

Australian university starts up in Upper Hutt

Australia's Ballarat University is to provide courses at a campus in Upper Hutt in a joint-venture with Campus Group Holdings, and the first pupils are expected in November.

The university will run the courses on the former Central Institute of Technology site in Upper Hutt which has capacity for several thousand students as well as 500-bed accommodation. The site is managed by New Zealand International Campus (NZIC), a subsidiary of the Australian-based Campus Group Holdings.

NZIC campus director Steve Townsend said he hoped to get up to 100 international students for the first intake next month with another intake in March.

The Upper Hutt site would not be a Ballarat campus but students would be enrolled in Ballarat degrees and the university would oversee quality assurance, teaching, assessment and the curriculum. Campus Group Holdings would recruit staff and be responsible for infrastructure, Mr Townsend said.

NZIC has recently gained NZQA-accreditation to provide degrees in Business, Commerce, Computing, Information Technology, Management and Business Administration.

It also teaches diplomas in business subjects as well as in tourism and hospitality in a joint venture with tertiary institution New South Wales Technical And Further Education (TAFE).

The business model used by Campus Group Holdings at its Upper Hutt campus is used in several sites around Australia with other universities. *Subtext* will have a feature on Campus Group Holdings in its November edition.

- Ballarat is a small city (population: 84,000) in Victoria, approximately 120 kilometres northwest of Melbourne.

A story in *The Australian* is at http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5744,10837537%255E12332,00.html

New Zealand International Campus is at <http://www.nzic.ac.nz/>

The University of Ballarat website is at <http://www.ballarat.edu.au/>

TAFE NSW is at <http://www.tafensw.edu.au/>



New Zealand
International Campus
W E L L I N G T O N

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Vouchers by any other name – govt 'scholarship schemes'

Education Minister Trevor Mallard last month announced three voucher-type programmes in the form of scholarships for trainee teachers. But privately-trained students have been left out.

Education vouchers are supposedly a no-go for the Labour Party – so why do their education scholarships look so much like them, and why are private students forbidden access to them?

In one scheme, students training to teach in Maori and in other subject areas where there are teacher shortages – maths, physics, chemistry and technology – have been offered government money to study for degrees.

There is no limit on the numbers of scholarships awarded for secondary teaching, so anyone who includes a sufficient number of papers in one of these subjects in their degree and agrees to become a secondary teacher could be eligible.

The government expects 400 scholarships to be awarded each year, compared to 225 previously.

The \$18.8 million teaching scholarship scheme could be worth more than \$20,000 to some students, depending on the duration of their study.

A new government scheme will also give assistance to students training to teach in Maori and Pasifika languages and to people from low income backgrounds training to be early childhood education teachers.

Privately-trained students miss out

Education Forum member and Early Childhood Council chief executive Sue Thorne said though the early childhood education scholarships were in theory a good idea, students from private training schools were not allowed to take them up.

She said an ECC survey had shown up to 40 percent of all graduates were privately trained.

"It is very disappointing and perplexing that a large number of students have been left out of the scheme.

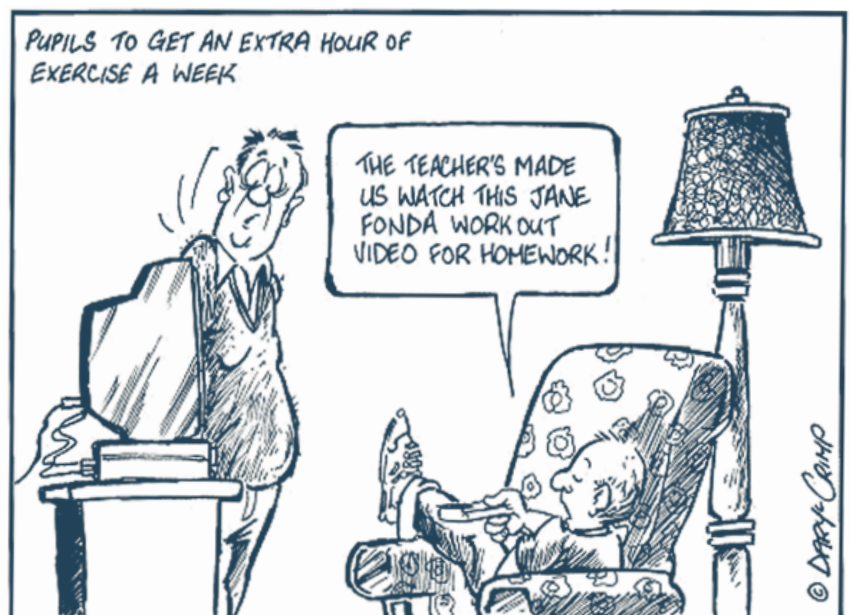
"Students at private training establishments get training that is particularly relevant to the workplace whereas some state training is quite detached from the realities that early childhood teachers face on the job, particularly for those working with the younger age groups.

