

Tēnā koe Rt. Hon. Christopher Luxon,

I would like to congratulate you on your election as Prime Minister and wish you and your Government all the best through your term in office.

I am expressing deep concern for the lack of vision shown towards issues in the tertiary sector but also to students more broadly.

In five months of office, this Government has made itself content with rolling back six years of positive reform on issues of health, the environment, and finances. Further, the National Party appears to offer no solace to students in their ongoing and significant issues. This letter is not intended to solely criticise or scold, it merely wishes to highlight how this Government's decisions have affected students and highlight key areas of concerns for students. I would also like to personally extend an invitation that the OUSA is open to assisting the Government or its ministers in whatever capacity necessary to improve student living standards and wellbeing.

The recent dismemberment of Te Aka Whai Ora is a disgrace for this Government. In only 24 hours, a year and a half of work and decades of lobbying have been undone with no consultation with iwi. Te Aka Whai Ora being ripped apart for not meeting unreasonable 18-month deliverables is an impossibly high standard and is frankly an embarrassment. Poor health outcomes among the Māori community are well documented, and it is evident that the health system is not working for Māori. Yet this Government's solution is to cut down an agency still in its infancy and then force Māori back into a system that is evidently failing to address health inequalities. Further, Parliamentary urgency bypassed any form of consultation and the Waitangi Tribunal to erode Māori rangatiratanga over their own health. It is extremely disappointing to see this Government take such major steps back from its obligations towards the Māori community, their health and its Treaty obligations.

Plans to repeal the internationally lauded smoke-free legislation is a considerable mistake. For as much as the National Party is the party of 'fiscal responsibility,' it plans to scrap legislation that would have garnered the country billions. Smokefree Aotearoa was estimated to reduce health care expenditure by US\$1.3 billion, and further increase disposable income by US\$29 billion by 2050 with significant benefits to Māori and those on low incomes in Aotearoa New Zealand. 22.9% of those aged between 18-24 being daily vapers. While marginally better than smoking tobacco, this vaping endemic is particularly harmful to young people and students. While the consequences of this decision will far outlive this Government, it is incredibly disappointing that this coalition is content to set its next generation back years, if not decades, towards a smoke-choked Aotearoa.

This Government's decisions to withdraw support for projects such as Auckland's light rail and Let's Get Wellington Moving are frankly shortsighted and dangerous. We are no longer at the point where climate change is a problem to kick 20 years down the line. It is a contemporary reality. While plans to double renewable energy production are positive and long over-due, repealing attempts to deal with the issue here and now is reckless. We are increasingly nearing the point of no return in the climate crisis. The imminent economic damage of the climate crisis is untold but is very real. Natural disasters such as Cyclones Gabrielle and Hale, Canterbury wildfires, Auckland Anniversary floods are the reality in choosing to ignore the climate crisis. I understand that these examples largely predate your Government; however, they offer a cautionary tale to delaying the necessary response to the climate crisis. If the National Party seriously wishes to pursue climate progress, it must reconsider its lack of commitment to public transportation and transition away from fossil fuels.

I would like to extend extreme apprehension regarding the Government's proposed 6.5% reduction to public sector expenditure, particularly as it concerns the tertiary education sector. With the

University of Otago's draft budget projecting debts of NZ\$203 million in 2024 and 107 voluntary redundancies already, it is evident that reduced funding will not save the University of Otago. As evident through the numerous education policies released by the party, I believe that the National Party shares the OUSA's belief in the value of education as one of the most empowering opportunities in one's life. However, this commitment to education should not end at the primary and secondary school levels. Education offers higher wages, greater employment opportunities, inequality reduction, innovation, entrepreneurship, income tax and further public benefits. Any reduction in tertiary education funding is a conscious choice to forego the substantial individual and collective benefits of education. To cut tertiary education funding is to undermine Aotearoa's future as an intellectual and economic powerhouse.

Further, it appears that any policy mentioning student issues must have missed the printer. There is seemingly no policy focus given to reduction in student poverty, improvements in student housing or seeking improved youth mental health outcomes.

Students continue to be haunted by high rent and high grocery costs. In 2023 Household living costs increased by 7.2% and annual food prices in July 2023 were 9.6% higher than they were the at the same time last year. A Tertiary Education Union survey concluded that students flatting spent 56% of their weekly income on rent and 66% of students did not have enough money to afford their basic needs. While the Government might be content cutting large necessities of its budget, it must empathise with students that aren't quite as eager. Equally, The condition of student housing is appalling. Poor housing is not 'the student experience' it is a bitter reality for thousands of students who are living in cold and mouldy flats, despite paying record high rents.

