

## Counting the cost: Morrison must back our public universities and match revenue shortfall

The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU NSW) has called on the Federal Government to provide urgent financial assistance to universities affected by any downturn in international student numbers.

Leading economists, international rating agencies and the industry's peak commercial body, Universities Australia, have all raised the potential vulnerability the sector faces in any prolonged restriction on international student travel in response to the rapid spread of coronavirus in China.

Standard & Poors estimate Australian universities stand to forfeit around \$3.1 billion in revenue

CPSU NSW Assistant Branch Secretary, Troy Wright said "education is now our third largest export".

"For decades Governments have pushed our public universities to build business models based on expanding their international fee paying student numbers to supplement cuts in public funding," he said. "We've turned our public universities into businesses and in doing so exposed them to market vulnerability.

"Many of our universities are now either highly dependent on revenue from international students, or cash-strapped to the extent they can't easily sustain a further decline in income.

"Universities have become among the most critical employers in our regions and generate enormous economic activity in other parts of the economy.

"The Prime Minister must step-in and ensure adequate additional funding is available to universities experiencing, or likely to experience significant losses in revenues."

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