



NEW ZEALAND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

78% increase in MIQ cost for a single student, what's next?

First the increase in proof of funds required for student visas, now the increase in MIQ fees. International students are getting shaken down on their way back to NZ.

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On the 2nd of March 2021, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment revised the cost of Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) facilities for temporary visa holders returning to New Zealand on and after the 25th of March 2021. This revision saw a rise from \$3,100 to \$5,520 for one returnee, a 78% increase. For each additional adult, the price was revised from \$950 to \$2,990, a 215% increase. Finally, we saw a 239% increase for each additional child, from \$475 to \$1,610.

The sudden hike in MIQ cost comes as an absolute shock to the international student community, especially now, as the second exemption cohort of 1000 international students are due to return as early as April. It is counterintuitive to the government's decision to welcome more international students back into this country and to collaboratively work on strategies to recover the international education sector.

On the 27th of July 2020, Hon. Chris Hipkins said, “Ultimately we want an international education system that’s mutually good for students, providers, and benefits New Zealand economically and socially.”¹ However, the revised fee structure only benefits the government at the expense of international students. The government reasoned that the new revised fees better reflect the real cost of MIQ. However, only temporary visa holders are paying a higher price. This decision is explicit discrimination against not only international students, but all other temporary visa holders who contribute valuable work and diversity to the wider New Zealand communities. As a student representative from Massey University commented, “It’s just absurd. It’s totally unfair for international students.”

The impact of this increase is further compounded by expensive flights, rising tuition fees, and the recent hike in the proof of funds required for a student visa. It poses a huge deterrent for those who are considering returning to New Zealand; an opinion shared by NZISA, institutions and education agencies. This increase is yet another barrier placed by the government between international students and the education they are paying tens of thousands for.

Now is a critical time for tertiary institutions and education agencies to step up and assist those returning students who will have to foot the hefty MIQ bill. International students are key to the recovery of New Zealand’s tertiary education sector, we need to invest more in encouraging initiatives that can help their return to New Zealand. It is disappointing to see the New Zealand government single out temporary visa holders and demand an extra \$2420 for their MIQ. Decisions like these alienate the international communities of New Zealand and send the message that temporary visa holders can be and should be treated differently.

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1. [COVID-19: Stabilising international education as the sector rebuilds](#)