

Briefs...

Day of action

Students around the country held a national day of action last month urging the Federal Government to adopt a number of Bradley Review recommendations including reducing the age of independence from 25 to 22, raising the allowable income to \$400 per fortnight and opening Youth Allowance to masters coursework students.

"Students are concerned about the fate of their higher education system. They are concerned about the lack of fair student income support and the lack of adequate funding for teaching and research," president of the National Union of Students David Barrow said.

"Food is a critical element in many of these actions since 1 in 8 students misses a daily meal. You'll see that BBQs, noodle-handouts and Breakfast clubs are popular events across the country" he said.

Enrolments up

School-leavers are opting for security and vocational disciplines that lead directly to careers, with law, business, teaching,

engineering and science recording strong, and in some cases dramatic, increases in enrolment.

In what appears to be a recessionary response, 15 universities – including five members of the Group of Eight, three technological universities and four regionals – also report an average increase of 6.5per cent over last year across all disciplines.

Overseas students too

The recruitment of overseas students to Australia continues to defy the global downturn, with the latest statistics recording growth of 21.4 per cent over the same time last year.

The figures did not yet include the key March commencement period, but Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard described the growth as encouraging and showing the strength of a local industry now worth \$14.2 billion a year.

The growth continued to be led by China, which had more than 70,000 students enrolled in Australian universities, colleges and schools in January, followed by India with almost 60,000 students.

Uncertain labour market

"They would definitely reduce the number of graduates employed"

Almost three in five graduate employers surveyed in late 2008 felt that the current instability in the world financial markets would have some impact on their recruitment of new graduates during 2009, according to research conducted by Graduate Careers Australia.

Of this group, whilst nearly three-quarters indicated that they would definitely not cancel their graduate programs, nine per cent indicated that they would definitely reduce the number of graduates employed and almost 70 per cent indicating that they would consider reducing their 2010 intake of 2009 graduates.

Graduate Careers surveyed graduate employers for the 2008 Graduate Outlook survey to investigate how they planned to respond to the economic downturn and how this might impact on their graduate

intake.

Graduate Careers executive director, Cindy Tilbrook, said that Graduate Careers has fast-tracked the release of their research findings to help graduates make informed career decisions in an increasingly uncertain labour market.

"With the increasing level of concern in the community about the impact of the economic downturn on employment rates, information to assist graduates in making career decisions is vital," Tilbrook said.

She added that, "Despite the economic downturn, it is still important for graduate recruiters to consider the longer term position and not just the short-term when reviewing their graduate programs.

"Some of the underlying factors that have driven the recent boom in graduate recruitment in Australia are still relevant (such as the overall ageing of the workforce), and graduate recruiters can use the current situation to place themselves in a preferential position in the eyes of graduates through a commitment to their graduate programs in these difficult times.

"A continued intake of graduates will also ensure that these recruiters are well placed to maximise opportunities as soon as the economic climate starts to turn".



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