



Hand Up

Campaign to REINSTATE FULL ACCESS to TIA (Training Incentive Allowance) NZ

The Honourable Mr Steven Joyce

Minister for Tertiary Education

NZ Parliament

Wellington

Wednesday, 1 June 2011

Dear Mr Joyce,

Your government professes to want sole parents to work, to move off the benefit, to positively contribute to society. How can they do that when, between your policy changes to the Student Loan scheme and Minister Bennett's changes to study help (viz-a-vie the Training Incentive Allowance), you have effectively told them that they are not worth the investment?

Hand Up finds it incredible that you have formulated policies that are doing the exact opposite and are effectively de-motivating the very people your government should be motivating to build a new life for themselves without recourse to the need for welfare assistance.

Why?

Why are you being so one-eyed in your blatant disregard for these people, making them feel like second-class citizens, vilified by middle NZ?

Why are you making it almost impossible for them to make a better life for themselves and their families?

Why are you raising more barriers to participating in a Knowledge Economy?

Why?

Paula Rebstock, the Chair of the Welfare Working Group said, in her introduction to the report from the Group earlier this year, that, "... we should also be willing to invest early to reduce avoidable welfare dependency." The report further states that, "... before the recent economic downturn, (when) many firms were reporting serious difficulty in finding workers at all skill levels."

Indeed, the report has a heavy focus on education and training as vitally important to ensuring less welfare assistance and dependence on government as well as putting in



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place policy to encourage beneficiaries back in to the paid work force **and** meet the needs of employers.

The report states that, "... *cross-Government approaches to reduce long-term welfare dependency*" is vital in ensuring that any welfare reforms are successful.

Surely, then, this would help focus the government, including your department, on the fact that upskilling and investing in higher education for those beneficiaries who want and are motivated to be successful to undertake higher level/tertiary training to meet the needs of the skills shortages in New Zealand today and the future. Surely you should be doing what is needed to make this happen.

Help be part of the creation of a healthy, confident, skilled, stable and knowledgeable workforce by putting in place policies that will grow our economy and not disincentivise, denigrate and demotivate those receiving welfare assistance.

Mr Joyce, **Hand Up** is asking you to relook at this policy change and reinstate the ability to draw upon course-related costs for part-time full year students.

After all, it is all about a **Hand Up**, not a hand out.

Yours sincerely,