



THE HON DR CRAIG EMERSON MP
ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER
MINISTER FOR TRADE

SENATOR THE HON CHRIS EVANS
MINISTER FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION, SKILLS,
JOBS AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

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LIBYAN STUDENTS HELPED TO KEEP STUDYING IN AUSTRALIA

The Australian Government will assist around 650 Libyan students, and their dependants, who have been left stranded in Australia without funds for study and living costs due to the conflict in their home country.

The Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Craig Emerson, and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Senator Chris Evans, today announced a \$1.5m loan to the Libyan Embassy to support the students and their families for the coming month.

Dr Emerson said the Government would continue to work with the Libyan authorities to ensure the resumption of funding for the students as soon as possible.

In the meantime, the assistance would allow the students to stay and continue their studies. Authorities and organisations in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada have also taken steps to ensure funding is available for Libyan students in these respective countries.

“These students have come to Australia to pursue their studies in good faith,” Dr Emerson said.

“Many are under significant stress, and in addition to their current financial concerns are extremely worried for the welfare of family members in Libya. We want to do everything we can to ensure that they are able to finish their courses in Australia, and return home to help in the rebuilding of their country,” he said.

Senator Evans said that the plight of the students, many of whom are accompanied by their wives, husbands and children, was a humanitarian issue which required immediate financial help. He paid tribute to the support and flexibility that many universities and other education institutions had been providing for Libyan students.

“Universities have demonstrated outstanding humanitarian support for their Libyan students through this difficult and uncertain time,” Senator Evans said.

“Their willingness to provide emotional, academic and financial assistance, including deferring tuition fees for their Libyan students, clearly demonstrates the best of Australian compassion and care for international students.”

In addition, Universities Australia has coordinated information between government and institutions to progress possible solutions.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) has also committed to taking a flexible approach in dealing with students seeking visa renewals.

Students who are concerned about their visa status should contact DIAC on 131 881 to get the best advice for their personal circumstances. A fact sheet for Libyan students is available on the DIAC website <http://www.immi.gov.au/students/pdf/libyan-students.pdf>