"And, anyway, why on earth is anyone being left out when there is such a dire shortage of trained teachers in the industry. It seems to be just another example of the minister's baseless aversion to private education."

More information on the degree scheme is at <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/ViewDocument.cfm?DocumentID=21015>

Information on the early childhood scholarship scheme is at <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/ViewDocument.cfm?DocumentID=21001>

Information on the Maori and Pasifika scholarship scheme is at <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/ViewDocument.cfm?DocumentID=20995>



Highlights from the OECD's 2004 edition of *Education at a Glance*

Last month the OECD released its mammoth, annual compendium of education statistics – *Education at a Glance*. We highlight some key findings for New Zealand.

More freedom for schools to decide how they want to teach

Decision-making in schools is becoming more decentralised.

In New Zealand, 75 percent of educational decisions are made at the school level, compared to 24 percent in Australia, 100 percent in the Netherlands, and 85 percent in England.

Decisions on how teaching is organised are now mainly taken by schools in all OECD countries, rather than by authorities. Decisions on planning and structures remain mostly with centralised government.

On average, about half of all decisions relating to lower secondary education are now taken by schools, notably higher than five years ago.

NZ spending on education

During 2001, the Labour government spent 5.5 percent of GDP on educational institutions, compared to the OECD mean of 5.0 per cent – ranking New Zealand 11th out of 30 countries.

Gaps in NZ achievement

New Zealand has the largest gap between girls' and boys' educational achievement, according to *Education at a Glance*.

The report highlights a 27-point gap between the reading literacy skills of 10-year-old boys and girls, the highest of the 16 countries measured.

Graduation rates

New Zealanders have high rates of graduation from secondary education, with 76 percent of 25-64 year olds having at least an upper secondary education compared to 65 percent for the whole OECD.

In tertiary type B programmes (those that have a practical, technical or occupational focus) some 15 percent of New Zealanders aged 25-64 have a qualification compared to eight percent for the OECD, placing New Zealand fourth equal.

More people than ever in tertiary education

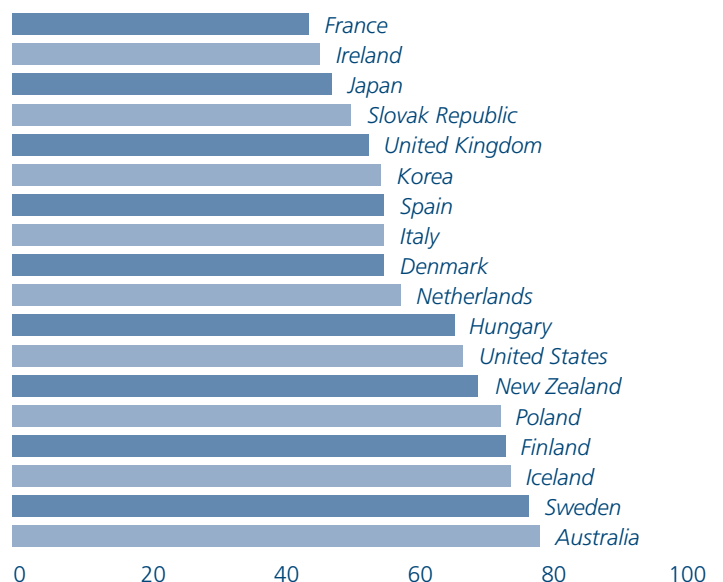
More people around the world are completing university courses and other forms of tertiary education than ever before.

Half of today's young adults, on average, now enter universities or other institutions offering similar qualifications at some stage during their life. However, progress has been uneven across countries and some have significantly fallen behind.

In general, people with tertiary qualifications have significantly higher salaries. For example, in the US, earnings for tertiary graduates are on average 86 percent higher than those for people with only secondary education. New Zealand has one of the lowest differentials at only 28 percent.