Nearly all students live in dire financial situations, which in conjunction with poor student housing conditions (not even we want to live in Castle Street) exacerbate the mental health crisis in Aotearoa New Zealand of which students are just one victim. The NZUSA's *Kei Te Pai?* Report found that 56% of students had considered leaving university due to mental health concerns. More widely, Aotearoa New Zealand's youth suicide rate is the highest in the OECD, 25% of young people experienced significant mental distress, and youth self-harm and suicide have both increased in recent years.

To choose to ignore student poverty, poor housing and the mental health crisis the National Party is choosing to actively ignore thousands of young New Zealanders in a time of great need. Young people in this country are suffering, and yes, they might be masking that with alcohol, nangs and D&B, but that doesn't make their issues any less real.

Unfortunately, the solution is not that students need to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. For many students there isn't any more strap to pull. Many students are taking on full-time employment or even two jobs to support their studies. Students should not be expected to put themselves in significant financial debt, work themselves to exhaustion in inadequate housing. If the National Party truly believes in the value of education and the benefit of an educated and productive workforce, it must work towards universal student wages. Note that doesn't read increase weekly study link payments, decrease fees (although that would be great!) or even work to ease the cost of living. Students should be encouraged to upskill themselves both to their own personal benefit but also for their communities. While this might sound like socialist dribble, this is not dissimilar to the fees-free model of the 1990s. All we are asking for is that young people today be given the same opportunities that you and your colleagues received.

Despite its tone... and content, this letter is not intended to scold. However, I hope it has demonstrated the desperate need for student support from Parliament. This letter is intended to

identify key areas of concern regarding National Party policy namely in health, the environment and public finance. Further this letter implores the National Party to develop ANY tertiary student focussed policies to ease these very real and important issues. If this letter has struck any chord, the OUSA would be more than open to assisting the National Party in taking active steps in developing student policies. The National Party has a responsibility to govern for all Aotearoa New Zealand. This includes students.

I would strongly recommend the Government develop student focussed policies and consider the impact on already vulnerable students when making future decisions. I hope if nothing else this letter has articulated the dire straits facing students and the tertiary education sector. The OUSA is more than open to supporting the National Party in developing student focussed policies such as (but certainly not limited to!) universal student allowance, a study wage, increasing the quality of student accommodation and housing, regulating access to vapes and other nicotine products and pursuing a dedicated efforts to improve mental health outcomes for students and young people as a whole.

Nāku, na

Liam White

Political Representative

Otago University Student Association

Tēnā koe Hon. Dr. Shane Reti,

I would like to congratulate you on your successful election and wish you all the best through your term in Government.

I am sending this letter on behalf of the Otago University Students Association and the 20,000 taura from across the country that it represents. We are expressing deep concern for the lack of vision shown towards issues in the tertiary sector but also to students more broadly. In five months of office, this Government has seemingly made itself content with rolling back six years of positive reform on issues of health, the environment, and finances. Further, the National Party appears to offer no solace to students in their ongoing and significant issues. This letter is not intended to solely criticise or scold, it merely wishes to highlight how this Government's decisions have affected students and highlight key areas of concerns for students. I would also like to personally extend an invitation that the OUSA is open to assisting the Government or its ministers in whatever capacity necessary to improve student living standards and wellbeing.

The recent dismemberment of Te Aka Whai Ora is a disgrace for this Government. In only 24 hours, a year and a half of work and decades of lobbying have been undone with no consultation with Māori on Te Aka Whai Ora's disestablishment. Te Aka Whai Ora being ripped apart for not meeting unreasonable 18-month deliverables is an impossibly high standard and is frankly an embarrassment. Poor health outcomes among Māori are well documented, and it is evident that the health system is not working for Māori. Yet this Government's solution is to cut down an agency still in its infancy and then force Māori back into a system that is evidently failing to address health inequalities. Further, Parliamentary urgency bypassed any form of consultation and the Waitangi Tribunal to erode Māori rangatiratanga over their own health. It is extremely disappointing to see this Government take such major steps back from its obligations towards Māori, their health and its Treaty obligations.

Plans to repeal the internationally lauded smoke-free legislation is a considerable mistake. For as much as the National Party is the party of 'fiscal responsibility,' it plans to scrap legislation that would have saved Aotearoa billions of dollars. Smokefree Aotearoa was estimated to reduce health care expenditure by US\$1.3 billion, and further increase disposable income by US\$29 billion by 2050 with significant benefits to Māori and those on low incomes in Aotearoa New Zealand. 22.9% of those aged between 18-24 being daily vapers. While marginally better than smoking tobacco, this vaping endemic is particularly harmful to young people and students. While the consequences of this decision will far outlive this Government, it is incredibly disappointing that this coalition is content to set its next generation back years, if not decades, towards a smoke-choked Aotearoa. I would implore that you reconsider the decision to repeal SmokeFree legislation to work towards a healthier Aotearoa.

