

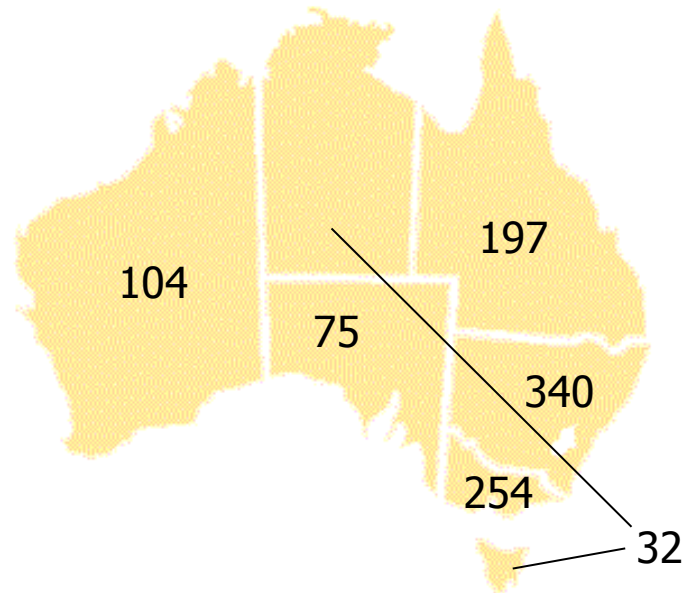
Higher Education Report

Prepared for NSW Greens,
Senator Lee Rhiannon
June 2014

lonergan research 

Methodology

- The study was conducted among 1,004 Australians aged 18 years and over. The study was conducted throughout Australia including both capital city and non-capital city areas as follows:

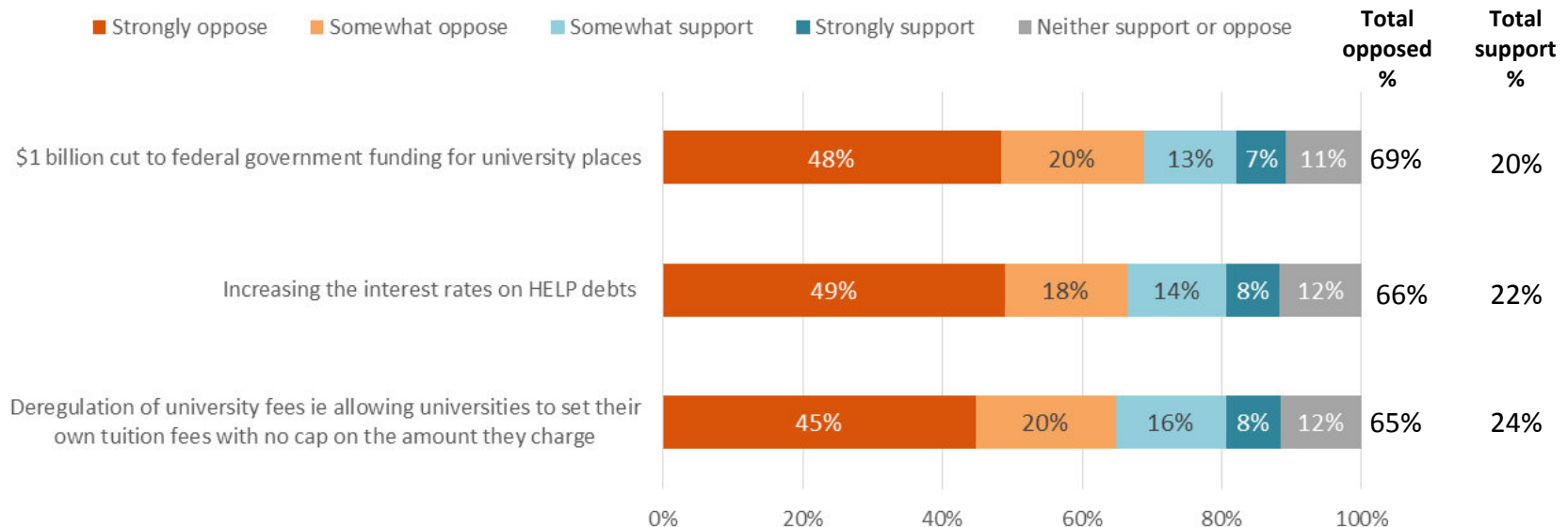


- Fieldwork commenced on Thursday, June 19 and was completed on Monday, June 23, 2014.
- After interviewing, data was weighted to the latest population estimates sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Main Findings

