

# Office of the Mayor



30 March 2010

The Education and Science Select Committee  
Parliament Buildings  
Private Bag 18041  
**Wellington 6160**

Dear Sir/Madam

## **VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHIP OF STUDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS**

I write to record my opposition to the Bill which seeks to make membership of Students' Associations voluntary.

I make this submission personally as the Mayor of Dunedin, and not on behalf of my Council, as it has not had an opportunity to discuss the Bill.

### **Background:**

1 - I was a student of Otago University from 1959 to 1964, completing a Bachelor of Laws. During those years, I was involved in student politics, rising to the exalted rank of Business Manager on the Executive of the Otago University Students' Association (OUSA) from 1963-64.

2 - By virtue of office, as the Mayor of Dunedin, I am a member of the University Council, which is the governing body of Otago University. OUSA is represented on that Council.

3 - Over the past five years, as Mayor of Dunedin, I have had much contact with the President of OUSA as well as representatives from the Otago Polytechnic Students' Association (OPSA).

4 - I believe that I have an understanding of student politics and the way that students' associations work in Dunedin.

5 - The relationship that Dunedin citizens have with the tertiary student population is unique in New Zealand, because of the proximity of the campus to the CBD and the size of the tertiary sector, relative to the total population of the city. Dunedin is a University city offering a unique student experience.

**My reasons for opposing voluntary membership are as follows:**

1 – Dunedin City places great value on the fact that there is a formal student body to deal with which democratically speaks on behalf of the student body.

2 – Through my relationship with OUSA and OPSA, I have been able to deal with student issues in a collaborative way to the benefit of the community, the University, the Polytechnic as well as the student body. By way of example, the problems that have been caused historically by some orientation events, the Toga Parade and the Undie 500, have been managed collaboratively in a way that I believe would not have been possible without the students' associations.

3 – I do not believe that the present system is "broke". There is a perfectly adequate system in place that works.

4 – In Dunedin, OUSA provides many facilities and opportunities for students outside of their academic reasons for being at University and these can only be provided because of the funding that occurs through compulsory membership.

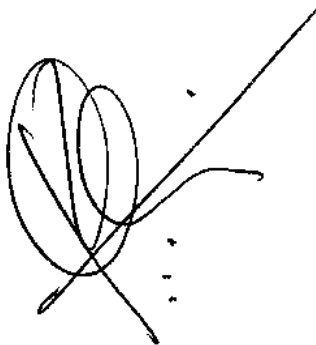
5 – The events and activities that OUSA provides for students benefit the wider community of Dunedin.

6 – Although the membership of the Executive of OUSA and OPSA changes each year, it is nonetheless a very responsible body because the administration that unpins each association is constant.

7 - I am much aware of the so called apathy among the students towards their association, which in many ways is perhaps the same apathy that ratepayers and citizens have to their local authorities, but the reality is that students will turn to their associations (as citizens and ratepayers turn to their local authorities) in times of need, and they would both be the worse off without either their association or local authority.

I would appreciate the opportunity of appearing before the Select Committee in support of my submission.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long, sweeping stroke extending upwards and to the right.

Peter Chin  
**Mayor of Dunedin**