

**Media  
Release****22 May 2001  
Attention: Education and  
Political reporters  
For Immediate Release****Vic Uni's Billion Dollar Debt Threat To Students**

Total student debt could grow by an extra billion dollars in the next ten years if all tertiary institutions followed Victoria University's threatened lead and charged students an extra \$500 in fees, according to the New Zealand University Students Association (NZUSA).

"Tertiary institutions owe it to this and future generations of students to accept the government's fee freeze offer," said NZUSA Co-President Andrew Campbell. "We calculate that if the rest of the sector followed Victoria and increased fees by \$500 that total student loan debt could rise by an extra \$1 billion."

"Of course most of the responsibility for student loan debt lies with the government. However universities have an opportunity to help students by not raising fees and accepting the government's funding increase".

"Vice chancellors are only telling half of the story when they focus on the decrease in government funding throughout the nineties. The fact is that they recouped these costs through student fees, and that as a result per student funding did not fall in real terms during this period."

NZUSA calculates that the Victoria increase of \$500 would total \$80 million of debt per year if applied to New Zealand's 160,000 full time students. Over 10 years this could total \$1 billion including interest.

"The bottom line is that students cannot and will not tolerate another fee increase. Universities can afford to accept this fee freeze and should do so," said Campbell. "There is absolutely no justification for increasing tuition fees in the current environment."

**ENDS**

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