OVERSEAS STUDENTS CHARGE BILL 1979

Date Introduced: 10 October 1979
House: House of Representatives
Presented by: Hon. M.J.R. MacKellar, Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs

Purpose

To introduce an annual charge on overseas students studying in Australian Universities and Colleges of Advanced Education.

Background

Since 1973 the number of persons in Australia at any one time as private overseas students has been subject to a limit of 10,000. Such students could be granted temporary entry visas provided that they satisfied a number of conditions, the chief of which was that their proposed course of study was not available in their home country. Prospective students had to have a genuine intention to enter Australia on a temporary basis, and to depart on completion of their course. However, private overseas students could acquire resident status if they were able to satisfy the normal criteria for migration. In recent years almost 75 per cent of students completing formal studies have applied successfully for resident status.

On the 22 August the Minister announced that the new criteria for admission would emphasise high academic ability and the future utility of the intended qualifications. In addition, overseas students will be required to leave Australia on the conclusion of their studies and applications for return will not normally be received or considered within two years.

The Commonwealth Government assumed full responsibility for Universities and Colleges of Advanced Education from the 1 January 1974. Since that time students at these institutions have not paid tuition fees. The average annual tuition cost per full-time student is currently estimated at around $5,500 (Universities) and $4,000 (Colleges of Advanced Education). The Government has determined the charges to be levied under this Bill after taking account of costs and fees charged by other comparable countries.
Provisions

The Bill provides for the imposition of an annual charge on overseas students enrolled at prescribed courses in Universities and Colleges of Advanced Education. Prescribed courses are those leading to a degree, diploma or associate diploma.

Clause 7 exempts those overseas students enrolled in prescribed courses for a year before 1 January 1980.

The amount of the charge is to be fixed by regulation and is not to exceed $2,500.

The Minister has indicated that the range of charges to be prescribed will be:

- Masters' or Ph.D degree - $2,500 p.a.
- Medical, Veterinary Science and Dentistry Courses - $2,000 p.a.
- Other Award Courses - $1,500 p.a.