

Media Release

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Concern Postgraduates will miss out on \$950 ‘stimulus’ payment

The Graduate Student Association has been inundated with phone calls and email from postgraduates worried they may miss out on the \$950 payment.

“We’re concerned that the eligibility requirements in several categories of payment outlined in the Prime Minister’s ‘stimulus package’ circumvent the actual financial arrangements of many postgraduates, cutting them out of the scheme entirely”, said new GSA President Paul Coats.

Payment categories which immediately appear to discriminate are:

“\$950 Tax Bonus for Working Australians”

Eligibility rests on having a “net tax liability”¹. Many postgraduates survive on the APA scholarships alone, which are untaxed, and therefore would not accrue a tax liability (net OR gross). These students appear to miss out. For those scholarship recipients supplementing their APA with casual tutoring or other part time work, they are unlikely to creep far into the tax brackets (above the \$6000 threshold), therefore would not accrue tax liability, and therefore are also unlikely to receive a payment.

“Training and Learning Bonus”

Very few postgraduate coursework degree programs, and no research degree programs qualify for Austudy, ABSTUDY or Youth Allowance. Eligibility based on receipt of these commonwealth payments alone² clearly cuts out the vast majority of postgraduates.

“It is a great irony that the House of Representative standing committee report ‘Building Australia’s Research Capacity’ last year recommended an increase in APA scholarship rates, and yet the Federal Government continues to overlook the strained financial situation of many postgraduates”, said Paul Coats.

“Many postgraduates sustain themselves on casual work and face an uncertain future as the unemployment rate rises. If \$950 payments are to be made, the government should pay all those in need, and avoid restrictive eligibility requirements”.

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

¹ Federal Treasurer’s website, FACT SHEET “\$950 Tax Bonus for Working Australians”

² Federal Treasurer’s website, FACT SHEET “Training and Learning Bonus”