

6 December 2010

Rt Hon John Key
Prime Minister
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Dear Prime Minister

Review of University Entrance 2010

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) is consulting with stakeholders on changes to university entrance (UE) requirements. The proposal, as it currently stands, could have serious implications for the tourism and hospitality sectors, as it will create an 'approved subject' list linked to the school curriculum, which by default would exclude tourism.

The Tourism Industry Association New Zealand (TIA), the Hospitality Association of New Zealand (HANZ), and the Aviation, Tourism and Travel Training Organisation (ATTTO) do not support the use of an approved subject list for the purpose of UE. Any proposal that requires students to focus solely on traditional academic subjects is out of step with contemporary learning outcomes that aim to equip students with a mix of vocational, as well as academic skills that are better aligned to job and economic outcomes.

By implication, the NZQA proposal is suggesting that tourism should not be a subject of choice for more able students. The proposal will send a very clear message to schools and teachers that tourism is a subject for less capable students with tourism being an industry that can only provide limited career options. Given the tourism and hospitality sectors employ one in ten people in New Zealand and have risen to become the country's top export sector, the NZQA approach is alarming.

Despite NZQA's lack of regard for tourism, in the view of TIA, HANZ and ATTTO, the subject does allow students who do it to gain a range of skills that some of the more academic subjects do not provide, for example problem solving, communication and people skills. Subjects like tourism make academic achievement more accessible to a broader base of students.

TIA, HANZ and ATTTO believe the current proposal devalues a vital export industry and is inconsistent with the government's objective of growing New Zealand's economy. There is a rightful place for students with a strong academic bias at our universities who also go on to contribute to the country's productivity, but this should not be the sole focus. It should also not be at the expense of less academically inclined students who can actually make valuable contributions to the economy and country as a whole.

Of further concern is that TIA and HANZ, as the peak bodies for the tourism and hospitality

sectors, were not consulted in the development of the UE review. One might have expected NZQA to think of talking to the industry when putting together its review proposal.

In summary, TIA, HANZ and ATTO are extremely concerned at the NZQA proposed changes to UE that will restrict career pathways in the tourism and hospitality industries. The proposal is effectively saying to prospective students “don’t choose tourism, it’s not a viable or long-term career option”.

We would appreciate your support for the industry on this issue and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Tim Cossar
Chief Executive
TIA



Bruce Robertson
Chief Executive
HANZ



Elizabeth Valentine
Chief Executive
ATTTO

cc Hon Anne Tolley, Minister of Education
cc Hon Steven Joyce, Minister for Tertiary Education
cc Hon Jonathan Coleman, Associate Minister of Tourism
cc Dr Karen Poutasi, Chief Executive, NZQA