

Hon Dr Michael Cullen

Minister for Tertiary Education



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Media Statement

Driving higher quality university education

Universities are to receive an extra \$129 million over the next four years to ensure they can deliver high quality and relevant training that meets our economic and social priorities, Tertiary Education Minister Dr Michael Cullen announced today.

"The funding will support the new investing in a plan approach that seeks to ensure universities and other tertiary education organisations are equipped to meet the needs of all stakeholders - students, business, communities and taxpayers," said Dr Cullen.

"We want a vibrant, energetic and focused university sector that helps to drive economic transformation. The additional funding will therefore help the sector manage change, enhance capability and improve international competitiveness.

The extra funding provides:

- \$40 million over the next four years to support sector change in key areas such as further differentiation and collaboration, increased achievement of under-represented groups, and an ongoing focus on high quality teaching and research to drive economic growth.
- \$89 million specifically for the University Tripartite Forum to explore and create opportunities to increase the competitiveness of New Zealand universities, through recruitment and retention strategies in an international labour market.

"The government is continuing to work closely with the New Zealand Vice Chancellors' Committee and Association of University Staff of New Zealand within the Universities' Tripartite Forum to address staffing and other resource issues within universities," said Dr Cullen.

"The additional funding is a direct result of this work and the government recognising the need for increased investment. Universities must also demonstrate a commitment that this additional funding will contribute to increased performance."

This investment is in addition to the \$199.5 million of operating funding available to the whole sector, funded through Budget 2007, to increase Student Component funding rates for the 2008 calendar year in line with previous decisions around the Funding Category Review and by the rate of forecast CPI inflation.

Legislation has also been introduced into the House that will enable tertiary education organisations to have a more streamlined relationship with central government and support the new investment approach.

"Proposed amendments to the Education Act give effect to the tertiary education reforms, by replacing the current system of Charters and Profiles with Plans that would be approved by the TEC, following a process of collaborative development with the tertiary education organisation in question," said Dr Cullen.

"The amendments also facilitate replacement of the Tertiary Education Strategy, and Statement of Tertiary Education Priorities with a single strategy document."

Note:

Today's announcement complements last week's announcement of additional funding for the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic, Industry Training Organisations and wananga sector to assist them to meet the requirements of the new investment approach. Further information is available at:

<http://www.beehive.govt.nz/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentID=29116>

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