Education at a Glance is at http://www.oecd.org/document/7/0,2340,en_2649_201185_33712135_1_1_1_1,00.html

Percentage of population entering higher education in 2002 across the OECD



Officials rejected early childhood funding plans

The government's own officials warned plans to offer free education to three- and four-year-olds at community-based centres had no clear educational rationale, didn't offer value for money, and could threaten private centres.

Education Minister Trevor Mallard announced "20-free-hours a week" in the May Budget. The plan, to start in 2007, is only for non-profit community-based centres, meaning 25,000 children at independent centres miss out.

At the time, Mr Mallard said the plan would "make quality early childhood education available to more New Zealand children, while at the same time keeping a lid on costs to parents".

But papers released under the Official Information Act to United Future reveal the minister snubbed advice from Treasury officials, the *NZ Herald* has reported.

"We do not recommend you pursue this option," officials said in a report last November.

Papers released to the Early Childhood Council show the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) also said it did not support the plans "because they would be likely to significantly distort early childhood education (ECE) participation and labour market participation patterns and could threaten the viability of some private ECE centres."

Education Forum member and Early Childhood Council chief executive Sue Thorne said MSD's concerns were valid.

"Clearly the announcement of free 20 hours has raised expectations that all children will be able to access this entitlement and it is causing government concern about providing enough places



to meet that demand."

Last week the Prime Minister announced another \$8.8M to build community centres for another 290 child places.

"In the true tradition of government-funded projects these new places are more than three times the cost of a high-quality, privately-funded centre. That is money that could have been used to fund children's attendance at the centres of each family's choice," Mrs Thorne said

"We don't buy the government's argument that free ECE has been limited to community centres because of fiscal restraints. It is purely and simply another example of the government's anti-business, anti-private education ideology getting in the way of what is good for children.

"Ultimately parents and children will

have their choices in ECE restricted because private operators will be weighing up the risks of investing time and money in a sector that the government clearly does not wish the private sector to be in."

A *NZ Herald* story is at <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/storydisplay.cfm?storyID=3597198&thesection=news&thesubsection=general>

A *Subtext* story on the original Budget announcement is at http://www.educationforum.org.nz/documents/e_newsletter/06_04/Jun04_Ecebud.htm

An *Early Childhood Council* resource of media stories about the budget announcement, and reaction to it, is at <http://www.ecc.org.nz/articles/index.php?rt=1&rid=449>

Cohen launches book of journalism on university life

From autism research to a university scholarship for the best duck-quack imitation, higher education journalist David Cohen's new book shows that university life is as broad and colourful as life itself.

Welcome to the Campus of Struggle is a collection of articles, profiles and columns that explore higher education around the world over the past five years.

Perhaps more widely-known in this country these days for his *National Business Review* media columns, Mr Cohen has, in the past decade, entertained and informed readers worldwide with his higher education journalism. The book is a taster of the hundreds of pieces published in high-profile British, US and Australasian publications.

Speaking to *Subtext*, Mr Cohen said he had always been crucially interested in the play of ideas between cultures and "arguments across borders". Reporting on universities had proven a good way to focus on those topics.

"Universities are not divorced from life; they are often right at the centre of things."

Spending time with young Islamic fundamentalists at an Indonesian Muslim university just as militant Islam was becoming a global issue and watching Indonesian students protest during that country's economic crisis showed how interlinked universities were to the key issues of the day.

As the *Campus of Struggle* moves from the ransacking of a New Zealand university's GM potato plot to the worldwide rise of private colleges and the teaching of a university course on Oprah Winfrey in Canada, Mr Cohen's insistence

that life inside higher education is as wide as the world becomes clear.

The book has its origins in a visit to Mr Cohen's Wellington office from a leading politician who, concerned that his party did not have a cohesive higher education policy, was after ideas and wondered if

Mr Cohen could photocopy some articles for the party to mull over.

The visit highlighted what Mr Cohen sees as a lack of good ideas and public debate over higher education in New Zealand.

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Competition:

Five copies of *Welcome to the Campus of Struggle* to give away

David Cohen's new book *Welcome to the Campus of Struggle* has been described as 'a thoughtful and amusing collection of journalism on higher education'. We have five copies to give away.

The competition couldn't be easier – it's a first-in, first-served event.

