



Dear higher education provider

On 18 September 2019, the Australian Government introduced a package of Bills to reform tuition protection for domestic students accessing a VET Student Loan (VSL) or FEE-HELP or HECS-HELP loan at a private education provider or TAFE.

The Bills – collectively called the Tuition Protection Bills – will establish strong and sustainable tuition protections for students whose education or training provider ceases to provide a course or closes. Subject to the passage of the Bills, the new tuition protection arrangements will commence on 1 January 2020.

The Bills will expand the successful Tuition Protection Service (TPS) for international students to include similar tuition assurance protection for domestic students accessing an Australian Government student loan.

A new levy contribution framework for VSL and FEE-HELP or HECS-HELP providers will underpin the new arrangements. This levy framework will broadly align the new arrangements with the TPS.

The levies, developed by the Australian Government Actuary, will ensure the new arrangements are sustainable and can respond to sector trends. Under the new levy framework, all non-exempt approved providers will be required to contribute annual levies commensurate with their size and risk. The levies will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain appropriate to the sector, and to ensure there are sufficient funds to support the delivery of tuition protection services. This includes assisting displaced students to continue their studies in a suitable replacement course.

Further information regarding the levy framework, including the individual levy components, can be found on the Department of Education website at: [www.education.gov.au/help-and-other-information](http://www.education.gov.au/help-and-other-information).

The introduction of a levy contribution framework to fund tuition protection – while not new – does represent a change for the VET and higher education sectors. Given this, if you have any specific issues or concerns you would like to raise with the department – including views on operational policy matters such as the timing of the collection of the levy – I invite you to provide your feedback to me at [FEE-HELPTuitionAssurance@education.gov.au](mailto:FEE-HELPTuitionAssurance@education.gov.au) by 31 October 2019. Your feedback will inform future communication and consultation with the sector.

Please note that the new arrangements do not extend to any other tuition assurance schemes for domestic students who pay upfront fees. Students who prepay their fees will continue to be covered under the tuition assurance arrangements set out in the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015*.

Finally, I would like to advise you that the current interim tuition assurance arrangements and provider obligations remain in place until the new arrangements are implemented.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Coburn', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Damian Coburn  
Branch Manager  
HELP and Provider Integrity Branch  
Higher Education Group  
Department of Education

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