



Media Release

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Attention: Education and
Political reporters
For Immediate Release**

New figures show health workers battle with student debt

New figures released by Statistics New Zealand today show the additional difficulties graduates in the health workforce face in paying back student loans and come at the same time as the Tertiary Education Commission is considering raising fees for medical students by \$5000 over five years.

The report shows that health workers are in the group least likely to have student loans of under \$10,000 and have the highest loan balance of borrowers overseas, which stands at \$24,600 on average.

"These figures send a clear signal to the Tertiary Education Commission that they must refuse to raise fees further for medical students at Otago and Auckland universities," said Fleur Fitzsimons, Co-President of the New Zealand University Students' Association (NZUSA). "Doctors cannot afford to face an additional, government imposed fee increase."

"The evidence is clear: our best and brightest nurses and doctors are being forced overseas thanks to massive student loans instead of filling dangerous workforce shortages in New Zealand."

"The government must take note of these figures and realise it makes no sense to burden our health workforce with massive student loans that will take decades to repay."

"For the future health of all New Zealanders, government must introduce a living allowance for all students and scrap student fees," said Fitzsimons.

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