



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Higher Education

SPEECH

Thursday, 28 August 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Date Thursday, 28 August 2014
Page 8968
Questioner
Speaker Brodtmann, Gai, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (13:42): Today, the Minister for Education introduced legislation that will make the dream of a higher education unaffordable for thousands of Australians. Under the Abbott government, university fees will increase, the Commonwealth contribution to the cost of degrees will decrease, students will pay a higher interest rate on their HECS debt and students will have to start paying that debt back sooner. These policies are bad for low- and middle-income earners, they are bad for women and carers, and they will deter people from entering higher education.

I recently visited my alma mater, RMIT, and I was shocked to hear from a number of students that they knew people who were planning to move to Europe to attend university, because, even with the cost of moving abroad and the cost of living in Europe, it will still be cheaper than studying in Australia. As a result, Australia will lose the precious intellect and potential of these bright young Australians. There will be a brain drain.

Young people should not have to move overseas to pursue a higher education. They should not have to choose between higher education and home ownership, and they should not have to choose between higher education and starting a family. Under the Abbott government's plan, they will have to make these choices. Let us not forget that, prior to the election the Minister for Education said there would be no increase to university fees. Prior to the election, the Prime Minister said there would be no cuts to education. This legislation is another broken promise from a government whose word means nothing. *(Time expired)*