Changes to higher education

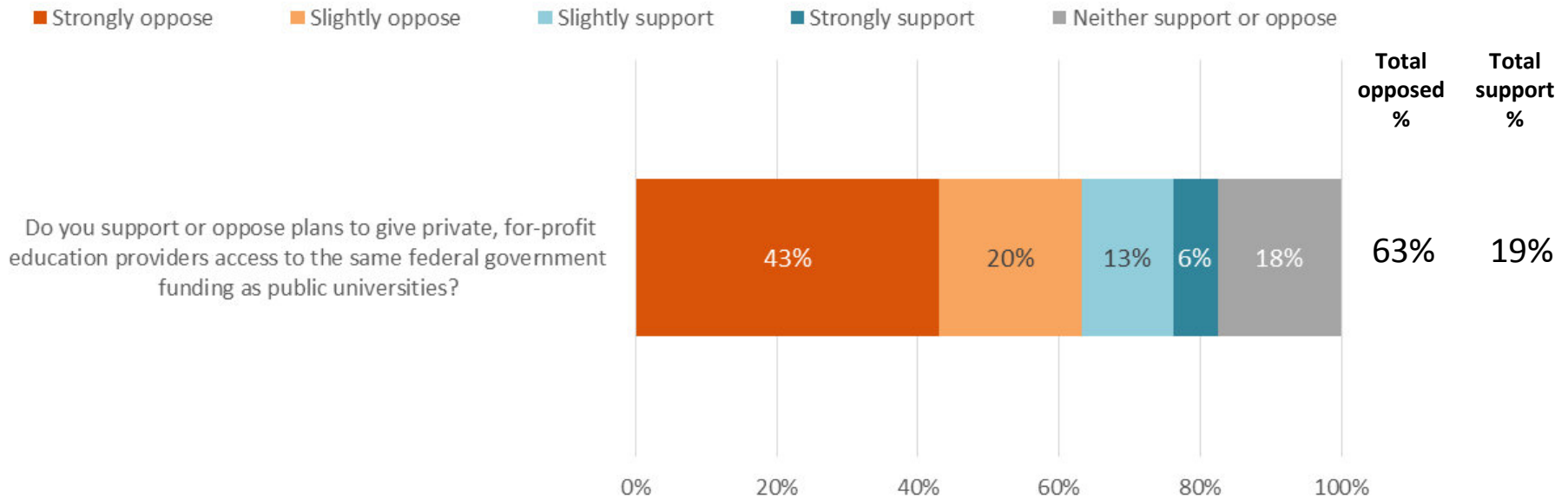
- Two thirds (65%) of Australians oppose plans to remove the fee cap and allow universities to set their own fees. 7 in 10 Australians (69%) oppose the \$1 billion cut to federal government funding for university places. Furthermore, 2 in 3 (66%) are opposed to increasing interest rates on HELP debts.
 - Women are more likely to oppose the deregulation of university fees (72%; cf. men 57%); the \$1 billion cut to federal government funding for university places (76%; cf. men 61%); and increasing the interest rates on HELP debts (74%; cf. men 58%).
 - Young people (18-24) are the most likely to oppose the deregulation of university fees (77%; cf. those aged 25-34 69%, 35-54 65%, 55+ 58%); the \$1 billion cut to federal government funding for university places (79%; cf. those aged 25-34 68%, 35-54 69%, 55+ 65%); and increasing the interest rates on HELP debts (77%; cf. those aged 25-34 64%, 35-54 66%, 55+ 65%).



Q. Do you support or oppose each of the following higher education changes? (see questionnaire for full question text)

For-profit access to federal government funding

- Almost two thirds (63%) of Australians oppose plans to give private, for-profit education providers access to the same federal government funding as public universities.
 - Women are more likely to oppose plans to give for-profit education providers access to federal government funding (67%; cf. men 60%).
 - Those aged 55+ are the most likely to strongly oppose plans to give for-profit education providers federal government funding (50%; cf. those aged 35-54 41%, 25-34 37%, 18-24 40%).