Further, it appears that any policy mentioning student issues must have missed the printer. There is seemingly no policy focus given to reduction in student poverty, improvements in student housing or seeking improved youth mental health outcomes.

Students continue to be haunted by high rent and high grocery costs. In 2023 Household living costs increased by 7.2% and annual food prices in July 2023 were 9.6% higher than they were the at the same time last year. A Tertiary Education Union survey concluded that students flatting spent 56% of their weekly income on rent and 66% of students did not have enough money to afford their basic needs. While the Government might be content cutting large necessities of its budget, it must empathise with students that aren't quite as eager. Equally, the condition of student housing is

appalling. Poor housing is not 'the student experience' it is a bitter reality for thousands of students who are living in cold and mouldy flats, despite paying record high rents.

Nearly all students live in dire financial situations, which in conjunction with poor student housing conditions (not even we want to live in Castle Street) exacerbate the mental health crisis in Aotearoa New Zealand of which students are just one victim. The NZUSA's *Kei Te Pai?* Report found that 56% of students had considered leaving university due to mental health concerns. More widely, Aotearoa New Zealand's youth suicide rate is the highest in the OECD, 25% of young people experienced significant mental distress, and youth self-harm and suicide have both increased in recent years.

To choose to ignore student poverty, poor housing and the mental health crisis the National Party is choosing to actively ignore thousands of young New Zealanders in a time of great need. Young people in this country are suffering, and yes, they might be masking that with alcohol, nangs and D&B, but that doesn't make their issues any less real.

Unfortunately, the solution is not that students need to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. For many students there isn't any more strap to pull. Students should not be expected to put themselves in significant financial debt, work themselves to exhaustion in inadequate housing. If the National Party truly believes in the value of education and the benefit of an educated and productive workforce, it must work towards universal student wages. Note that doesn't read increase weekly study link payments, decrease fees (although that would be great!) or even work to ease the cost of living. Students should be encouraged to upskill themselves both to their own personal benefit but also for their communities. While this might sound like socialist dribble, this is not dissimilar to the fees-free model of the 1990s. All we are asking for is that young people today be given the same opportunity.

Despite its tone... and content, this letter is not intended to scold. However, I hope it has demonstrated the desperate need for student support from Parliament. This letter is intended to identify key areas of concern regarding National Party policy namely in health, the environment and public finance. Further this letter implores the National Party to develop tertiary student focussed policies to ease these very real and important issues. If this letter has struck any chord, the OUSA would be more than open to assisting the National Party in taking active steps in developing student policies. The National Party has a responsibility to govern for all Aotearoa New Zealand. This includes students.

I would *strongly recommend* the Government develop student focussed policies and consider the impact on already vulnerable students when making future decisions. I hope if nothing else this letter has articulated the dire straits facing students and the tertiary education sector. The OUSA is more than open to supporting the National Party in developing student focussed policies such as (but certainly not limited to!) universal student allowance, a study wage, increasing the quality of student accommodation and housing, regulating access to vapes and other nicotine products and pursuing a dedicated efforts to improve mental health outcomes for students and young people as a whole.

Nāku, na

Liam White

Political Representative

Otago University Student Association

Tēnā koe Hon. Nicolla Willis,

I would like to congratulate you on your election and wish you and your Government all the best through your term.

I am expressing deep concern for the lack of vision shown towards issues in the tertiary sector but also to students more broadly.

In five months of office, this Government has seemingly made itself content with rolling back six years of positive reform on issues of health, the environment, and finances. Further, the National Party appears to offer no solace to students in their ongoing and significant issues. This letter is not intended to solely criticise or scold, it merely wishes to highlight how this Government's decisions have affected students and highlight key areas of concerns for students. I would also like to personally extend an invitation that the OUSA is open to assisting the Government or its ministers in whatever capacity necessary to improve student living standards and wellbeing.

