

# Hon Chris Hipkins

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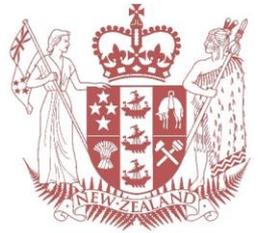
MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services



26 May 2020

Chris Beard  
Executive Director  
ISANA  
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Dear Chris

I want to update you on the work that is underway to map out the future of New Zealand's international education sector.

A vibrant, diverse international education sector is vital to New Zealand's future success.

We have a unique opportunity to reset and rebuild our sector for the future. We will leverage off New Zealand's strengths as a high-quality education provider and as a desirable destination to visit. We know that our handling of the COVID-19 virus has further strengthened our reputation as a safe and welcoming country.

I want to acknowledge the sector's work supporting students through COVID-19 and enhancing our reputation as being an excellent place to study.

Education New Zealand and the Ministry of Education are developing a strategic recovery plan which we will share with the sector. We will seek your input over the next two to three months to ensure your views and experience are heard and considered.

The Government wants to work with you on the plan, which we will invest in, to ensure New Zealand has a resilient, diversified and future-focused international education sector.

Until then, I know that this is a very difficult and painful time for many of you, with only half the expected number of students onshore and our borders closed.

The *Rebuilding Together* Budget announced over \$1.6b expenditure relevant to tertiary education. We also announced some broader measures to support businesses including the extension of the Wage Subsidy Scheme for up to 8 weeks to help retain your staff, which may bring some welcome relief for those in your sector who are eligible.

There is also additional support for domestic students with a \$20 million student hardship fund, to be distributed by education providers. Last week, the Government put in place a hardship fund in place to provide food and essential support to international students experiencing temporary hardship, to help meet their immediate needs.

Details of other education and training initiatives can be found here  
<http://education.govt.nz/our-work/publications/budget-2020/>

I want to let you know that I am also looking at options to be able to defer payment of the Export Education Levy to give international education providers some financial relief while continuing to provide the services normally funded through the levy.

As members of New Zealand's team of 5 million people, you have worked incredibly hard and made sacrifices to help beat the spread of COVID-19. Our challenge now is to re-establish international education in New Zealand and to welcome students to our shores. But this must be done safely, so we do not squander our world-leading efforts and risk being plunged back into lockdown and in the process, losing our social license.

I'm aware that there is an eagerness amongst international education providers to explore how new and returning international students might be admitted to New Zealand under a system of quarantine. Work is currently underway by health officials to look at border control options and what quarantine arrangements would need to look like. I will be an active participant in any Cabinet discussions on this matter and will keep you informed of progress as I am able.

I look forward to our conversations to build our future sector.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'CHM', is positioned above the printed name and title.

**Chris Hipkins**  
**Minister of Education**