



**Sharon Grierson MP**  
Federal Member for Newcastle

# Media Release

Wednesday 1 September 2004

## NEWCASTLE STUDENTS AND FAMILIES DESERVE BETTER

Too many Novocastrian students and families are feeling the financial strain of a university education. With the Howard Government giving the go-ahead for HECS fees to rise by 25% next year and the introduction of full-fee paying degrees for local students the burden will become even heavier.

The number of part-time students at the University of Newcastle has been increasing each year and is now more than 50%, reflecting the harsh reality that more and more students are forced to work almost full-time hours just to make ends meet.

Recent studies suggest that need for students to do more and more paid work is having a detrimental effect on their studies.

The University of Newcastle has approximately 6000 students that come from a low socio-economic background, only a few hundred will have access to the Government's proposed new Commonwealth Scholarships. How are these students to manage the ever increasing cost of higher education? Not only will they struggle to live day-by-day, they will also inherit a debt of tens of thousands of dollars.

Student debt is estimated to reach \$11 billion later this year and is forecast to rise by 52% over the next four years to a record high of \$15 billion by 2007-2008.

The Howard Government should be ashamed of the debt they have placed on students and their families.

John Howard promised that there would be no \$100,000 university fees, but there are now already 16 degrees costing in excess of \$200,000 on offer to Australian students.

You can't trust the Howard Government with education.

Only Labor will stop the 25% hike in HECS fees. Only Labor has a plan to lift the burden on students and their families.

**For further information please contact Sharon Grierson  
on 4926 1555**

Newcastle  
427 Hunter Street  
Newcastle NSW 2300  
Ph: 02-4926 1555 Fax: 02-4926 1895  
e-mail: Sharon.Grierson.MP@aph.gov.au



Canberra  
Suite R2 88  
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600  
Ph: 02-6277 4221 Fax: 02-6277 8461  
Web Page: [www.newcastle-alp.com](http://www.newcastle-alp.com)