To win a copy of this beautiful book, simply be one of the first five people to email us at subtext@educationforum.org.nz with your name and postal address and we'll have a book in the mail to you shortly.

The book is a collection of Mr Cohen's writing – personal observations, profiles, news stories and columns – on tertiary education around the world from 1999–2004.

"It is a tour-de-force... a must-read for those who populate universities and for anyone who wishes to understand how the aim of higher education – indeed the very philosophy underpinning university life itself – seems to be changing across the globe." – Professor Kyongsoo Lho, Dean of International Affairs, Seoul National University.



Bring back student fees, OECD tells Ireland

Irish students should bear some of the costs of their higher education and fees should be re-introduced, an OECD Review of Higher Education Policy in Ireland recommended in Dublin last month.



Tuition fees were abolished in the Irish Republic in 1996.

The review recommended that universities be allowed to set fees, and that there be means-tested student support and grants to assist low-income or special-needs students.

"We do not believe that with the economic and fiscal realities facing Ireland it will be possible to develop the globally competitive tertiary education system and research capability that it seeks by relying on state funding alone," the OECD said in the review.

A summary of the OECD Review's arguments:

- Ireland needs to invest more in tertiary education for economic and social reasons but will find it increasingly difficult to do so because of the competing claims from other parts of the education system, as well as other parts of the public sector of the economy;

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Cohen launches book of journalism on university life

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David Cohen

"Globally, it's a trillion dollar business. Locally, it is perhaps the biggest industry in Auckland and export education is a massive earner for New Zealand. Yet not

one of our major papers has a fulltime higher education reporter.

"We are very poorly served by that – future social historians will find that preposterous."

The range of articles in *Welcome to*

the Campus of Struggle – the product of more than 35 working trips to 15 countries and nearly 80 campuses – shows how important that debate is in other countries, and how it should be here.

While he writes regularly for left-leaning (the British *Guardian*), conservative (*The Australian*) and apolitical publications (the *Chronicle of Higher Education*), Mr Cohen describes his personal point of view on higher education as "American".

"In the States, families find it utterly natural to front up for the costs to put a child through a good university. My wife's family, for example, didn't think twice about paying US\$30,000 for each year

of her undergrad experience.

"The public-private partnership is clearly a major part of the US market and I think that has probably shown itself to be the best mix for a dynamic higher education sector."

- The publication of *Welcome to the Campus of Struggle* (Dunmore Press, 2004) was materially supported by the Education Forum.

More information on the book is at http://www.educationforum.org.nz/documents/publications/campus_of_struggle.htm

Under-funding will mean the end of quality UK universities

Great Britain has won no Nobel prizes in the past 25 years compared to 10 in the 30 before that – a striking illustration of the ongoing decline of its universities.



Martin Wolf

That's the view of *Financial Times* chief economics commentator Martin Wolf who was in Wellington last month as a guest of the New Zealand Business Roundtable.

Mr Wolf compared the university system to the "failed model of the nationalised industry" citing an underpaid and demoralised mass workforce and chronic under-funding.

What was needed – to boost income – was competition, the freedom to set fees and employment conditions, and student loans (repaid on an income-contingent basis) to fund fees and maintenance.

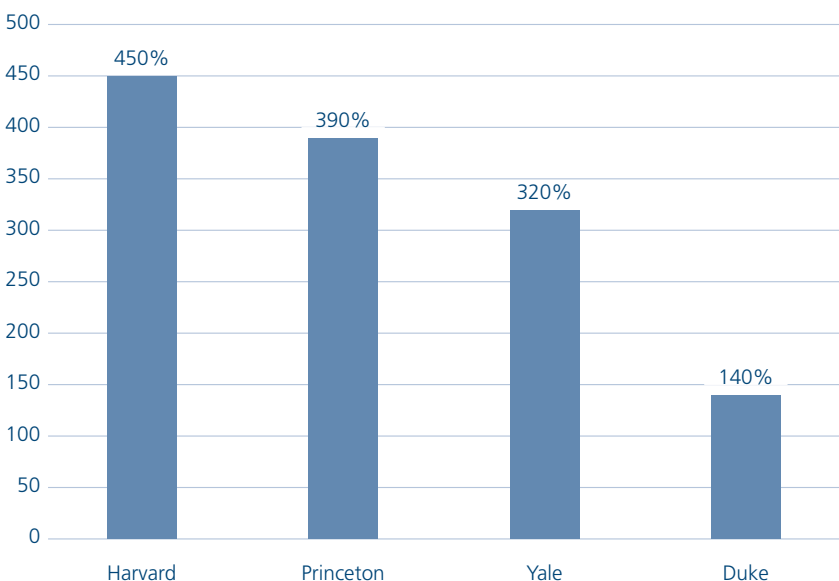
Mr Wolf's presentation – "Why Universities have not been saved" – is at http://www.educationforum.org.nz/documents/presentations/universities_2004.ppt

