

Media Release

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Attention: Education and
Political reporters
For Immediate Release

Students expect immediate action from new Minister of Tertiary Education

The New Zealand University Students' Association (NZUSA) is today welcoming the appointment of Michael Cullen as the new Minister of Tertiary Education and Jim Anderton as Associate Minister of Tertiary Education, however warn that immediate action is needed to reduce the burden of student debt on our graduates, families and society.

"Students are pleased to see that the Labour-Progressive-led government has listened to the grave concerns expressed by students and the community and have committed to scrapping interest on student loans and increasing access to student allowances, said Andrew Kirton Co-President of the NZUSA.

"However these changes need to happen sooner rather than later to ensure even more students do not enter the workforce laden with massive amounts of student debt – 2008 is too long for students to wait," said Kirton.

Fees have also increased by hundreds of dollars for students over the past two years, with many tertiary institutions again applying to the Tertiary Education Commission for a 10% increase for 2006.

"The trend of fee increases all over the country must be stopped, we hope the Michael Cullen will use the review of the fee maxima policy later this year to reduce fees or at least protect students from any further fee increases into the future," said NZUSA Co-President Camilla Belich.

"We would like to challenge Michael Cullen to tackle student debt on all fronts. He must lower fees, increase access to allowances, reduce debt and ensure that students receive a quality tertiary education. It's a huge job and we hope he is up to it," Belich said.

Student Presidents from around the country are looking forward to meeting with Michael Cullen and voicing their concerns next week.

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For more information contact:

Camilla Belich
NZUSA Co-President
Phone 0274 86 86 77

Andrew Kirton
NZUSA Co-President
Phone 0274 86 86 73