I would like to extend extreme apprehension regarding the Government's proposed 6.5% reduction to public sector expenditure, particularly as it concerns the tertiary education sector. With the University of Otago's draft budget projecting debts of NZ\$203 million in 2024 and 107 voluntary redundancies, it is evident that reduced funding will not save the University of Otago. As evident through the numerous education policies released by the party, I believe that the National Party shares the OUSA's belief in the value of education as one of the most empowering opportunities in one's life. Equally, you yourself must see the value having studied at two of our most prestigious academic institutions; the Victoria University of Wellington and the University of Canterbury. However, commitment to education should not end at the primary and secondary school levels. Education offers higher wages, greater employment opportunities, inequality reduction, innovation, entrepreneurship, income tax and further public benefits. Any reduction in tertiary education funding is a conscious choice to forego the substantial individual and collective benefits of education. To cut tertiary education funding is to undermine Aotearoa's future as an intellectual and economic powerhouse.

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Nāku, na

Liam White

Political Representative

Otago University Student Association

Tēnā koe Hon. Penny Simmons,

I would like to first congratulate you on your election and wish you and your Government all the best through your term in government.

I am expressing deep concern for the lack of vision shown towards issues in the tertiary sector but also to students more broadly.

In five months of office, this Government has seemingly made itself content with rolling back six years of positive reform on issues of health, the environment, and finances. Further, the National Party appears to offer no solace to students in their ongoing and significant issues. This letter is not intended to solely criticise or scold, it merely wishes to highlight how this Government's decisions have affected students and highlight key areas of concerns for students. I would also like to personally extend an invitation that the OUSA is open to assisting the Government or its ministers in whatever capacity necessary to improve student living standards and wellbeing.

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Despite its tone... and content, this letter is not intended to scold. However, I hope it has demonstrated the desperate need for student support from Parliament. This letter is intended to identify key areas of concern regarding National Party policy namely in health, the environment and public finance. Further, this letter implores the National Party to develop dedicated tertiary student focussed policies to ease these very real and important issues. If this letter has struck any chord, the OUSA would be more than open to assisting the National Party in taking active steps in developing student policies. I hope that as an alumnus of the University of Otago, you might take student issues, not just institutional university issues, with the focus they deserve. The National Party has a responsibility to govern for all Aotearoa New Zealand. This includes students.

I would *strongly recommend* the Government develop student focussed policies and consider the impact on already vulnerable students when making future decisions. I hope if nothing else this letter has articulated the dire straits facing students and the tertiary education sector. The OUSA is more than open to supporting the National Party in developing student focussed policies such as (but certainly not limited to!) universal student allowance, a study wage, increasing the quality of student accommodation and housing, regulating access to vapes and other nicotine products and pursuing a dedicated efforts to improve mental health outcomes for students and young people as a whole.

Nāku, na

Liam White

Political Representative

Otago University Student Association

Tēnā koe Hon. Matt Dooney,

I would like to congratulate you on your election and wish you and your Government all the best through your term in government.

I am expressing deep concern for the lack of vision shown towards issues in the tertiary sector but also to students more broadly.

In five months of office, this Government has seemingly made itself content with rolling back six years of positive reform on issues of health, the environment, and finances. Further, the National Party appears to offer no solace to students in their ongoing and significant issues. This letter is not intended to solely criticise or scold, it merely wishes to highlight how this Government's decisions have affected students and highlight key areas of concerns for students. I would also like to personally extend an invitation that the OUSA is open to assisting the Government or its ministers in whatever capacity necessary to improve student living standards and wellbeing.

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Nāku, na

Liam White

Political Representative

Otago University Student Association

Tēnā koe Hon. Casey Costello,

I would like to congratulate you on your election and wish you and your Government all the best through your term in government.

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In five months of office, this Government has seemingly made itself content with rolling back six years of positive reform on issues of health, the environment, and finances. Further, the Government appears to offer no solace to students in their ongoing and significant issues. This letter is not intended to solely criticise or scold, it merely wishes to demonstrate how this Government's decisions have affected students and highlight key areas of concerns for students. I would also like to personally extend an invitation that the OUSA is open to assisting the Government or its ministers in whatever capacity necessary to improve student living standards and wellbeing.

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Plans to repeal the internationally lauded smoke-free legislation is a considerable mistake. For as much as this Government is dedicated to 'fiscal responsibility,' it plans to scrap legislation that would have garnered the country billions. Smokefree Aotearoa was estimated to reduce health care expenditure by US\$1.3 billion, and further increase disposable income by US\$29 billion by 2050 with significant benefits to Māori and those on low incomes in Aotearoa New Zealand. 22.9% of those aged between 18-24 being daily vapers. While marginally better than smoking tobacco, this vaping endemic is particularly harmful to young people and students. While the consequences of this decision will far outlive this Government, it is incredibly disappointing that this coalition is content to set its next generation back years, if not decades, towards a smoke-choked Aotearoa.

Further, it appears that any policy mentioning student issues must have missed the printer. There is seemingly no policy focus given to reduction in student poverty, improvements in student housing or seeking improved youth mental health outcomes.

