



NEW ZEALAND UNION OF STUDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS (INC.)

TE RŌPŪ ĀKONGA O NGĀ WHARE WĀNANGA O AOTEAROA

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Press Release

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Attention: Education and Political reporters

Reckless bill will put quality and students at risk

High quality tertiary education will be put at risk if an Act Party Bill being considered by Parliament is further advanced next week. The Bill seeks to fundamentally alter membership of students' associations, however students warn this will lead to downwards pressures on quality and higher costs to students, staff, and tertiary institutions.

"Students' associations' are an integral part of the tertiary landscape. They contribute to academic success and positively influence students staying in study," says NZUSA co-President David Do.

"Submissions from universities and polytechnics around the country demonstrated the important and unique role associations play in creating quality tertiary experiences. They are among the 98% of submissions against the Bill," says Do.

"The 2009 Australasian Study of Student Engagement notes a strong correlation between academic success and positive student engagement opportunities. Students' associations provide these opportunities because the advocacy, sporting and social activities they offer create positive holistic environments that foster success," says NZUSA co-President Pene Delaney.

"For example, over the past month associations have held 'stress-free study week' events and free breakfasts to assist with the stressful exam season. Services like 'Campus Angels' help students who may be studying late get home safely. These and more would be lost if the Bill goes through," says Delaney.

"The Government has said it wants to improve student success and completion rates and to enhance the quality and productivity of the tertiary sector. It would be reckless to remove one of the factors that help achieve this and remove important frontline services that students want and need," says Do.

"The sector is already operating in a tight fiscal environment with busy staff and increasing enrolments, and it will not be able to pick up all the work associations do. There is a real risk that like in Australia, institutions may be forced to divert scarce resources from research and teaching to fill the gap," says Delaney.

"If students, staff, and tertiary institutions don't want this Bill, why is the Government planning to push forward with this reckless Bill? The Government should work with students to improve and protect the high quality tertiary education experience currently provided in New Zealand's universities and polytechnics. We urge National not to put quality and students at risk for an ideological whim," concludes Do.

NZUSA is the national representative body for tertiary students and has been advocating on student issues since 1929.

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