

30 June 2008

Tēnā koutou katoa

We are writing to inform you of government decisions about the review of the provision of ministry funded Alternative Education (AE) and access of AE students to the Correspondence School.

The AE review is aimed at achieving a better understanding of how and to what extent student needs are being met under current AE provision. The ministry has undertaken a preliminary analysis of AE policies that may need to be strengthened or changed and is now clarifying how AE relates to the Schools Plus initiative.

Schools Plus was announced earlier this year by the Prime Minister and is being developed to achieve the government's goal that: *All young people are in education, skills development or structured learning, relevant to their needs and abilities, until the age of 18.*

Schools Plus is clearly of direct relevance to the AE sector, will be informed by current AE practices and policy, and will integrate AE frameworks into its scope.

The ministry has extended the completion of the AE review to March 2009 to enable the results of the Schools Plus engagement process to be taken into account, and to ensure that the AE review's aims are achieved through comprehensive consultation with the sector.

As the timeline for the AE review is to be extended into 2009, the ministry proposes rolling over existing funding agreements for AE provision for a further year, and will contact managing schools in August to discuss details.

From Term 3 this year AE students will gain free access to the Correspondence School. This is in recognition that easy access to qualifications for AE is an area of growing importance as the government seeks to boost the rate of qualified young New Zealanders entering the workforce.

For those wanting more information, please contact Mary Chamberlain for further details about the AE review and policy programme. Jim Greening can provide information about rolling over the AE funding agreements. We can be contacted at the Ministry of Education's national office on phone 04 463 8000.

Kind regards

[signed]

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[signed]

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