Q. Do you support or oppose plans to give private, for-profit education providers access to the same federal government funding as public universities? (see questionnaire for full question text)

Views on funding for Higher Education

- 4 in 5 (80%) Australians agree that increasing the cost of degrees will make it harder for those who are less wealthy to go to university.
- 78% of Australians agree Australia is both headed towards a US-style system for higher education and that removing the cap on university fees will lead to a dramatic increase in the cost of degrees.
- Three quarters (75%) of Australians agree the federal budget announced in May is unfair.
 - Almost all young people aged 18-24 agree increasing the cost of degrees will make it harder for those who are less wealthy (89%; cf. 25-34 78%, 35-54 80%, 55+ 77%); cutting public funding for university places by up to \$1 billion will hurt the quality of higher education (92%; cf. 25-34 73%, 35-54 72%, 55+ 66%); and removing the cap on university fees will lead to a dramatic increase in the cost of degrees (89%; cf. 25-34 78%, 35-54 77%, 55+ 74%).
 - Women are more likely to agree that increasing interest rates on HELP debt is unfair to graduates who take career breaks, particularly women who take breaks to have children (83%; cf. men 63%).

State Specific Findings

New South Wales and Victoria

- No significant differences to report on

Queensland

- Queenslanders are the most likely to disagree increasing interest rates for HELP debts is unfair on graduates who are already in the workforce (35%; cf. national average 29%).

South Australia

- South Australians are the most likely to oppose increasing the interest rates on HELP debts (76%; cf. national average 66%).
- South Australians are the most likely to oppose plans to give for-profit education providers access to federal government funding (71%; cf. national average 63%).

Western Australia

- West Australians are the most likely to oppose the deregulation of university fees (72%; cf. national average 65%).
- West Australians are the most likely to agree cutting public funding for university places by up to \$1 billion will hurt the quality of higher education (85%; cf. national average 73%); and removing the cap on university fees will lead to a dramatic increase in the cost of degrees (85%; cf. national average 78%).
- West Australians are the most likely to agree increasing interest rates for HELP debts is unfair on graduates who are already in the workforce (78%; cf. national average 71%); and unfair to graduates who take career breaks particularly women who take breaks to have children (81%; cf. national average 73%).
- West Australians are the most likely to agree Australia is headed towards a US-style system for higher education (87%; cf. national average 78%).

Detailed Tabular Findings

How to read the tables

- These tables contain three different types of figures:
 1. UNWEIGHTED COUNT (UC): This refers to the number of people who fall into each category. The unweighted base generally only appears as the first row of figures.
 2. WEIGHTED COUNT (WC): These figures show an estimate (in '000s) of the number of people in Australia who fall into each category, or who would answer the question in this manner. The weighted figures generally appear just above each percentage figure in the tables.
 3. PERCENTAGE: These are vertical percentages. These can be interpreted in the following manner. "x% of COLUMN HEADING responded to the question with ROW HEADING".