Students continue to be haunted by high rent and high grocery costs. In 2023 Household living costs increased by 7.2% and annual food prices in July 2023 were 9.6% higher than they were the at the same time last year. A Tertiary Education Union survey concluded that students flatting spent 56% of their weekly income on rent and 66% of students did not have enough money to afford their basic needs. While the Government might be content cutting large necessities of its budget, it must empathise with students that aren't quite as eager. Equally, The condition of student housing is appalling. Poor housing is not 'the student experience' it is a bitter reality for thousands of students who are living in cold and mouldy flats, despite paying record high rents.

Nearly all students live in dire financial situations, which in conjunction with poor student housing conditions (not even we want to live in Castle Street) exacerbate the mental health crisis in Aotearoa New Zealand of which students are just one victim. The NZUSA's *Kei Te Pai?* Report found that 56% of students had considered leaving university due to mental health concerns. More widely, Aotearoa New Zealand's youth suicide rate is the highest in the OECD, 25% of young people experienced significant mental distress, and youth self-harm and suicide have both increased in recent years.

To choose to ignore student poverty, poor housing and the mental health crisis the Government is choosing to actively ignore thousands of young New Zealanders in a time of great need. Young people in this country are suffering, and yes, they might be masking that with alcohol, nangs and D&B, but that doesn't make their issues any less real.

Unfortunately, the solution is not that students need to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. For many students there isn't any more strap to pull. Many students are taking on full-time employment or even two jobs to support their studies. Students should not be expected to put themselves in significant financial debt, work themselves to exhaustion in inadequate housing. If the Government truly believes in the value of education and the benefit of an educated and productive workforce, it must work towards universal student wages. Note that doesn't read increase weekly study link payments, decrease fees (although that would be great!) or even work to ease the cost of living. Students should be encouraged to upskill themselves both to their own personal benefit but also for their communities. While this might sound like socialist dribble, this is not dissimilar to the fees-free model of the 1990s. All we are asking for is that young people today be given the same opportunities that you and your colleagues received.

Despite its tone... and content, this letter is not intended to scold. However, I hope it has demonstrated the desperate need for student support from Parliament. This letter is intended to identify key areas of concern namely in health, the environment and public finance. Further this letter implores the Government to develop ANY tertiary student focussed policies to ease these very real and important issues. If this letter has struck any chord, the OUSA would be more than open to assisting the Government in taking active steps in developing student policies. The Government has a responsibility to govern for all Aotearoa New Zealand. This includes students.

I would *strongly recommend* the Government develop student focussed policies and consider the impact on already vulnerable students when making future decisions. I hope if nothing else this letter has articulated the dire straits facing students and the tertiary education sector. The OUSA is more than open to supporting the Government in developing student focussed policies such as (but certainly not limited to!) universal student allowance, a study wage, increasing the quality of student accommodation and housing, regulating access to vapes and other nicotine products and pursuing a dedicated efforts to improve mental health outcomes for students and young people as a whole.

Nāku, na

Liam White

Political Representative

Otago University Student Association

Tēnā koe Hon. David Seymour,

I would like to congratulate you on your election and wish you and your Government all the best through your term in government.

I am expressing deep concern for the lack of vision shown towards issues in the tertiary sector but also to students more broadly.

In five months of office, this Government has seemingly made itself content with rolling back six years of positive reform on issues of health, the environment, and finances. Further, this Government appears to offer no solace to students in their ongoing and significant issues. This letter is not intended to solely criticise or scold, it merely wishes to demonstrate how this Government's decisions have affected students and highlight key areas of concerns for students. I would also like to personally extend an invitation that the OUSA is open to assisting the Government or its ministers in whatever capacity necessary to improve student living standards and wellbeing.

The recent dismemberment of Te Aka Whai Ora is a disgrace for this Government. In only 24 hours, a year and a half of work and decades of lobbying have been undone with no consultation with Māori on Te Aka Whai Ora's disestablishment. Te Aka Whai Ora being ripped apart for not meeting unreasonable 18-month deliverables is an impossibly high standard and is frankly an embarrassment. Poor health outcomes among Māori are well documented, and it is evident that the health system is not working for Māori. Yet this Government's solution is to cut down an agency still in its infancy and then force Māori back into a system that is evidently failing to address health inequalities. Further, Parliamentary urgency bypassed any form of consultation and the Waitangi Tribunal to erode Māori rangatiratanga over their own health. It is extremely disappointing to see this Government take such major steps back from its obligations towards Māori, their health and its Treaty obligations.

