

# More scholarships coming

*“Highly skilled professionals needed for a more productive and prosperous nation”*

The Federal Government plans to double the number of Commonwealth scholarships from 44,000 to 88,000 by 2012.

As part of this expansion, two new scholarship categories will be introduced in 2009 – National Priority Scholarships for students enrolling in priority areas; and National Accommodation Scholarships for students relocating interstate to study specialist courses not available near their home.

The Government proposes that the new National Priority Scholarships be offered to students undertaking undergraduate studies in nursing, teaching, medicine,

dentistry, allied health, science and engineering.

The Commonwealth Scholarships program assists students from low socio-economic backgrounds, especially those from regional and remote areas and Indigenous students, with costs associated with higher education.

The program currently assists students with general education costs and for students from regional and remote areas who have to move to attend higher education, accommodation costs. Currently these scholarships are worth up to \$4,324 a year and are indexed annually.

The Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines will

be amended to include the new scholarship categories and it is intended that the amended guidelines will be finalised by July 2008, to enable providers to effectively promote and market the new scholarships for the 2009 academic year.

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, released a discussion paper last month inviting responses by May 1 on how best to implement the new scholarships.


In the discussion paper, the Government, says it considers universities to be a key training ground for developing the highly skilled professionals which Australia needs to become a more productive and prosperous nation.

Thus the Government has proposed the National Priority Scholarships target undergraduate students enrolling in courses to prepare students for the critical work-skill areas.

Commonwealth Scholarships are intended primarily for students undertaking an initial qualification and National Priority Scholarships target undergraduate students.

However, the only means of obtaining initial registration to practice in a number of occupations which may be identified as priority areas, is to complete a post-graduate qualification.

Currently the only post-graduate students eligible to receive a CS are those enrolled in the identified National Priority Areas of teaching and nursing.

One question asked in the discussion paper is whether consideration should be given to expanding the eligibility for National Priority Scholarships to include those post-graduate courses which come within the national priority work skill areas and which require a post-graduate qualification for initial registration to practice. 



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