Mr Wolf also delivered the NZBR 2004 Trotter Lecture on his visit. More information is at http://www.nzbr.org.nz/lecture_series.asp?Topic=RonTrotterLecture

Mr Wolf said quality UK universities were losing ground against their US counterparts in terms of funding and quality.

For example, Britain had 80 of the 1,200 most widely cited scientists, against 700 in the United States. In microbiology, it was six, fewer than in Harvard University alone.

Income per undergraduate as percent of Oxford's



Australian childcare firms form conglomerate

Three of Australia's largest childcare companies have announced plans to form a conglomerate owning or managing more than 700 centres.

ABC Learning Centres will merge with Peppercorn Management and Child Care Centres Australia (CCCA). The merger will mean about 15 percent of all Australian long-day care centres owned or managed by the new entity.

Peppercorn looks after the day-to-day running of listed New Zealand childcare firm Kidicorp. CCCA owns 5.5 percent of Kidicorp, the AAP has reported.

ABC originally envisaged raising \$300 million to fund the \$340 million takeover but market sources said there had been such a good reaction to the offering that the company had decided to raise a further \$100 million to help fund the acquisition of 200 more centres, *The Australian* has reported.

A story in The Australian is at http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5744,11004278%5E643,00.html

What works in education – PISA revisited

Leading education researchers Ludger Woessmann and Thomas Fuchs have re-examined the latest PISA results to look at what factors, internationally, affect student achievement. A summary of their findings follows.

- Consistent with theory as well as previous evidence, school autonomy is related to superior student performance in personnel management and process decisions such as the hiring of teachers, textbook choice and deciding budget allocations within schools.
- The performance effects of school autonomy tend to be more beneficial in systems where external exit exams are in place, emphasising the role of external exams as "currency" of the school system.
- Students in public schools perform worse than students in private schools. However, holding the mode of private versus public operation constant, the same is not true for students in schools that receive a larger share of private funding, and in maths, the share of private funding is actually statistically significantly related to weaker performance.
- While smaller classes do not go hand-in-hand with superior student performance, better equipment with instructional material and better-educated teachers do.
- External exit exams are statistically significantly and positively related to student performance in maths, and marginally so in science.
- Institutions account for roughly one-quarter of the international variation

in student performance. Thus, institutional structures of school systems are again found to be important determinants of student educational performance.

Meanwhile, an earlier paper by Ludger Woessmann argues that positive effects on student performance stem from centralised examinations, school autonomy, competition from private educational institutions, scrutiny of achievement, and teacher influence on teaching methods. A large influence of teacher unions on curriculum scope has negative effects on student performance.

The PISA paper, "What Accounts for International Differences in Student Performance? A Re-Examination Using PISA Data", can be downloaded from <http://ssrn.com/abstract=572802>

The earlier paper, "Schooling Resources, Educational Institutions, and Student Performance: The International Evidence" can be downloaded from <http://ideas.repec.org/p/kiel/kieliw/983.html>

A range of other papers by Ludger Woessmann is at <http://econpapers.hhs.se/RAS/pwo29.htm> and <http://ideas.repec.org/e/pwo29.html>

It's a fact:

Degree of regulation and funding of private schools, various countries, 1999

		Degree of Regulation		
		Low	Medium	High
Level of Public Funding	High	Australia	Denmark	Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain
	Medium	New Zealand		British Columbia (Canada)
	Low	United Kingdom		Greece Italy

Source: Adapted from Kober (1999) Lessons from other countries about private school aid, pp 10-11.

Private education debate was significant in Australian election

Australian Labor Party leader Mark Latham's publicity stunt publication of a list of 67 elite schools he would like to receive less funding highlighted the importance of private education as an election issue, according to visiting Australian commentator Janet Albrechtsen.



