



Media release

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Guiding Light for University and TAFE Students

Two guides aim to provide prospective and continuing university and TAFE students with invaluable, 'must-read' information as they approach their higher education decision-making this year. The release of the guides coincides with the announcement of first-round university offers Australia-wide.

ASG's *Get Smart Guide* and ASG's *Get Smart Scholarships Guide* are packed with information about higher education, including a guide to the costs, entitlements, support, fees, changes to support and benefits, how to qualify for support, scholarships information, and important cautions.

The Australian Scholarship Group (ASG) commissioned expert tertiary student services adviser, Mr Vince Callaghan to write the free e-guides, which are available for download from ASG's website – www.asg.com.au – in the Resource Centre.

The guides also contain cautionary information for students and their parents about prospective changes to the 'gap year', youth allowance, parental income tests, personal income assessments, and scholarships information given the Australian Government's proposed changes to the *Income Support for Students Bill*, which stalled in the Senate late last year, leaving higher education students and their parents in a situation of uncertainty.

Mr Callaghan said he believed it was vital that students and their parents were aware of the pending changes so that they could make informed decisions and fully understand the issues.

"While we don't know all the outcomes of the reintroduction of the changes to the *Income Support for Students Bill* when the Australian Government reintroduces it into Parliament in February this year, we do know that the current 'gap year' arrangement (used to gain independent student assistance) is planned to be abolished and this has major implications for students, especially those from regional and rural areas," Mr Callaghan explained.

ASG's Community Adviser, Ms Michelle Hunder said ASG was committed to assisting parents provide education opportunities for their children.

"The 'one-stop' information contained in ASG's *Get Smart Guide* and ASG's *Get Smart Scholarships Guide* offers a critical service provided not just to ASG's Members, who value assisting their children to gain a complete education as a major foundation for life, but to the wider community also," she said.

"ASG encourages students and their parents to download the free e-guides containing resources that encourage planning, help students investigate options, alert and caution them to possible changes in the sector, as well as provide a host of tips, checks, and sources for further information," Ms Hunder added.

ASG's *Get Smart Guide* and ASG's *Get Smart Scholarships Guide* are available for free download from ASG's website: www.asg.com.au/resources – under Guides. ASG will post updates as they come to hand.

ASG is Australia's leading friendly society specialising in education benefits. ASG's Education Program™ offers a unique, convenient, and proven way for families to plan for their children or grandchildren's future education. The program can be tailored to suit the needs of most family budgets. For further information about ASG and ASG's Education Program™, visit www.asg.com.au or phone: 1800 648 945.

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Note:

- **Mr Vince Callaghan**, expert tertiary student services adviser and author of ASG's *Get Smart Guide* and ASG's *Get Smart Scholarships Guide* is available for interview.
- **Images** (low and high-resolutions) are available at: www.asg.com.au/images_asggsg

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