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Attention: Education and Political
reporters

For Immediate Release

Benson-Pope makes up student debt repayment figures

Students are shocked that this morning on Radio New Zealand's *Morning Report* Associate Minister of Education David Benson-Pope made up figures on student loan repayment times for teachers.

Benson-Pope announced that he thought it would take the average teacher four to five years to repay the average teaching student loan debt of \$23,187.

"Anyone who knows anything about the student loan scheme knows that it takes a lot longer than four years to repay tens of thousands of dollars worth of debt," said Andrew Kirton, Co-President of the New Zealand University Students' Association (NZUSA).

Benson-Pope was responding to the NZUSA report released this morning into the effects of student debt on primary and early childhood teachers - "*Teachers in Debt: A Report Card.*"

"The Minister is clearly misleading the public in an attempt to cover up his government's systematic failure to address the student debt crisis," said Kirton.

"We call on the Minister to apologise immediately to the thousands of teacher graduates who are struggling day by day because of their student loan, and to do his homework before opening his mouth in the future," said Kirton.

NZUSA has calculated that it takes on average 28 years for females and 15 years for males to repay a three year bachelors degree.

Ends.

For further comment, contact:

Andrew Kirton
NZUSA Co-President
Mobile 0274 86 86 73