



NEW ZEALAND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

A Win for International Students in New Zealand

New Zealand Government's \$1M international student hardship fund reflects the strength of our collective and united international student voice.

Issued by NZISA on 25th May 2020

Following several weeks of careful and persistent public consultations with the Ministry of Education, Education New Zealand, ISANA NZ, Office of Ethnic Communities, and regional international student representatives from NZISA's Representative Council, the New Zealand International Students' Association (NZISA) is proud to announce that on Thursday 21st May 2020, \$1 million NZD has been allocated by the New Zealand Government towards a hardship fund for international students.

Prior to the established fund, international students in New Zealand expressed immense concerns due to the lack of support from their institutions and the government. NZISA has covered these concerns in our [media release](#)¹ on the unsustainable plans of institutions capitalising on international students for financial relief due to the COVID-19

¹ <https://nzisa.co.nz/2020/05/06/the-hypocrisy-of-new-zealand-universities-capitalising-on-covid-19/>

pandemic. NZISA has created a constructive survey to gauge a better understanding of the financial hardship faced by international students through a quantitative and qualitative analysis. We have circulated preliminary results to stakeholders for broader engagement and to capture the international students' experiences. This survey is still open and will close on Monday 1st June 2020 (midnight).

As part of NZISA's COVID-19 strategic responses, we have ensured to take a multifaceted approach by maintaining consistent communication with government agencies in addition to the exchange of perspectives through a series of meetings with our key stakeholders. NZISA emphasises that international students are bridges of connectivity between New Zealand and other parts of the world. The value that international students bring should be measured beyond economic indicators, with a focus on contributions from international students. In highlighting this, NZISA has exercised determination in working on practical feasible solutions and outcomes with key stakeholders. These solutions alleviate the pressures international students are currently facing, while taking into account the economic impact COVID-19 has on teaching staff, academic, and pastoral care support staff. NZISA will continue to amplify the international student voice as we navigate through the COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 environment.

This new [\\$1M international student hardship fund](#)², which kicked in on 21st May 2020, is to support currently enrolled fee-paying international students who are in genuine, temporary financial hardship. Each student is able to receive up to \$1,000 from their organisation or education providers. NZISA encourages eligible organisations and education providers to apply for this grant from Education New Zealand, up to \$20,000 per application. Education providers and organisations should put forward additional requests for this funding as needed to accommodate the needs of their international students. This grant can be used for direct cash support, living costs (except for salaries, tuition fees and air travel costs), or the purchase of resources such as food parcels. Organisations are required to demonstrate programme outcomes and allocation

² <https://enz.govt.nz/news-and-research/international-student-hardship-grant-fund/>

of the fund as part of the commitment and accountability to ensure value for money.

Raising New Zealand's profile as an international education destination will require moving away from a reliance on international student numbers. Rather, the sector should move in a positive direction – towards financial sustainability.

As NZISA has mentioned in a previous press release, and as reiterated here, “All education providers should focus on providing sufficient support for international students facing hardship in New Zealand during these uncertain times. Such action would be a positive contributing factor towards the future of New Zealand's reputation as one of the top international education providers in the world.” NZISA strongly recommends institutions and government agencies to continue their efforts in finding opportunities and advancing the support for international students, especially during a global pandemic. This pandemic provides a window of opportunity for institutions and government agencies to work collaboratively, ensuring that quality of education and support for international students are improved and guaranteed.

NZISA supports the New Zealand Government taking a stride towards focusing on the wellbeing of current international students and displaying recognition for the challenges international students are facing in the COVID-19 environment. This step of filling in the gaps to improve the universal experience of studying in New Zealand is only the beginning of a long-term win: a sustainable export education sector. On behalf of all international students, we stand prepared to show our dedication to New Zealand's export education sector and to maintain established relationships with current international student representatives who have been providing constructive input and support to us.

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