

Opposition Response To The 2014-15 Federal Budget

Below are key passages from the Opposition's response to the Abbott Government's 2014-15 Budget. It includes Opposition Leader, [Bill Shorten's budget reply](#), as well as [media commentary on Bill Shorten's reply](#), and [media releases from the Shadow Minister for Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Industry, Kim Carr](#).

Bill Shorten Budget Reply

Bill Shorten delivered his Budget Reply speech on May 15. Watch the video [here](#).

EDUCATION

Only through education will Australia fully develop our economic potential, our scientific potential, our artistic potential – our people's potential.

That is why the Prime Minister's \$5 billion cuts to Higher education are so destructive. Cuts that mark the end of Australia's fair and equitable higher education system.

Labor will vote against these cuts to university funding and student support.

Labor will not support a system of higher fees, bigger student debt, reduced access and greater inequality.

We will never tell Australians that the quality of their education depends on their capacity to pay.

Commentary on Bill Shorten's Budget Reply

The Conversation

Bill Shorten's budget reply: experts react

On education, he said Labor would vote against cuts to university funding and student support.

"Labor will not support a system of higher fees, bigger student debt, reduced access and greater inequality. We will never tell Australians that the quality of their education depends on their capacity to pay."

Higher education

Tim Pitman, Senior Research Fellow, National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education at Curtin University

Citing \$5 billion in government cuts to higher education, Shorten accused the government of denying the next generation of Australians what many in the parliament have had: access to free or relatively inexpensive higher education.

Unsurprisingly, he advised that Labor will vote against cuts to university funding and support and will not vote for "a system of higher fees, bigger student debt, reduced

access and greater inequality”. This statement can be taken as a blanket rejection of all measures announced under education minister Christopher Pyne’s portfolio, including increased student contributions and fee deregulation.

The Australian

Labor blocks path to fiscal fix

David Crowe

Opening three new fronts in the budget fight, Mr Shorten said Labor would vote against the government’s university reforms and cuts to unemployment benefits while signalling a vote against cuts to family tax benefit.

The policy decisions put Labor on course to reject about \$18bn in budget savings that are central to Joe Hockey’s promise to scale back the budget deficits.

Labor’s position on the detail of every tertiary education change was not clear last night but the government’s reforms save at least \$3.1bn and as much as \$5bn over four years.

In total, Labor’s policy positions could deepen the deficits by about \$18bn without any alternative savings or revenue measures to offset the impact.

New policy initiatives were absent from the formal speech to parliament but Labor sources argued there was no need to spell out alternative policies early in this term of parliament. Instead, there was a repeated attack on Mr Abbott for telling voters before the election there would be “no cuts” to health and education and then unveiling a budget to scale back \$80bn in federal funding in both areas over the decade ahead.

Media Releases from the Shadow Minister for Higher Education, Research, Innovation and industry, Kim Carr

Abbott Government betrays students

Wednesday 14 May 2014 Media Release

The Abbott Government's first Budget marks the end of fair and affordable higher education, and a betrayal of Australian students and their families.

This Budget will mean spiraling university fees for young people – and demonstrates that the Government has broken its promise not to increase fees or to cut funding to higher education.

Lower-income, female, and rural and regional students and their families will be the hardest hit as they are made to shoulder a larger burden of university costs.

More than \$5 billion in cuts to Higher Education will mean:

- Less public investment in university teaching per student, despite almost 100,000 additional student places.
- Slugging students with ever-increasing debt, an increased interest rate, and lower thresholds for beginning repayment.
- Over \$200 million less for university teaching and research programs as a result of changes to indexation.
- \$171 million in cuts to equity programs.

This Budget heralds the death of the Whitlam-Hawke higher education system: a system in which your brains, not your wallet, determined where you go to university and what you study.

Under the Abbott-Pyne system, students will be forced to weigh up how much debt they will incur, and how long it will take them to repay it, when deciding whether or not they can afford a tertiary education.

This is a government with the wrong priorities when it comes to higher education.

Australia's science and research future gutted

Wednesday 14 May 2014 Media Release

Scientists, researchers and their families will feel betrayed this morning by a government whose actions speak louder than their words.

Other cuts include:

- Australian Research Council: \$74.9 million cut over three year, and fewer Future Fellows than under Labor.
- Co-operative Research Centres: \$80 million cut.

PhD and Masters programs will now attract student fees, making it harder for students to pursue excellence.

There must now be serious concerns that, having sold Australia's scientists and researchers down the drain, the Government will spark a new brain drain.