Janet Albrechtsen

"It was a deliberate attack from Labor, even though it was inconsistent with his personal views that people can and should do

well in life – if they do well, this policy would slug them," said Dr Albrechtsen, a columnist for *The Australian*.

With the numbers of families choosing private schools increasing – one in five pupils were private 25 years ago, one in three today – Australians were showing they wanted choice. Labor's policy was in contrast to the needs of many families, Dr Albrechtsen said.

Many parents were taking on more than one job to get their children into the

school they wanted them to attend.

"Labor said its internal polling showed the policy doing well, but other polls said otherwise. People feel pretty ripped off by the education system," she said.

For example, parents needed to know how their children's school was doing relative to other schools, so they could make judgements on their progress but the information was not always available.

Literacy was another area where parents were justified in feeling ripped off.

"Twenty-six experts have written to the Commonwealth government telling it that children are falling through the cracks because of 'whole reading' programmes, which had, in effect, become a worldview for many teachers.

"But it is hard to get change. We need to reignite the reading wars and get

phonics back on the agenda."

- Dr Albrechtsen was in New Zealand in early October for the Association of Cambridge Schools' annual conference in Auckland. She gave a public presentation in Wellington – as a guest of the Education Forum – on literacy and school policies in Australia.

An opinion piece by Dr Albrechtsen on schools policy is at

http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5744,10837681%5E32522,00.html

An opinion piece by Dr Albrechtsen on tertiary education funding is at

http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5744,10195970%25E32522,00.html

Bring back student fees, OECD tells Ireland

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- Irish tertiary education institutions are over-dependent on public funding; less reliance on the state would make them more competitive;
- The free-fees policy has not had the effects that were hoped for in improving participation from students from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- The free-fees policy is inequitable because it provides substantial subsidies to students whose families could well

afford to pay tuition fees. (An estimated 20 percent of students enrolled in universities and receiving the benefit of free fees are from families with incomes in excess of €70,000 per annum).

- The rate of return to higher education, both now and predicted for the future, fully justifies students bearing a share of the cost of their education.

Though student fees are supported by the Education Minister, Noel Dempsey, the *Times Higher Education Supplement* has reported that the Irish government

looks set to ignore the recommendations for now.

More information on the OECD review is at <http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?maincat=10861&pcategory=10861&ecategory=10876§ionpage=13637&language=EN&link=link001&page=2&doc=25890>

A Guardian backgrounder, from earlier this year, on funding in the Irish tertiary sector is at <http://education.guardian.co.uk/students/tuitionfees/story/0,12757,1131562,00.html>

Outsourced tertiary education – meeting needs, exceeding expectations

Anecdotally, there has been a boom lately in polytechnics receiving EFTS-funding for courses subcontracted to private providers. We look at three such courses that are notching up wins for all involved.

Safety on the farm

Lugging a chainsaw to the back paddock on the tray of your tractor or quad-bike is not the casual task it once was.

With work place safety a key issue for all employers, even farmers must take all practical care to ensure their workers use equipment safely.

Northland Polytechnic spotted the need for locals to access training and contracted local, NZQA-accredited, training firm Rural Training Solutions (RTS) to provide the expertise.

RTS director Graeme Couper said the result had been a win for all involved.

"Farmers say they need the training but we have found in the past that they just don't want to pay the higher costs

when it is delivered purely through a private firm.

"Now, with EFTS funding covering it, the costs to farmers are lowered, and the polytechnics have experts to deliver the training – surely that is what it is all about.

"Farmers get the training; the polytechnic gets to fulfil its community charter; a local firm gets a bit of business; and, on top of all that, OSH and ACC will be happy as injury rates drop," Mr Couper said.

Each two-day chainsaw, tractor and all-terrain vehicle safety course is for 8-10 people; comprises one day of theory and one day of practical work; is worth two to four unit standards (10-15 credits); and can be put towards the National Certificate in Agriculture level 2 or 3.

Northland Polytechnic chief executive Terry Barnett said the polytechnic's charter called for the polytechnic to provide training meeting the region's needs. The large distances between centres in the region meant that having a private provider was a sensible way to help build capacity in areas the polytechnic could not easily service.



Outsourcing a sound business tool

Outsourcing is an effective and longstanding business model. It means bringing in experts to do the tasks your organisation does not have the resources or skills to do. Anecdotally the practice is increasing in NZ tertiary education.

