

22 February 2005
Attention: Education and
Political reporters
For Immediate Release

Maharey must extend single benefit to students

Students are today calling on the government to extend the single benefit to all tertiary students, effectively implementing a universal living allowance. The move to a single benefit was announced in a press release from Steve Maharey today.

“A single living allowance for all students would ensure a simpler, fairer allowance system that would dramatically reduce student debt,” said Andrew Kirton, Co-president of the New Zealand University Students’ Association (NZUSA).

Currently only one half of students are eligible for some financial assistance while they study, meaning thousands are forced to borrow from the student loan scheme to pay for food, rent and transport.

“The change to a single living allowance for all students, with one set of criteria, would dramatically reduce the time spent on administration, and allow students to focus on their study instead of where the next meal is coming from,” said Kirton.

“A living allowance for all students is a system designed to meet the needs of the 21st century. It will see fewer rules and less discrimination due to age, marital status and parental income, said Camilla Belich, Co-president of NZUSA.

Belich said the move to a living allowance for all students would return New Zealand to a full and fair student support system not seen in New Zealand for some time.

“No one would be financially worse off as a result of a change to a universal living allowance. The focus would shift from one of survival and financial stress to real academic achievement,” said Belich.
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For further comment, contact:

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