

GSA President and GSA International Officer Message

Some relief for international students, but a long journey ahead!

Following extensive lobbying on these issues, GSA welcomes today's announcement from the University to expand financial assistance to international students. GSA President, Jeremy Waite, welcomes the financial assistance for international students, which includes a package to reduce the financial burden of returning to Australia along with an expansion of merit-based scholarships for international coursework students. GSA has been actively urging the University to offer this support to international students, particularly those who are offshore.

"This support will help students to continue their studies and compensate them for their quarantine and flight expenses," said GSA International Officer, Afsaneh Seifinaji.

"There is no doubt that this strong support from the University will bring hope for international students impacted by the pandemic. I look forward to seeing continued and compassionate support from the University of Melbourne."

GSA looks forward to hearing more regarding the proposals for counselling and psychological support for international students. The impact of COVID-19 on international students and the closure of Australia's borders has presented various challenges to students' financial situations, which has a direct impact on their mental health.

However, GSA also believes that there is more that needs to be done to support all international students, both on and offshore, and to provide needs-based support to students who currently require it. Many onshore students have faced unemployment throughout lengthy lockdowns, and have struggled to pay course fees and even living expenses. Further, with the cost of travelling to Australia increasing on average to \$4000 for a ticket and \$3000 for quarantine, these expenses far exceed the University's support package. There is no anticipated date from the Government as to when the compulsory quarantine rule will be lifted for international travelers to Australia.

The GSA President and International Officer call on the University to consider a fee reduction and financial support for all impacted students, not only high-achieving students. The pandemic has directly impacted students' overall health and well-being, in turn disproportionately affecting the performance of more vulnerable students.

[Read details of the announcement](#)

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