



DEBUNKING THE MYTH THAT HISTORY GRADUATES ARE NOT 'JOB-READY'

In 2020, the Morrison government introduced a package of reforms to university student contributions (fees), known as '[Job-Ready Graduates](#).' The legislation lowered fees for those subjects that this government deemed to be most 'job ready' or to be a 'national priority.' At the same time, it increased prices for other subjects deemed to not be 'job ready' or to not fit any national priority, in order to deter students from studying them.

Students in the humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS), including history students, saw their student fees more than double under the JRG package, presumably on the basis that HASS graduates are not as 'job-ready.' These fee increases were based on two false assumptions:

1. That governments could manipulate student choice through price signals
2. That humanities, arts and social science degrees produced graduates who were less 'job ready' or less important to the nation than other graduates.

1. Price signals don't reshape student choice

- The [Australian Universities Accord Final Report](#) found that only 1.5% of students applied to enrol in courses they would not have applied for under the pre-JRG student contribution arrangements. JRG has left some students with extremely high HELP debts that do not reflect their future earning potential.

2. Humanities, Arts, and Social Science graduates are, in fact, 'job-ready' and are also key to national prosperity

- While data on the precise value of history degrees is not available in all cases, data on HASS degree outcomes is widely available. Humanities, Arts and Social Science graduates are found in more than [300 occupations](#), demonstrating that HASS graduates are adaptable, flexible and possess transferable skills.
- The 2024 [Impact and Outcomes report](#) from DASSH (Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities) shows that HASS graduates have very strong employment outcomes and good salaries after graduation. Around 90% of HASS graduates are in full-time employment three years after graduation. Earnings for humanities, culture and social sciences graduates remain steady at around \$82,000 three years after graduating. This is on par with the wider university average of \$83,500.
- History trains students in the close and critical reading of evidence, critical and creative thinking, understanding historical context, and evaluating competing perspectives. These are skills that are in demand and will continue to be in demand in the future, according to the World Economic Forum's latest [Future of Jobs report](#) (2023), which notes that 'analytical thinking and creative thinking remain the most important skills for workers.'

- Research conducted by the [Australian Academy of the Humanities](#) — ‘Future of the Humanities in Australia’ — also affirmed that humanities graduates are trained in the skills employers want, including communication skills, creativity, problem-solving, leadership, emotional intelligence and critical thinking.
- This 2018 study on [‘The Value of the Humanities’](#) notes the broad range of technical and transferable skills that are fostered by HASS study.
- Katie Barclay, writing in [Policy and History](#), noted that while history graduates develop important skills, they also learn historical knowledge, which shapes how people interpret their experiences, and those of others.
- The AHA’s 2022 report [History Opened Many Doors](#) offers testimony from history graduates on how their history training helped them in their careers.