the only state which does not provide transport concessions for domestic postgraduate students and one of two that does not fully fund international postgraduate students. We believe that this significantly disadvantages both the students and the recruiting capacities of the institutions in this state and give our support to the submissions that have already been made by students and Universities Australia to redress this situation.

We therefore urge you to reconsider your previous decision and extend the current PTV student concession scheme to all full time postgraduate students, particularly Victoria's higher degree by research candidates.

Best regards

Professor Sue Berners-Price
Convenor
Australian Council of Graduate Research Inc.