

MEDIA RELEASE

8 April 2025



IHEA: Time to Fix the Copyright Gap

As part of its 2025 Federal Election Platform, Independent Higher Education Australia (IHEA) is calling on the next government to reform copyright legislation. Current licensing models place an unfair financial burden on independent higher education providers, driving up tuition costs and student debt.

“Independent providers are being charged nearly three times more in Copyright Agency fees than public universities despite delivering the same content,” said IHEA CEO, the Hon Dr Peter Hendy. “There is no justification for students at independent providers to be penalised for accessing identical educational materials.”

The issue spans beyond written works licensed by the Copyright Agency. It also includes music (APRA and AMCOS) and screen content (Screenrights). IHEA stresses the need for fair treatment across all licence types.

“The current system is fundamentally inequitable and out of step with modern education,” said Dr Hendy. “Students should not be subsidising a licensing model that fails to reflect how learning is delivered today, particularly with the growing shift to online education.”

IHEA is calling for an independent review of statutory licence provisions to establish fairer pricing and ensure the model reflects current teaching practices.

“As part of IHEA’s negotiations, the Copyright Agency agreed to review how independent providers actually use licensed content, a critical step for establishing fair fees. However, to date, we are not aware of any action taken to commence this review,” Dr Hendy said.

With the rising cost of living and student debt already a national concern, IHEA warns that without reform, Australia's independent students will continue to be unfairly penalised.

“The copyright framework must catch up with how education is delivered today,” Dr Hendy said. “Australia's *Copyright Act 1968* needs comprehensive review to ensure its statutory licence provisions truly reflect modern educational practices and eliminate unreasonable costs imposed on the education sector.”

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