



## **Dr Monique Ryan to Table Amendment to HECS Legislation Including Support for Practical Placements**

Independent Federal Member for Kooyong, Dr Monique Ryan, will this week table an amendment to the Albanese Government's Universities Accord (Cutting Student Debt by 20 Per Cent) Bill 2025.

Dr Ryan noted the significance of education being the first legislative priority of the 48<sup>th</sup> Parliament. However, she warned that the proposed reforms do not constitute the structural reform required to address the deep inequities in the tertiary education sector.

"Labor has long criticised the unfair, inequitable Morrison-era Job-Ready Graduates scheme," Dr Ryan said. "Its reversal is long overdue. This is the time to make that change."

Dr Ryan also highlighted the financial burden placed on students undertaking mandatory unpaid placements, particularly in regional areas. Many students are required to complete full-time unpaid placements as part of their degrees, often without support for travel, accommodation, or living expenses.

"These placements often involve full-time hours, leaving students to bear the brunt of out-of-pocket expenses all on their own," Dr Ryan said. "Students are living in their cars. They're going part-time or deferring their studies to save up so they can complete placements. It's a false economy when we have critical shortages of psychologists, of GPs, of OTs and physios. We should support them to finish their training. They'll give back when they're in the workforce."

"When I was a medical student on placement, it wasn't a walk in the park – but we had significant costs covered, like accommodation," she said. "Right now, we're expecting too much from tertiary students. We're not giving students the support they need and deserve."

Dr Ryan's amendment will extend prac placement support to all care sector courses, reverse the Job-Ready Graduates schemes' doubling of the cost of arts and laws degrees, and change the timing of HECS indexation. Dr Ryan is urging the Government to take bold action to support the next generation of Australians by reducing student debt and properly funding higher education.

"If the government truly values education, it must find the capacity to fund it properly."

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