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Youth Guarantees – but for whom and for what?

For those destined for University, 'free' education until the end of the eighteenth year of age is guaranteed in state schools, and increasingly in private schools. But for some young people who opt to take a slightly different path, 'free' education will only be guaranteed until the end of the seventeenth year of age.

At a recent business breakfast hosted by Cullen Law, the Prime Minister, Right Hon. John Key stated that students who leave school early will only receive two years free education in Trades Academies situated on schools grounds.

"This makes the proposed Youth Guarantee discriminatory" says Elizabeth Bang, President of the National Council of Women of New Zealand.

The New Zealand Herald has claimed that Prime Minister John Key is committed to the Youth Guarantee as part of a strategy to help NZ's 'third division' economy. However, one has to question the depth of knowledge and skill attained by attending a two year programme when apprenticeships provided by polytechnics and similar tertiary educational institutions require three to five years of training.

NCWNZ asks that all young people are treated equally and receive free education until 'the 1st day of January after the person's 19th birthday' as is provided by the Education Act 1989 (Section 3, p.5).

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