Plans to repeal the internationally lauded smoke-free legislation is a considerable mistake. For as much as this Government is concerned with 'fiscal responsibility,' it plans to scrap legislation that would have garnered the country billions. Smokefree Aotearoa was estimated to reduce health care expenditure by US\$1.3 billion, and further increase disposable income by US\$29 billion by 2050 with significant benefits to Māori and those on low incomes in Aotearoa New Zealand. 22.9% of those aged between 18-24 being daily vapers. While marginally better than smoking tobacco, this vaping endemic is particularly harmful to young people and students. While the consequences of this decision will far outlive this Government, it is incredibly disappointing that this coalition is content to set its next generation back years, if not decades, towards a smoke-choked Aotearoa.

I would like to extend extreme apprehension regarding the Government's proposed 6.5% reduction to public sector expenditure, particularly as it concerns the tertiary education sector. With the University of Otago's draft budget projecting debts of NZ\$203 million in 2024 and 107 voluntary redundancies, it is evident that reduced funding will not save the University of Otago. As evident through the numerous education policies released by the party, I believe that you share the OUSA's belief in the value of education as one of the most empowering opportunities in one's life based on your time studying at the University of Auckland. However, this Government's commitment to education should not end at the primary and secondary school levels. Education offers higher wages,

greater employment opportunities, inequality reduction, innovation, entrepreneurship, income tax and further public benefits. Any reduction in tertiary education funding is a conscious choice to forego the substantial individual and collective benefits of education. To cut tertiary education funding is to undermine Aotearoa's future as an intellectual and economic powerhouse.

Further, it appears that any policy mentioning student issues must have missed the printer. There is seemingly no policy focus given to reduction in student poverty, improvements in student housing or seeking improved youth mental health outcomes.

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Nearly all students live in dire financial situations, which in conjunction with poor student housing conditions (not even we want to live in Castle Street) exacerbate the mental health crisis in Aotearoa New Zealand of which students are just one victim. The NZUSA's *Kei Te Pai?* Report found that 56% of students had considered leaving university due to mental health concerns. More widely, Aotearoa New Zealand's youth suicide rate is the highest in the OECD, 25% of young people experienced significant mental distress, and youth self-harm and suicide have both increased in recent years.

To choose to ignore student poverty, poor housing and the mental health crisis the Government is choosing to actively ignore thousands of young New Zealanders in a time of great need. Young people in this country are suffering, and yes, they might be masking that with alcohol, nangs and D&B, but that doesn't make their issues any less real.

Unfortunately, the solution is not that students need to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. For many students there isn't any more strap to pull. Many students are taking on full-time employment or even two jobs to support their studies. Students should not be expected to put themselves in significant financial debt, work themselves to exhaustion in inadequate housing. If you truly believe in the value of education and the benefit of an educated and productive workforce, you must work towards universal student wages. Note that doesn't read increase weekly study link payments, decrease fees (although that would be great!) or even work to ease the cost of living. Students should be encouraged to upskill themselves both to their own personal benefit but also for their communities. While this might sound like socialist dribble, this is not dissimilar to the fees-free model of the 1990s. All we are asking for is that young people today be given the same opportunities that you and your colleagues received.

Despite its tone... and content, this letter is not intended to scold. However, I hope it has demonstrated the desperate need for student support from Parliament. This letter is intended to identify key areas of concern regarding Government policy namely in health, the environment and public finance. Further this letter implores the Government to develop ANY tertiary student focussed policies to ease these very real and important issues. If this letter has struck any chord, the OUSA would be more than open to offering assistance in developing student focussed policies. You have a responsibility to govern for all Aotearoa New Zealand. This includes students.

I would *strongly recommend* the Government develop student focussed policies and consider the impact on already vulnerable students when making future decisions. I hope if nothing else this letter has articulated the dire straits facing students and the tertiary education sector. The OUSA is more than open to supporting the Government in developing student focussed policies such as (but certainly not limited to!) universal student allowance, a study wage, increasing the quality of student accommodation and housing, regulating access to vapes and other nicotine products and pursuing a dedicated efforts to improve mental health outcomes for students and young people as a whole.

Nāku, na

Liam White

Political Representative

Otago University Student Association

Tēnā koe Hon. Tim Costley,

I would like to congratulate you on your election and wish you and your Government all the best through your term. This might be a bizarre way to open a letter, but when you came down to the OUSA's Tent City event and you came over to the barbeque, after complimenting my sausage grilling technique, we briefly discussed students' issues (I am not totally convinced you weren't trying to talk your way into a free sausage). You seemed interested in student issues, and I understand it is beyond your Ministerial scope, however, I would urge you to keep students in mind through your term in Government.

