

## MEDIA RELEASE

March 30 2017

### University students rally for free education

Students from the three major South Australian Universities have staged rallies on campuses and on the steps of parliament house in a show of solidarity with students from around the country protesting on the March 22 National Day of Action calling for free tertiary education.



*South Australian students from the three major universities at the March 22 National Day of Action*

*Photo courtesy of Kayla Dickeson*

The protest is a part of the National Union of Students campaign “Make Education Free Again”, lobbying the government for free tertiary education for all students studying in Australia. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2017, the USASA Board passed a motion to support the campaign.

UniSA students rallied outside Jeffrey Smart from 2:30PM and marched to Parliament House to meet students from the University of Adelaide and Flinders University.

The campaign is part of a national push by students to rally for free tertiary education for all students studying in Australia.

Current statistics put free tertiary education at the annual cost of \$8 billion, a small cost compared to our annual defence budget of \$32.6billion.

All three major universities were represented at the Adelaide rally at Parliament House. Speakers included UniSA Student Association President Kayla Dickeson, Adelaide University SRC President Mark Pace and General Councillor Leigh Briar, and Flinders University Student Association Education Officer Hamish Richardson. Tammy Franks MLC from the Greens and Ron Slee from the National Tertiary Education Union also spoke in support of the campaign. Adelaide University SRC Education Officer Daniel Nesar chaired the protest.

USASA President Kayla Dickeson, speaking at the rally, said that the government should see young people as a priority in the budget.

“We as a country need to start prioritising the welfare of our young people, and stop locking them out of education and work. The current attacks on penalty rates are devastating to young people, who like myself have relied on weekend work to get us through our studies. Pay delays from Centrelink and a \$3 billion cut to the university sector means that students are expected to live on less and study at universities without proper funding and resources,” Kayla said.

“‘Innovation and efficiency’ programs translate to cuts and restructures with little to no consultation with the students who are either accumulating thousands of dollars in debt, or up-front payments for international students, mean that under the neoliberal agenda we are seeing a dip in the quality of our education. Further, it is compounding towards the move to online learning and the casualisation of the workforce.”

Kayla went on to say that free education should be the solution to the current attacks on education.

“Education is a human right, not a privilege. Every person in this country deserves equal, equitable, affordable, free, and accessible education and a prosperous future in our university system”.

*The USASA Board will continue to support the education campaign throughout 2017. For updates on the campaign, follow the USASA Board on their blog at <https://usasaboard.wordpress.com/> and their Facebook page on <https://www.facebook.com/USASASStudentBoard>.*

*You can also email the President [Kayla.Dickeson@unisa.edu.au](mailto:Kayla.Dickeson@unisa.edu.au) if you have any queries or you'd like to get more involved with the campaign.*