

Media Release

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Postgraduate Petition Demands PT Concessions: VC & Provost agree

- **Over 1,500 Melb Uni graduates have signed petition already**
- **Vice Chancellor and Provost issue statement of support**
- **GSA President: “The state government is engaged in cold-hearted discrimination”**

The University of Melbourne Graduate Student Association today announced that over 1,500 newly enrolling graduate students had already signed the Association’s petition to demand full public transport concessions for all postgraduate and international students.

Victoria is one of only a few states that don’t grant public transport concessions to either postgraduate or international students. “The academic year has not yet commenced, but already we have observed a flood of support for the GSA campaign. Graduate and international students are rightly annoyed that they face hefty prices on public transport – and are turning out in droves to demand them”, said GSA President Paul Coats.

The Vice-Chancellor Professor Glyn Davis, and Provost Professor Peter McPhee, have issued a statement in support of the GSA campaign. Professor’s Davis and McPhee have written:

“With graduate study now part of mainstream higher education and the important contribution international students make to Victoria’s economy, it is time that the Victorian Government treated graduate students and international students in the same way as domestic undergraduate students in regard to public transport concessions. A two-tier system of eligibility for student fare concessions is not equitable.”¹

GSA President. Paul Coats, responded:

“The GSA is delighted to have the University’s support for our campaign. With an economic recession looming we foresee many graduate students will suffer economically through job losses, increased cost of rent and living expenses. International students contribute enormously to our society, but are structurally disadvantaged. By denying concessions the government is engaged in cold-hearted discrimination. NOW is the time for the state government to act and grant these concessions.”

The petition calls for the realisation of recommendation 19 of the 2008 House of Representatives Committee on Science, Industry and Innovation report, which explicitly called for: “...*Access to transport concessions should be made available to all full-time tertiary students, regardless of type of enrolment or the level of course in which they are enrolled.*”² (emphasis added)

For more information contact: Paul Coats, GSA President, 0416 509 140

¹ Public email correspondence with GSA President from Vice-Chancellor Professor Glyn Davis, and Provost Professor Peter McPhee, 22 February 2009.

² Vamvakinou, M (House of Representatives’ Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Innovation). 2008. *Building Australia’s Research Capacity*. Commonwealth of Australia: Canberra.