

Did you know...??

The Guild Shops are closing

The Future of the ECU Student Guild

Dead or Alive?

Future of the ECU Student Guild – Dead or Alive?

As you are probably aware by now, the Federal Government passed its Voluntary Student Unionism (VSU) legislation just before Christmas. This means that from July 1st, enrolling students will choose whether or not they pay their Amenities & Services Fee (A & S Fee) to use the services of the Guild. While we hope that many of you will realise the value the Guild provides and pay your fee voluntarily, the stark reality is that our bottom line will suffer. Nevertheless, we are trying our best to maintain those services that are of greatest importance to you. Here is your guide to the changes that will be occurring over the next few months as we make the transition to VSU.

Will I have to pay my A & S Fee in second semester?

We don't know whether the University will collect the second instalment of the A & S Fee for those students who enrolled in February 2006. All of the other public universities in Perth will be collecting the second instalment, and the Guild wants ECU to do the same so that we can continue providing the services and support we offer for as long as possible. Please visit our website at www.ecuguild.org.au to find out more.

What changes is the Guild making to cope with VSU?

After much discussion and debate, your Guild Senate (the governing body of the Guild) approved many necessary cost-saving initiatives, including the closure of the two remaining shops at Joondalup and Mount Lawley and reduced expenditure over all categories in our budget. Unfortunately, we will be losing three permanent members of staff and five casual members. Three other staff will have their hours reduced. As hard as these decisions were, we have a duty as a Guild to ensure we use student funds wisely and appropriately, a responsibility we take very seriously.

Why is the Guild closing its shops?

When payment of the A & S Fee was compulsory, student representatives decided to use some of the fee revenue to provide subsidised goods and services through the Guild shops, like free tea and coffee and five-cent photocopying. These subsidies cost about \$100,000 a year across the three metro campuses (because of its small student population, the Guild never had a shop in Bunbury). In September of last year, your Guild Senate in consultation with Guild Management and the Retail Shop Manager decided to

close the Churchlands shop as it was losing almost \$35,000 a year but only serving a small number of students. In March, Senate made the difficult decision to close the Mount Lawley and Joondalup shops at the end of Semester One. Despite high student populations on both campuses, the shops were still losing close to \$70,000 a year—much more than the Guild can afford under VSU.

What will replace the shops?

While everyone will miss the friendly faces and discounted prices of the Guild shops, the good news is that we are lobbying the University to transform the shops into common rooms where students can relax and socialise on campus. Also, we will continue to offer second-hand book sales through the ECU Bookshop.

How will the Guild encourage students to voluntarily pay their A & S Fees?

We are currently working on a membership scheme based on a value package. In a nutshell, we want to show you just how much Guild services are worth, and they're worth up to five times what you pay for them! We're also working collaboratively with the University and other suppliers to add even more to the package, including great freebies and discounts both on and off campus. With a little cooperation and a lot of hard work, we plan to earn every penny of your A & S Fee by offering the highest level of service for the lowest price.

Despite the challenges, the Guild team remains optimistic about the future because we are determined to make it work. We need the same level of commitment from you, our members, by adding your support to keep the Guild **ALIVE**.

Umile Gwakuba

President – ECU Student Guild