I am expressing deep concern for the lack of vision shown towards issues in the tertiary sector but also to students more broadly.

The National Party appears to offer no solace to students in their ongoing and significant issues. This letter is not intended to solely criticise or scold, it merely wishes to highlight areas of concern for students. I would also like to personally extend an invitation that the OUSA is open to assisting the Government or its ministers in whatever capacity necessary to improve student living standards and wellbeing.

I would like to extend extreme apprehension regarding the Government's proposed 6.5% reduction to public sector expenditure, particularly as it concerns the tertiary education sector. With the University of Otago's draft budget projecting debts of NZ\$203 million in 2024 and 107 voluntary redundancies, it is evident that reduced funding will not save the University of Otago. As evident through the numerous education policies released by the party, I believe that the National Party shares the OUSA's belief in the value of education as one of the most empowering opportunities in one's life. However, this commitment to education should not end at the primary and secondary school levels. Education offers higher wages, greater employment opportunities, inequality reduction, innovation, entrepreneurship, income tax and further public benefits. Any reduction in tertiary education funding is a conscious choice to forego the substantial individual and collective benefits of education. To cut tertiary education funding is to undermine Aotearoa's future as an intellectual and economic powerhouse.

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To choose to ignore student poverty, poor housing and the mental health crisis the National Party is choosing to actively ignore thousands of young New Zealanders in a time of great need. Young people in this country are suffering, and yes, they might be masking that with alcohol, nangs and D&B, but that doesn't make their issues any less real.

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Despite its tone... and content, this letter is not intended to scold. However, I hope it has demonstrated the desperate need for student support from Parliament. This letter is intended to identify key areas of concern regarding National Party policy namely in health, the environment and public finance. Further this letter implores the National Party to develop ANY tertiary student focussed policies to ease these very real and important issues. I hope that you might be able to empathise with these issues on your own experience as a student at Massey University and subsequent postgraduate study at Cranfield University. If this letter has struck any chord, the OUSA would be more than open to assisting the National Party in taking active steps in developing student policies. The National Party has a responsibility to govern for all Aotearoa New Zealand. This includes students.

I would *strongly recommend* the Government develop student focussed policies and consider the impact on already vulnerable students when making future decisions. I hope if nothing else this letter has articulated the dire straits facing students and the tertiary education sector. The OUSA is more than open to supporting the National Party in developing student focussed policies such as (but certainly not limited to!) universal student allowance, a study wage, increasing the quality of student accommodation and housing, regulating access to vapes and other nicotine products and pursuing a dedicated efforts to improve mental health outcomes for students and young people as a whole.

Nāku, na

Liam White

Political Representative

Otago University Student Association

Tēnā koe Hon. Shane Jones,

I would like to congratulate you on your election and wish you and your Government all the best through your term in government.

I am expressing deep concern for the lack of vision shown towards issues in the tertiary sector but also to students more broadly.

In five months of office, this Government has seemingly made itself content with rolling back six years of positive reform on issues of health, the environment, and finances. Further, this Government appears to offer no solace to students in their ongoing and significant issues. This letter is not intended to solely criticise or scold, it merely wishes to demonstrate how this Government's decisions have affected students and highlight key areas of concerns for students. I would also like to personally extend an invitation that the OUSA is open to assisting the Government or its ministers in whatever capacity necessary to improve student living standards and wellbeing.

I would like to extend extreme apprehension regarding the Government's proposed 6.5% reduction to public sector expenditure, particularly as it concerns the tertiary education sector. With the University of Otago's draft budget projecting debts of NZ\$203 million in 2024 and 107 voluntary redundancies, it is evident that reduced funding will not save the University of Otago. As evident through the numerous education policies released by the party, I believe that you share the OUSA's belief in the value of education as one of the most empowering opportunities in one's life based on your time studying at the University of Auckland and the Harvard Kennedy School. However, this Government's commitment to education should not end at the primary and secondary school levels. Education offers higher wages, greater employment opportunities, inequality reduction, innovation, entrepreneurship, income tax and further public benefits. Any reduction in tertiary education funding is a conscious choice to forego the substantial individual and collective benefits of education. To cut tertiary education funding is to undermine Aotearoa's future as an intellectual and economic powerhouse.

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Nearly all students live in dire financial situations, which in conjunction with poor student housing conditions (not even we want to live in Castle Street) exacerbate the mental health crisis in Aotearoa New Zealand of which students are just one victim. The NZUSA's *Kei Te Pai?* Report found that 56%

of students had considered leaving university due to mental health concerns. More widely, Aotearoa New Zealand's youth suicide rate is the highest in the OECD, 25% of young people experienced significant mental distress, and youth self-harm and suicide have both increased in recent years.