The Tertiary Education Commission has this year clamped down on private education providers outsourcing to organisations not accredited with the NZ Qualification Authority. It is understood some public institutions also contract to unaccredited providers.

But with people demanding education and training in increasingly diverse areas, institutions will never be able to cover all the bases and it's a sensible move to bring in quality external providers to deliver courses.

"Where we don't have a strength we selectively look for a partner," Mr Barnett said.

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Outsourced tertiary education – meeting needs, exceeding expectations*Continued from page 10***Nursing programme has healthy outcome**

The Plunket Society has been teaching a nursing programme accredited to Whitireia Community Polytechnic since 1996 and now looks sets to boost its teaching services with the addition of a National Certificate for Health Workers.

Plunket's national education manager Jan Pearson said the relationship with the polytechnic had been so successful that the original nursing programme had grown from a graduate certificate to a post-graduate qualification, the equivalent of two masters papers.

Though the programme is accredited through Porirua-based Whitireia, students are located all over New Zealand. They work and are assessed in the field, with four visits a year from one of Plunket's eight educators as well as two tutorials in either Wellington or Auckland.

Plunket bases its standards around Whitireia's quality standards and uses the polytechnic's advisory committees to help guide it, but delivers the programme itself, with an emphasis on iwi and primary care health service for children.

Whitireia post-graduate studies programme leader Kathy Holloway said the polytechnic received strong benefits from working with Plunket as the society not only taught courses but was also in the field providing nursing services.

"It is important that nursing teaching is in touch with the practice sector. It means the course does not become part of the ivory tower of the academics but is based around what the nursing sector needs in the workplace.

"Plunket has a very clear idea of what how to combine teaching and practice; and in return they get to reinforce their

teaching with the resources and quality assurance that Whitireia can offer."

Mrs Holloway said the course-outsourcing model worked well and the polytechnic also used Hospice New Zealand, Wellington Free Ambulance and Medtra, a surgical nursing PTE, to deliver other health courses.

**Boosting confidence in academic abilities**

Getting people who have not had educational success to believe in their abilities, gain the confidence to get back into study and go on to tertiary education is no easy task.

But a successful new programme at Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) run by PTE the Solomon Group is getting results and seeing growing interest.

Solomon's Pathways to Tertiary Education course develops literacy and numeracy skills for students who want to go on to tertiary education and then encourages them to further learning at MIT.

MIT manager of Pathways Iona Chalmers said that of the 10 students in the first intake of the inaugural course this year, nine had gone on to MIT. The second intake of the course had grown to 24 students.

"We chose the Solomon Group because they have a great record for getting results in literacy and numeracy and they provided a quality learning environment. It's still early days but the increase in numbers in the second intake is a success in itself," Miss Chalmers said.

The course is part of MIT's strategy of working with local PTEs to help align their respective courses with the institute so that students can progress more easily from foundation courses to higher tertiary education.

MIT has run curriculum alignment pilots with 11 local PTEs over the past two years and has built relationships with 24 PTES in the South Auckland community. Pathways for PTE students has recently moved from project status to be part of MIT's core business.

"Students do well at quality PTEs. The smaller environments often mean that they are less intimidated and feel more noticed. They can give more confidence to learners and help them to believe that they are capable of learning," Miss Chalmers said.

"It also means our retention rates improve because when those students get to MIT they are prepared to study at tertiary level.

"PTES have in the past been seen by some as being outside the main tertiary sector, but we see them as having a very relevant role to play. We want to make the relationship work and we are always looking for new ways to work with them."

Quote of the month:

"One of the supreme ironies of course, for a Government that pretends to be concerned about ordinary New Zealand families, is that some New Zealanders do have choice – but only if they are wealthy enough ... this Government simply doesn't care that most New Zealand families have no choice about where their children go to school."

– National Party leader Don Brash in a speech on 'big government' and government spending to the combined Hutt Valley Rotary Clubs on 7 October.

The complete speech is at <http://www.national.org.nz/Article.aspx?articleId=2924>



Bill English

Parents meet schools' funding shortfall, says English

Parents pay about one-third of school operating costs so should get more say in how they are run, says National education spokesman Bill English.

In 2002 total school operating costs were \$1.45 billion and parents and communities contributed more than \$470 million

of that, Mr English said.

"It's about time the Government acknowledged the huge contribution parents and communities make by giving them more say in how schools are run."

