



NEW ZEALAND UNION OF STUDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS (INC.)

TE RŌPŪ ĀKONGA O NGĀ WHARE WĀNANGA O AOTEAROA

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**Press Release**

19 April 2010 - For Immediate Release  
Attention: Education and Political reporters

## **PM's attacks on students ill-informed and unfair**

Student leaders are condemning the Prime Minister's statements this morning regarding students as short sighted and based on ill-informed preconceptions of students.

His comments this morning on Breakfast come after the Minister for Tertiary Education Hon Steven Joyce signalled new restrictions on student loan eligibility on TVNZ's Q&A programme yesterday.

"Students are taxpayers and productive members of society. Students take their studies seriously and do understand the value invested in them by their fellow taxpayers. Any implication that they do not understand is unfair and incorrectly misrepresents students as different to the rest of New Zealand society," said David Do, Co-President of the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (NZUSA).

"Truck drivers and cleaners are often students too. 90 percent of fulltime students are engaged in paid work while studying and hence pay taxes. After graduation they go on to a variety of careers and professions that New Zealand needs. By continuing to contribute as taxpayers, they are also facilitating the education and training of the next generation of students and workers," added Do.

"We all need the qualified professionals that tertiary education can provide - whether it is teachers in schools, doctors in our hospitals when we're unwell, midwives delivering our babies, mechanics when our car breaks down, lawyers when we write a will or need advice regarding a mortgage, or accountants when we are small business owners," says NZUSA co-President Pene Delaney.

"John Key needs to recognize students are actually tax-paying productive individuals who are pulling their weight while juggling a full time study load. He shouldn't treat students as some sort of separate group without connections to the rest of society," added Delaney.

The Student Loan Scheme was designed to provide support to students and facilitate participation in education by ameliorating the barriers of cost. NZUSA believes government policy should not move so far away from those principles that genuine learners miss out on an important education.

"Limiting access to student loans to a set number of years could have significant negative impacts on part time and mature students and distance learners, who often combine family commitments with study and work responsibilities," concluded Do

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