

COLLEGE CLOSURE

Struggle for students after sale of school

Jo Gilbert

Several natural-medicine students have been left "high and dry" after the Government-approved sale of their college, says Christchurch Central Labour MP Brendon Burns. An Auckland business has bought the Canterbury College of Natural Medicine (CCNM), leaving many students a choice between commuting to complete their course or abandoning their studies. Burns said the sale should never have been approved. Adam Berry, chief executive of the New Zealand School of Education (NZSE), an Auckland private training establishment (PTE), said Christchurch's natural-medicine training was being cut and its Government funding transferred to the school.

While some students could complete their studies in Christchurch, first and second-year extramural herbal and nutrition students had to transfer to North Island or Australian institutes, where not all their completed papers could be cross-credited.

This meant some students had quit their course, while others had transferred and were enduring the extra cost and stress of having to travel for regular workshops and on-site third-year study.

Burns said it was unacceptable that the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) approved the sale when not all students had been catered for.

"I feel for these students," he said. "They entered into contracts with the college, made changes to their lifestyle and took out student loans and now they've been left high and dry."

The students deserved financial assistance from the CCNM and

NZSE to allow them to complete their studies, he said.

Students spoken to by The Press said they were upset the authority approved the sale.

"The first semester was a waste of my time and a waste of my and taxpayers' money spent on fees, textbooks and prerequisite classes," said student Melody Mortiaux.

She was now studying extramurally through an Auckland institute, which meant travel costs and an extra \$500 on resources.

Part-time student Sue Snell said she was reassessing her personal finances to see if she could afford to study through a Hamilton provider.

"But these mean major costs, and I don't just mean financially. I have two kids, a part-time job and a family to keep together," she said.

Transferring would cost Snell another \$3000 on the \$13,400 she had already spent on her herbal course over four years.

NZQA quality assurance deputy chief executive Tim Fowler said the authority approved the sale as it was satisfied most students had been "suitably dealt with".

As of June 30, he said, 114 of the 127 students had either completed their course, were continuing with the school or had transferred.

Eleven students chose to stop studying, one's fees were refunded because she could not continue studying in New Zealand and the last declined a refund.

PTEs, like the college, were private businesses that could sell or close at any time, Fowler said.

In a joint statement, the college and school said they had worked closely and in liaison with the authority to transfer extramural students and ensure "a smooth transition".

College director Di McCauley declined to comment.

TRANSPORT CONTEST



Winning wheels: Riki Katene showed style and skill to win the national Bus Rodeo.

Photo: ROBYN GRAY

Driver has panache to pull off top title

Marc Greenhill

A Canterbury tour-bus driver has been crowned the country's best.

Riki Katene, who drives long-distance coach tours for Hawarden Garage and Transport, won the fourth annual Tranzqual Bus Rodeo in Dunedin on Sunday by outriving 23 other competitors.

Drivers had to twice navigate a technically difficult course and were tested on customer service "panache", road theory and ability to detect bus faults.

Katene, a first-time competitor, said it was an "awesome feeling" to win after 21 years driving coaches.

"I am very humbled by [the title] and very proud of the industry," he said. "When you work day in and day out, here's the recognition."

He paid tribute to his fellow competitors, most of whom drove urban routes.

When you work day in and day out, here's the recognition.

Riki Katene bus driver

"I've got nothing but admiration and respect for them. I love the fact that these guys have patience and understanding," he said.

"Personally, I couldn't do it. Throw me out on the open road and I'm happy, but put me into rush hour..."

Katene said his "kick" was showing tourists New Zealand's beauty.

His last group was a busload of earthquake-shy Chileans.

"They were a bit apprehensive about coming to Christchurch because they know what an earthquake feels like."

SECONDARY EDUCATION

Govt seeks report on need for new school

Jo Gilbert

Schooling in northeast Christchurch will be reviewed after a community request for a new secondary school.

The Government has commissioned a report on whether the area has adequate schooling. It is expected to be completed by January.

