

Student protest planned for 29 April in Melbourne to redress Public Transport Concession Card inequality

Date: Monday, 27 April 2009

- **‘Fair Fares’ rally wins broad support**
- **Letter to Premier sent today: ‘Receive our petition on 29 April’**
- **“We’re not giving up this time,” says GSA President Paul Coats**

The Graduate Student Association of the University of Melbourne today announced that a sizeable rally and march have been organised for Wednesday 29 April, to demand full public transport concessions for all international and postgraduate students in Victoria.

The protest will commence at **1pm on Wednesday 29 April in front of the Graduate Centre, Grattan Street, University of Melbourne. Students will march to Parliament to deliver a petition of at least 5000 signatures to the Victorian Premier or his representative at 2 pm. There will be speeches from Postgraduate and International student groups at parliament too.** The petition, which calls on the government to make provision for transport concessions for *all* students, is the cumulative effort of a range of organisations over the past two months.

Organisations who have sponsored the protest include:

*Federation of Indian Students Australia * Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations
Persatuan Pelajar Indonesia Australia (Indonesian Students Federation) * National Union of Students
International Student Advisors Network Australia * Rail, Tram and Bus Union, Victorian Branch
National Tertiary Education Union * Monash Postgraduate Association * Latrobe University Postgraduate Association
University of Melbourne Student Union * Swinburne Student Union * RMIT Student Union*

Protest organiser and GSA President Paul Coats indicated that despite having received phonecalls from government agencies imploring the GSA to abandon its campaign, “we’re not giving up this time – our cause is a just one”. He continues: “This is not the first time that students have sought these concessions, but the time has come for the Government to act with compassion.”

In an open letter to the Premier sent today, the presidents of student organisations at the University of Melbourne—representing 23,000 postgraduate and international students—have called for immediate action to rectify the situation. The presidents wrote that: ‘Both international and postgraduate students contribute to our community economically, socially and academically, and these students feel that their contribution is grossly undervalued by the State Government.’

*Items attached: Poster advertising 29 April Rally for ‘Fair Fares’ (With full details of the events of the day)
Letter to the Premier, dated 27 April 2009, from Paul Coats and Sarah Quek*

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