



# **NEW ZEALAND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

## ***MEDIA RELEASE*** ***For immediate release***

### **NZ ISA successfully hosted New Zealand's first student-led Mental Health and Wellbeing Conference on 8 September**

*The Mental Health and Wellbeing Conference attracted more than 100 students across high school and tertiary levels, education providers, healthcare providers and policy makers from government agencies nationwide.*

On 8<sup>th</sup> September 2018, the International Students' Association ("NZ ISA") successfully hosted the first ever student-led Mental Health and Wellbeing Conference in New Zealand. The Conference was organised by students, executed by students, and targeted at students. NZ ISA was hugely successful in attracting international and domestic student representatives across high school and tertiary levels nationwide.

Distinguished guests such as Ms Melissa Lee (Member of Parliament), Justin Lester (Mayor of Wellington), Dr Shanton Chang (Associate Dean, University of Melbourne) and Kelly Feng (National Director, Asian Family Services) not only shared their experience on the key issues that international students struggle with, but also initiated a discussion on solutions and mechanisms to cope with these problems.

Despite his absence, Hon Dr David Clark (Minister of Health) sent his regards, noting the significance of the conference itself and emphasizing the importance of mental health and wellbeing, especially among international students.

The workshops offered by leading healthcare providers gave students and educators an insight into the cultural dimensions of mental wellbeing, and barriers that prevent international students from seeking help. Speakers also highlighted some shortcomings of New Zealand's healthcare referral system in terms of addressing the needs of our culturally diverse students. They encouraged all attendees to maintain strong communications with our international students so that trust can be built, and problems can be nipped at the bud.

Overall, the Conference informed and empowered those student leaders on mental health and wellbeing competency so that following the Conference, they can return to their student communities as advocates, change-makers and vessels of quality information.