			Total		State								Capital City					
					NSW/ACT		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		Yes		No	
			WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC
			16512	1004	5596	340	4149	254	3262	197	1247	75	1709	104	10626	649	5886	355
*No filter			WC	%	WC	%	WC	%	WC	%	WC	%	WC	%	WC	%		
<p>Q1. In the May budget, the federal government announced plans to deregulate higher education tuition fees, meaning universities will be able to set their own tuition fees for the courses that they offer, with <u>no cap</u> on the amount they can charge students. The government also announced it will cut approximately \$1 billion in government funding for university places and increase the interest rates on higher education loan program (HELP) debts up to a cap of 6% (from 2.9%). Do you support or oppose each of the following higher education changes?</p>	Deregulation of university fees (i.e. allowing universities to set their own tuition fees, with no cap on the amount they charge)	Strongly oppose	7380	45%	2326	42%	1994	48%	1398	43%	599	48%	789	46%	4503	42%	2877	49%
		Somewhat oppose	3328	20%	1178	21%	660	16%	635	19%	265	21%	444	26%	2340	22%	989	17%
		Somewhat support	2590	16%	1012	18%	669	16%	482	15%	183	15%	213	12%	1759	17%	831	14%
		Strongly support	1302	8%	516	9%	332	8%	286	9%	67	5%	84	5%	797	8%	505	9%
		Neither support or oppose	1911	12%	564	10%	494	12%	462	14%	133	11%	179	10%	1226	12%	685	12%
		TOTAL OPPOSE	65%	63%	64%	62%	69%	72%	64%	66%								
		TOTAL SUPPORT	24%	27%	24%	24%	20%	17%	24%	23%								
	1 billion cut to government funding for university places	Strongly oppose	7978	48%	2641	47%	2057	50%	1564	48%	666	53%	776	45%	4829	45%	3148	53%
		Somewhat oppose	3382	20%	1130	20%	758	18%	603	18%	265	21%	544	32%	2300	22%	1082	18%
		Somewhat support	2208	13%	861	15%	525	13%	414	13%	166	13%	179	10%	1507	14%	701	12%
		Strongly support	1153	7%	484	9%	299	7%	271	8%	50	4%	16	1%	814	8%	339	6%
		Neither support or oppose	1792	11%	481	9%	510	12%	411	13%	99	8%	194	11%	1175	11%	617	10%
		TOTAL OPPOSE	69%	67%	68%	66%	75%	77%	67%	72%								
		TOTAL SUPPORT	20%	36%	31%	31%	35%	42%	36%	30%								
	Increasing the interest rates on HELP debts	Strongly oppose	8066	49%	2636	47%	1947	47%	1523	47%	763	61%	892	52%	4913	46%	3153	54%
		Somewhat oppose	2912	18%	1039	19%	706	17%	559	17%	183	15%	327	19%	1955	18%	956	16%
		Somewhat support	2325	14%	759	14%	639	15%	481	15%	151	12%	262	15%	1605	15%	720	12%
		Strongly support	1278	8%	615	11%	363	9%	235	7%	34	3%	16	1%	894	8%	385	7%
Neither support or oppose		1931	12%	547	10%	495	12%	465	14%	116	9%	212	12%	1258	12%	673	11%	
TOTAL OPPOSE		66%	66%	64%	64%	76%	71%	65%	70%									
TOTAL SUPPORT		22%	32%	32%	32%	27%	34%	34%	28%									
<p>Q2. In the budget, the government announced... This means public universities will be competing with private, for-profit providers. Do you support or oppose plans to give private, for-profit education providers access to the same funding as public universities?</p>	Strongly support	1037	6%	382	7%	313	8%	208	6%	34	3%	84	5%	656	6%	381	6%	
	Slightly support	2137	13%	906	16%	559	13%	340	10%	152	12%	148	9%	1452	14%	686	12%	
	Slightly oppose	3338	20%	1162	21%	816	20%	686	21%	231	19%	395	23%	2338	22%	1000	17%	
	Strongly oppose	7107	43%	2206	39%	1826	44%	1359	42%	650	52%	725	42%	4300	40%	2806	48%	
	Neither support or oppose	2893	18%	940	17%	635	15%	669	21%	181	14%	357	21%	1879	18%	1014	17%	
	TOTAL OPPOSE	63%	60%	64%	63%	71%	66%	62%	65%									
	TOTAL SUPPORT	19%	23%	21%	17%	15%	14%	20%	18%									

