

Media Release

24 January 2003
Attention: Education and
Political reporters
For Immediate Release

“Just like America” – Labour’s Secret Plans for Education

Trevor Mallard admitted that he wants to make New Zealand tertiary education funding ‘*just like America*’ on Radio Pacific this morning. The New Zealand University Students’ Association is outraged that the Labour government are still pursuing an unfair private savings scheme based on the American model, where the rich save for their children’s degrees and everyone else misses out.

NZUSA Co-President Roz Connelly says the FUNZ model where parents save for tertiary education from when their children are born creates an unrealistic burden for families. “Parents of young children are likely to have their share of \$5 billion student debt to service. With the everyday costs of living plus the pressure to save for their retirement, few can hope to save for their children’s tertiary education as well.”

“The Labour Party did not mention the FUNZ savings scheme in their election manifesto. Voters did not get the option to vote for or against this plan although Mallard has been working on it since long before the election,” said Connelly. “Private savings schemes hark back to the fourth Labour Government. Have Labour begun taking policy advice from Richard Prebble again?”

“New Zealand families need a fully funded education system that recognises the important role of education for everyone” said NZUSA Co-President Fleur Fitzsimons. “Instead we’re heading down a slippery slope of vouchers and individual entitlements. What’s next, forcing eighteen year olds to start saving for hip replacement operations?”

“Parents with tertiary qualifications are much more likely to value education, and hence save for their children’s education. Private savings schemes entrench the inequities of the user-pays system. They put poor children at an added disadvantage as their parents are less likely to have the capacity to save,” said Fitzsimons.

“Students are calling on Mallard to come clean and release his plans so that students and parents can have their say about the future of tertiary education,” said Roz Connelly.

ENDS

For further information or comment contact:

Roz Connelly or Fleur Fitzsimons
NZUSA Co-Presidents
Phone 498 2500
Roz 0274 86 86 73 Fleur 0274 86 86 77