Amanda Williams, head of the group behind the push for a secondary school, said the review was another milestone.

"Everywhere you go along this process you say 'please' and you get 'no' or 'not no' and now we've had 'not no' and we are pretty much at that point where 'not no' might be becoming 'yes' and it's pretty exciting," she said.

The parent-led North East Secondary Education (NESE) committee and Christchurch East-based National list MP Aaron Gilmore took a 3664-signature petition and proposal to the education select committee in April.

The group said the area south of

the Waimakariri River, east of Marshland Rd and north of the Avon River had more than 25,000 residents and eight primary schools, but no secondary school.

Teenagers in the area, which is one of the city's fastest-growing, had to attend Mairehau or Aranui high schools, or apply for out-of-zone schools such as Shirley Boys High and Avonside Girls High. Some pupils were moving out of the area.

The select committee recommended to the Government that the Education Ministry develop an area strategy on schooling, but the Government has settled on completing an area report. A report is an assessment of schooling provision in the area which is then compared with expected future growth. A strategy takes it further, proposing solutions and consultation.

The Government said a strategy was unnecessary "as it is unlikely to reach any significant new conclusions from either the Ministry of Education or the petitioners' community".

Bail denied after breaches

A Christchurch man alleged to have groomed underage girls for sex has been remanded in custody after police said he committed four bail breaches.

Clement Wilkinson, 34, who faces a long list of underage-sex charges, was released on bail in July.

However, yesterday in the Christchurch District Court, Judge Stephen Erber remanded Wilkinson in custody after police said he had been given permission to attend four counselling sessions but had not

attended any. Defence counsel Lee Lee Heah said Wilkinson had been stressed as his Chinese partner's residency application had been declined, and he wanted to leave the house to get some exercise.

Given the seriousness of the alleged offending, the judge said he would be "failing completely" to protect the public if Wilkinson was released on bail again.

Wilkinson will reappear in the Christchurch District Court on October 1.

Online price fixing halted

Price fixing on Trade Me by two tyre sellers has been stopped by the Commerce Commission.

Tyre Guys Ltd, trading as tyre-guys, and Adens Trading Limited, trading as adenstyreshop, shared and matched each other's price lists between January 12 and 27.

Both sellers admitted they contacted each other through comments on Trade Me pages, text messages and emails.

Tyre Guys sent its prices for six

tyre brands to Adens Trading, who then matched those prices. Both traders made sales at the fixed prices.

"Although the price fixing only took place for a short time and the sellers offered competitive prices before and after the collusive period, consumers were likely to pay more than they otherwise would have," Commerce Commission acting general manager of enforcement Ritchie Hutton said.

NZPA

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

PRICES ARE PER PERSON EX CHRISTCHURCH

AIRFARES ONE WAY FARE, INTERNET PRICE FROM	Seat	Seat + Bag	The Works (Like Economy today)	Works Deluxe
Sydney	\$139	\$159	\$189	\$269
Melbourne	\$139	\$159	\$189	\$269
Brisbane	\$149	\$169	\$199	\$279
Gold Coast	\$149	\$169	\$199	\$279
Cairns	\$239	\$259	\$289	\$389
Adelaide	\$249	\$269	\$299	\$399
Perth	-	-	\$499	-

HOLIDAYS TWIN SHARE, INTERNET PRICE WITH PROMO CODE FROM

Sydney Flights (The Works) + 2 nights. Pensione Hotel Sydney ★★	\$559 PROMO CODE: 48SEP34	Sunshine Coast Flights (The Works) + 5 nights. Portobello by the Sea ★★	\$759 PROMO CODE: 48SEP44
Gold Coast Flights (The Works) + 7 nights. Aussie Resort ★★	\$759 PROMO CODE: 48SEP41	Port Douglas Flights (The Works) + 7 nights. Sabaya Resort ★★	\$1259 PROMO CODE: 48SEP36

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