Mr English said higher-decile schools raised around 40 percent of their operating costs and lower-decile schools raised around 20 percent.

"The reality is, the government funds only part of the cost of running schools in even the poorest areas. Under this Government, every family is paying for a 'free' education."

Canadian private tutoring centres numbers skyrocket

A recent study has found that the number of Canadian private tutoring centres grew by 60 per cent between 1996 and 2000.

In Toronto alone, the number of learning centres climbed from 10 to 74, the *Toronto Star* has reported.

Researchers have found that 24 percent of Ontario parents with school-aged children employ tutors, while 50 percent of parents in a national survey said they would hire a private tutor for their children if they could afford one, the *Star* said.

Colombian voucher programme sees results improvements

Colombia's PACES voucher programme increased secondary school completion rates by 15-20 percent and increased test scores, a new report says.

The programme provided more than 125,000 impoverished children with vouchers that covered half the cost of private secondary school. The vouchers were renewable annually conditional on adequate academic progress.

The National Bureau of Economic Research report is at <http://www.nber.org/papers/w10713>

Student loans benefit the economy, report argues

A report by leading education researcher Eric Hanushek argues that income contingent loans, need-based aid and merit-based aid can improve the efficiency of the economy and lead to more intergenerational mobility and greater income equality.

The National Bureau of Economic Research report is at <http://www.nber.org/papers/W10711>

NCPA – a big fan of vouchers

The US National Center for Policy Analysis recently published these three snippets in support of vouchers:

- According to the National Center for Education Statistics, per pupil spending at religious and independent schools averages US\$4,600 versus US\$6,857 at public schools.
- A 2003 Yankee Institute study found that if public education was delivered with private efficiency, there would be no state budget crisis.
- Brian Gottlob, a New Hampshire economist, says school choice would save New Hampshire US\$50 million over the next seven years.

Eye-opener: public and private school system comparison

With 1,000,000 students, the New York City public school system has a central office staff of 6,000. The Archdiocese of New York has 200,000 students and a staff of about 35, says David W. Kirkpatrick from the US Freedom Foundation in a recent article.

More information is at
<http://www.lincolninstitute.org/schoolreport.html>

Malaysia looking to speed up approval for private courses

Faster approval of courses offered by private education institutions will be followed by strict surveillance, the Malaysian *Star* has reported

Higher Education Ministry secretary-general Dr Mohd Yahya Nordin was quoted saying that although the approval process had been shortened recently to three months, the Cabinet feels that this is too long.

More information is at
<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2004/9/26/education/8866059&sec=education>

Vocational education training conference papers online

A large number of conferences papers from the 13th Australian VET Research Conference is now available online.

Topics include innovation in VET, equity, literacy and numeracy, recognition of prior learning, employability skills, and professional development for VET educators.

The papers are at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/newsevents/events/papers/trconf13.html>

Media blitz to fight state school exodus

A growing number of US education authorities are launching publicity campaigns to try and stop the flight of students to charter and private schools, the *Times Education Supplement* has reported.

Philadelphia, for example, recently announced a US\$600,000 media campaign, after a 16,000 drop in state pupil numbers in the past three years.

An authority in Colorado has recently placed 20 30-second prime-time ads to counter private school advertising and an Arizona authority has also announced plans for a three-year marketing campaign.

Swedish private schools on the rise

The number of pupils at Stockholm's private schools has doubled in the past four years, the *Times Education Supplement* has reported.

All Swedish pupils are eligible for vouchers to attend private schools. The government ended the state education monopoly a decade ago.

The increase in number has fostered an entrepreneurial spirit in schools, the *TES* reports, as they compete to attract students. State schools are revamping their programmes to compete.

Paper looks at US women's response to school choice

A new paper looks at US women's interest in education reform and responds to the criticisms made by women's groups to many school choice proposals.

The Independent Women's Forum paper concludes that women are better served by education policies that give parents control over where their children go to school.

The paper is at <http://www.iwf.org/pdf/recess.pdf>

New NZ Treasury papers on human capital and skills

- A literature review exploring the ways in which institutions can influence economic growth, with a particular focus on how institutions affect the use that firms make of human capital to improve their productivity, is at <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/workingpapers/2004/04-19.asp>
- A literature review on skills utilised by firms, the mechanisms by which skills contribute to firm productivity, how skills are acquired and the potential policy implications of these issues, is at <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/workingpapers/2004/04-16.asp>

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