

**MEDIA
RELEASE**

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Attention: Education and Political
reporters
For Immediate Release

Tertiary Education cuts will hurt students

Students are outraged today at the confirmation there will be no funding increases to the tertiary sector in the upcoming Budget and are concerned at the detrimental effect this will have on students.

The Minister of Finance, Bill English, confirmed today that the National-led Government would not be honouring Labour's commitment of ensuring funding keeps up with CPI.

"A decision not to increase funding to the sector is, in effect, an unacceptable cut to tertiary education", said Sophia Blair, Co-President of the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (NZUSA). "This will have a negative impact on the quality of tertiary education that students receive and there is a major concern that tertiary institutions may have to take drastic measures to cope, such as limiting entry, effectively shutting people out of education."

"Students are also extremely concerned that the Government may, in the coming years, make changes to the centralised fee maxima system and allow institutions to set their own fees in an attempt to make up the Government's funding shortfall. This is a regressive action that will once again see fee increases escalating and adding to the already massive collective student debt owed," said Blair.

"Given the Government's keen commitment to increase positive outcomes for students and ensure that students are given the highest quality tertiary education, we strongly question how allowing funding to decrease in real terms will achieve this," said Blair.

The Australian Government recently announced an extra increase of A\$2.6 billion in funding to the tertiary sector to ensure that people will be able to access education through the recession.

"Our Government needs to follow the lead of the Australian Government and take this recession as an opportunity to invest in our people. The last thing New Zealand needs is to come out of this recession with an even less educated, less skilled and less productive society than we started with. Unfortunately, this is exactly what we're likely to get with the Government's policy of continued under-funding of the sector" concluded Blair.

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