



# Tertiary Education

All New Zealanders should have the opportunity to access a world-class tertiary education.

Tertiary education is a great enabler, allowing Kiwis to gain knowledge and skills, prepare for the workforce, follow their dreams and set themselves up for success. As the party of equal opportunity, National will make sure that every New Zealander continues to have access to a world-class tertiary education sector, with a range of providers and a diversity of approaches to delivering the skills and knowledge our people need to prosper in the modern economy.

## Policy highlights

### National will:

- Implement SkillStart, a \$120 million programme offering incentives for tertiary training providers to develop and deliver rapid retraining and job placement programmes that get Kiwis back into the workforce.
  - Establish 1000 tertiary scholarships per year targeted at students from low decile schools to undertake science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) degrees.
  - Restore funding to ICT Graduate Schools to lift the number of skilled graduates available to technology firms, and deepen business connections with the University sector.
  - Abolish the poorly targeted and ineffective Fees Free scheme.
  - Provide temporary, targeted support for tertiary students facing hardship who would otherwise struggle to continue studying.
  - Remove regulatory barriers to make it easier for new providers with innovative delivery models to enter the tertiary education sector.
- Reverse the bureaucratic vocational sector restructuring and centralisation and return decision-making and assets back to regional institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs).

## Delivering skills to get New Zealanders back to work

The deep recession facing our country means many New Zealanders will find themselves unexpectedly out of work, some stuck with skills that aren't in demand, or in an industry that may no longer have a bright future. Rather than abandoning these people to months or years on a benefit, we want to help those displaced by the economic crisis gain new skills and remain a successful part of our workforce. We also want to support the small business sector to grow strong, resilient businesses that can be an engine of job creation. Investing in retraining and upskilling now will have a huge pay-off over time, and will help us to grow out of the recession stronger than when we went in.

### National will:

- Implement SkillStart, a \$120 million programme offering incentives for tertiary training providers to develop and deliver rapid retraining and job placement programmes. Under SkillStart, tertiary training providers will be eligible for a \$4000 payment for every unemployed Kiwi they can retrain and get back into full-time employment within a year.
- Develop a 12 week business training and mentoring programme – Small Business Builder – to provide experienced, unemployed New Zealanders with the essential business skills and mentoring they will need to start a business.
- Launch the Small Business Accelerator fund, a dedicated fund to deliver management training to small business owners, to help them grow their businesses and generate jobs.



## Investing in students

The jobs of the future will require more graduates with expertise in subjects such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Through targeted investments in our tertiary education system, we will make sure we are delivering the skills and knowledge needed for the high-growth sectors of the future to achieve their potential and help us grow our way out of this economic crisis. This will mean more Kiwis in high-paying, future-proofed jobs.

### National will:

- Establish 1000 tertiary scholarships per year targeted at students from low decile schools to undertake STEM degrees.
- Restore funding to ICT Graduate Schools to lift the number of skilled graduates available to technology firms and deepen business connections with the University sector.
- Maintain funding for Māori and Pasifika Trades Training (MPTT) to increase access for Māori and Pasifika learners to vocational and pre-employment training.
- Launch a Global PhD Scholarship programme to recruit 50 top STEM PhD candidates from major universities each year to spend at least six months in New Zealand during their doctorate, to deepen our networks with leading institutions and the future leaders in global tech.

The recession coupled with the loss of international tourists will hit sectors like hospitality and retail particularly hard. These are areas of the economy that some tertiary students have traditionally relied on to support themselves during study. With much of this part-time work drying up over the next year, some students will find themselves struggling financially. While most will be able to rely on support from their families, this won't be the case for everyone. National will provide targeted assistance to ensure those students facing real financial hardship are able to continue with their studies:

### National will:

- Double funding to the student hardship fund for the next year to support those students most affected by the economic impacts of the recession.
- Establish a pilot fund to improve pastoral care and support for first year tertiary students to support completion rates, as we know that students who finish their first year are considerably more likely to complete their qualifications.

## Strengthening the tertiary education system

Tertiary education is a key enabler of opportunity for all New Zealanders. From our previous experience managing New Zealand through the Global Financial Crisis, we know that demand for tertiary education and training will climb as the job market is constrained. That's why it's more important than ever to ensure that every dollar spent in the sector goes towards frontline services or increasing participation. It's not the time to be engaging in costly restructuring of the vocational sector, or wasting taxpayer money subsidising fees for students who already have access to a generous student loan scheme and would have been studying anyway.

### National will:

- making and remaining assets to regional ITPs.
- Re-establish Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) and give them responsibility for organising vocational training. Work with industry bodies to ensure all ITOs are industry-led, fit-for-purpose and able to deliver the skills needed for the future.
- Disestablish the Workforce Development Councils.
- Abolish the ineffective and wasteful Fees Free scheme.



- Work with industry to develop more careers partnerships, including more work experience opportunities and better careers information for secondary students.
- Work with our universities to improve their international rankings, with a goal of at least one ranked in the top 50 in the world by 2030.

Our tertiary education sector – universities, ITPs, and private training establishments (PTEs) – perform very well and deliver high quality education and internationally recognised qualifications. We believe that there is still room to strengthen our tertiary sector by unleashing greater innovation and making it more responsive to the requirements of a modern workforce.

#### National will:

- Remove regulatory barriers, as recommended by the Productivity Commission, to make it easier for new providers with innovative delivery models to enter the tertiary education sector.
- Make it easier for students to transfer credits between different tertiary institutions to encourage competition, choice and innovation.
- Start a request for proposal process to establish a third graduate entry medical school focused on retention of General Practitioners in rural areas.

## Safely re-starting international education

Covid-19 is going to be with us for a long time and we can't afford to isolate ourselves forever. The latest dire projections from Treasury show decades of deficits and sky-rocketing debt. International students contribute \$5.1 billion a year to the New Zealand economy. Most of this money does not come from tuition fees, but from spending on accommodation, food, tourism, entertainment etc. Spending by international students historically has supported around 50,000 Kiwi jobs. We need to secure our border so that we can begin

to safely restart this crucial sector of the economy and ensure our tertiary institutions remain financially viable.

#### National will:

- Secure our border by establishing Te Korowai Whakamaru/NZ Border Protection Agency, delivering robust border systems that will keep the virus at bay and allow our economy to thrive.
- Implement our smarter border plan, with more managed isolation capacity and a booking system to enable essential and skilled workers, students and, eventually, long-stay tourists to book a place in managed isolation facilities.
- Work with tertiary providers to safely begin returning international students to New Zealand through our managed isolation system.

Policy	Four-year cost (\$m)
<b>SkillStart</b>	120
<b>Small Business Builder</b>	25
<b>Small Business Accelerator</b>	20
<b>1000 STEM scholarships</b>	10
<b>ICT Graduate Schools</b>	28
<b>Global PhD recruitment programme</b>	12
<b>Student hardship fund</b>	20
<b>First year pastoral care fund</b>	5
<b>Total</b>	240

*The majority of these policies will be funded by disestablishing the Workforce Development Councils.*