			Total		State								Capital City					
					NSW/ACT		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		Yes		No	
			WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC
			16512	1004	5596	340	4149	254	3262	197	1247	75	1709	104	10626	649	5886	355
*No filter			WC	%	WC	%	WC	%	WC	%	WC	%	WC	%	WC	%		
Q3. The federal government made several announcements regarding funding for higher education in the May budget. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Cutting public funding for university places by up to \$1 billion will hurt the quality of higher education	Strongly agree	6796	41%	2177	39%	1912	46%	1158	35%	598	48%	725	42%	4055	38%	2741	47%
		Slightly agree	5190	31%	1692	30%	1150	28%	1037	32%	366	29%	735	43%	3752	35%	1438	24%
		Slightly disagree	2648	16%	979	17%	707	17%	584	18%	165	13%	149	9%	1710	16%	938	16%
		Strongly disagree	1878	11%	749	13%	381	9%	483	15%	117	9%	99	6%	1109	10%	769	13%
		TOTAL AGREE	73%	69%	74%	67%	77%	85%	73%	71%								
		TOTAL DISAGREE	27%	31%	26%	33%	23%	15%	27%	29%								
	Increasing interest rates for HELP debts is unfair on graduates who are already in the workforce	Strongly agree	6927	42%	2229	40%	1815	44%	1236	38%	647	52%	743	43%	4180	39%	2747	47%
		Slightly agree	4729	29%	1595	28%	1210	29%	874	27%	283	23%	588	34%	3319	31%	1409	24%
		Slightly disagree	3011	18%	1074	19%	742	18%	719	22%	150	12%	262	15%	2000	19%	1011	17%
		Strongly disagree	1845	11%	699	12%	382	9%	433	13%	166	13%	116	7%	1126	11%	719	12%
		TOTAL AGREE	71%	68%	73%	65%	75%	78%	71%	71%								
		TOTAL DISAGREE	29%	32%	27%	35%	25%	22%	29%	29%								
	Removing the cap on university fees will lead to a dramatic increase in the cost of degrees	Strongly agree	8143	49%	2606	47%	2078	50%	1667	51%	649	52%	838	49%	4970	47%	3173	54%
		Slightly agree	4716	29%	1667	30%	1068	26%	846	26%	348	28%	608	36%	3378	32%	1337	23%
		Slightly disagree	2492	15%	894	16%	770	19%	468	14%	149	12%	196	11%	1615	15%	878	15%
		Strongly disagree	1161	7%	429	8%	233	6%	282	9%	101	8%	67	4%	662	6%	498	8%
		AGREE	78%	76%	76%	77%	80%	85%	79%	77%								
		DISAGREE	22%	24%	24%	23%	20%	15%	21%	23%								
	Increasing the cost of degrees will make it harder for those who are less wealthy to go the university	Strongly agree	9279	56%	2997	54%	2288	55%	1736	53%	783	63%	1104	65%	5630	53%	3649	62%
		Slightly agree	3858	23%	1327	24%	887	21%	873	27%	281	23%	360	21%	2782	26%	1076	18%
		Slightly disagree	2183	13%	843	15%	691	17%	387	12%	98	8%	163	10%	1502	14%	681	12%
		Strongly disagree	1193	7%	428	8%	283	7%	266	8%	84	7%	83	5%	711	7%	481	8%
		TOTAL AGREE	80%	77%	77%	69%	85%	86%	79%	80%								
		TOTAL DISAGREE	20%	23%	23%	20%	15%	14%	21%	20%								
Australia is headed towards a US style system for higher education	Strongly agree	7550	46%	2592	46%	1902	46%	1424	44%	565	45%	794	46%	4588	43%	2962	50%	
	Slightly agree	5401	33%	1683	30%	1273	31%	1110	34%	450	36%	690	40%	3658	34%	1743	30%	
	Slightly disagree	2501	15%	889	16%	707	17%	500	15%	149	12%	193	11%	1668	16%	832	14%	
	Strongly disagree	1060	6%	433	8%	266	6%	229	7%	83	7%	33	2%	711	7%	349	6%	
	TOTAL AGREE	78%	76%	77%	78%	81%	87%	78%	80%									
	TOTAL DISAGREE	22%	24%	23%	22%	19%	13%	22%	20%									

			Total		State										Capital City			
					NSW/ACT		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		Yes		No	
			WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC	WC	UC
			16512	1004	5596	340	4149	254	3262	197	1247	75	1709	104	10626	649	5886	355
*No filter			WC	%	WC	%	WC	%	WC	%	WC	%	WC	%	WC	%		
Q3. The federal government made several announcements regarding funding for higher education in the May budget. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	The federal budget announced in May is unfair	Strongly agree	8059	49%	2563	46%	2032	49%	1480	45%	751	60%	878	51%	4861	46%	3198	54%
		Slightly agree	4282	26%	1538	27%	1147	28%	820	25%	180	14%	437	26%	2918	27%	1364	23%
		Slightly disagree	2512	15%	783	14%	640	15%	576	18%	234	19%	264	15%	1921	18%	591	10%
		Strongly disagree	1658	10%	713	13%	330	8%	386	12%	83	7%	130	8%	926	9%	732	12%
		TOTAL AGREE	75%	73%	77%	71%	75%	77%	73%	78%								
		TOTAL DISAGREE	25%	27%	23%	29%	25%	23%	27%	22%								
	Increasing interest rates on HELP debt is unfair to graduates who take career breaks particularly women who take breaks	Strongly agree	7198	44%	2280	41%	1814	44%	1341	41%	683	55%	808	47%	4329	41%	2868	49%
		Slightly agree	4842	29%	1758	31%	1132	27%	872	27%	297	24%	572	33%	3347	31%	1495	25%
		Slightly disagree	3080	19%	1046	19%	890	21%	615	19%	234	19%	247	14%	2110	20%	970	16%
		Strongly disagree	1392	8%	512	9%	312	8%	435	13%	33	3%	82	5%	839	8%	552	9%
		TOTAL AGREE	73%	72%	71%	68%	79%	81%	72%	74%								
		TOTAL DISAGREE	27%	28%	29%	32%	21%	19%	28%	26%								

**For any questions or comments, please
contact Chris Lonergan on 1300 123 453**

