



NEW ZEALAND UNION OF STUDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS (INC.)

TE RŌPŪ ĀKONGA O NGĀ WHARE WĀNANGA O AOTEAROA

NZUSA Federation Office~ Level 3, 354 Lambton Quay, PO Box 101-91, Wellington
Phone: 04 498 2500, Fax: 04 473 2391

Press Release

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Attention: Education and Political reporters

Students: Bill will slash services and cut representation

Students will pay more to see their services slashed and representation cut if legislation being considered by Parliament is passed.

That was the key message delivered today by student representatives at the Education and Science Select Committee. NZUSA was amongst the first to make oral submissions on Roger Douglas' Education (Freedom of Association) Amendment Bill.

Thousands of submissions have been lodged against the Bill from a wide variety of individual students and organisations - high school students, current students, graduates, management and staff within tertiary institutions, and community groups from across the political spectrum.

"This massive groundswell of support speaks volumes. It shows conclusively that students and the tertiary sector don't want and don't need this bill. Students and the sector are happy with the current situation and do not see any need for change," says NZUSA co-President David Do.

"The Bill will remove students' choices, with little regard to their welfare or quality of education. All the evidence, from Australia, Waikato, and Unitec, shows that this Bill will strip away important student services, representation, and advocacy," says NZUSA co-President Mr Pene Delaney.

NZUSA also reported the findings of an independent economic analysis from PriceWaterhouseCoopers on the value of services provided by students' associations and the potential impact of voluntary membership on this activity.

A conservative estimate of the input value of students' association services is \$25.1m as of 2008(1). Under voluntary membership, service levels would fall by at least 48 percent and as much as 73 percent. In Australia, voluntary membership reduced fee income by more than 95 percent.

"Such dramatic revenue losses in New Zealand will slash many services and won't be sustainable for several associations. For students, their experience on campus will be seriously diminished if this Bill passes, and their education will be lower quality and less well-rounded," says Delaney.

The Bill will destabilise the tertiary sector by putting further pressure on tertiary budgets and government spending at a time of increased fiscal restraint. Institutions will have to spend less on teaching and research, or pass on the costs to students by increasing the institutions' own compulsory student service fees.

"When it comes to student services, students will pay either way. But if the Bill is passed they will most likely pay more, have no choice in what they pay, have less say in how much they pay, and probably end up with fewer services and a lower quality of education," says Do.

"This Bill is an ideological solution in search of a problem. It is bad policy to impose such upheaval and chaos when there are many bigger issues facing the tertiary sector and New Zealand at present," concludes Do.



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(1) This covers financial and voluntary (i.e. cash and non-cash) inputs, and does not cover the wider economic and non-economic benefits that associations produce. For example, Student Job Search, founded and governed by students' associations, helped students earn over \$81million in the 2007-2008 year

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For more information contact:

NZUSA Co-President David Do, 027 486 8677, david.do@students.org.nz

NZUSA Co-President Pene Delaney, 027 486 8673, pene.delaney@students.org.nz