To choose to ignore student poverty, poor housing and the mental health crisis the Government is choosing to actively ignore thousands of young New Zealanders in a time of great need. Young people in this country are suffering, and yes, they might be masking that with alcohol, nangs and D&B, but that doesn't make their issues any less real.

Unfortunately, the solution is not that students need to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. For many students there isn't any more strap to pull. Many students are taking on full-time employment or even two jobs to support their studies. Students should not be expected to put themselves in significant financial debt, work themselves to exhaustion in inadequate housing. If you truly believe in the value of education and the benefit of an educated and productive workforce, you must work towards universal student wages. Note that doesn't read increase weekly study link payments, decrease fees (although that would be great!) or even work to ease the cost of living. Students should be encouraged to upskill themselves both to their own personal benefit but also for their communities. While this might sound like socialist dribble, this is not dissimilar to the fees-free model of the 1990s. All we are asking for is that young people today be given the same opportunities that you and your colleagues received.

Despite its tone... and content, this letter is not intended to scold. However, I hope it has demonstrated the desperate need for student support from Parliament. This letter is intended to identify key areas of concern regarding Government policy namely in health, the environment and public finance. Further this letter implores the Government to develop ANY tertiary student focussed policies to ease these very real and important issues. If this letter has struck any chord, the OUSA would be more than open to offering assistance in developing student focussed policies. You have a responsibility to govern for all Aotearoa New Zealand. This includes students.

I would *strongly recommend* the Government develop student focussed policies and consider the impact on already vulnerable students when making future decisions. I hope if nothing else this letter has articulated the dire straits facing students and the tertiary education sector. The OUSA is more than open to supporting the Government in developing student focussed policies such as (but certainly not limited to!) universal student allowance, a study wage, increasing the quality of student accommodation and housing, regulating access to vapes and other nicotine products and pursuing a dedicated efforts to improve mental health outcomes for students and young people as a whole.

Tēnā koe James Meager,

I am writing this letter to you as an alumnus of both the University of Otago and the Otago University Students Association Executive. Congratulations on your election, and I wish you all the best on your term in office. I would also like to personally extend an invitation that the OUSA is open to assisting the Government or its ministers in whatever capacity necessary to improve student living standards and wellbeing. I completely understand that the tertiary education sector policy is beyond your roles in the Justice and Regulation Review Select Committees however I would ask that you keep students in mind as a group that desperately need support.

I am firstly extending extreme apprehension regarding the Government's proposed 6.5% reduction to public sector expenditure, particularly as it concerns the tertiary education sector. With the University of Otago's draft budget projecting debts of NZ\$203 million in 2024 and 107 voluntary redundancies, it is evident that reduced funding will not save the University of Otago. As evident through the numerous education policies released by the party, I believe that the National Party shares the OUSA's belief in the value of education as one of the most empowering opportunities in one's life. I know that you understand the value of education, I was moved by your maiden speech in Parliament as you recounted the importance of your own education and the value it has brought in your life. I understand that that is the flaw and injustice you seek to amend. However, I urge you to encourage your colleagues to affirm their commitment to education beyond primary and secondary schooling. Any reduction in tertiary education funding is a conscious choice to forego the substantial individual and collective benefits of education. To cut tertiary education funding is to undermine Aotearoa's future as an intellectual and economic powerhouse.

However, students have far more practical threats than the existence of their university. Cost, housing and health are the three most poignant issues for students today.

Students continue to be haunted by high rent and high grocery costs. In 2023 Household living costs increased by 7.2% and annual food prices in July 2023 were 9.6% higher than they were the at the same time last year. A Tertiary Education Union survey concluded that students flatting spent 56% of their weekly income on rent and 66% of students did not have enough money to afford their basic needs. While the Government might be content cutting large necessities of its budget, it must empathise with students that aren't quite as eager. Equally, The condition of student housing is appalling. Poor housing is not 'the student experience' it is a bitter reality for thousands of students who are living in cold and mouldy flats, despite paying record high rents.

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I would *strongly recommend* the Government develop student focussed policies and consider the impact on already vulnerable students when making future decisions. I hope if nothing else this letter has articulated the dire straits facing students and the tertiary education sector. The OUSA is more than open to supporting the National Party in developing student focussed policies such as (but certainly not limited to!) universal student allowance, a study wage, increasing the quality of student accommodation and housing, regulating access to vapes and other nicotine products and pursuing a dedicated efforts to improve mental health outcomes for students and young people as a whole.

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Liam White

Political Representative

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