



## OZ KIW I MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Brownlee takes Kiwis in Australia for mugs**

After two days of the New Zealand Government hinting it would take a tougher stand on Australia's approach to New Zealanders, Gerry Brownlee turned up in Sydney this morning and folded.

“The New Zealand Government had a chance to push for a return to greater equality in the relationship and completely blew it,” said Oz Kiwi chairman Dr Timothy Gassin.

“During today's press conference with Julie Bishop, the New Zealand Government's flaccid response was on full display. Brownlee just stood there, mouthing platitudes about how close the relationship was and how we were all such great mates.”

“He didn't even criticise Australia's policy, instead repeating Australian Government talking points about how the higher education changes would encourage more New Zealanders to study in Australia. If Bishop and Brownlee believe this, they take Kiwis for mugs.”

The proposed changes would end decades of reciprocity between the countries in higher education and see New Zealand citizens charged full fees, which are typically several times higher than the fees they are currently charged. New Zealand citizens would be allowed to defer payment of at least some of these fees, but would be subject to a 25% loan charge for doing so.

Oz Kiwi is concerned that the New Zealand Government's failure to stand up to the largest change in trans-Tasman rights and entitlements since the 2001 changes sets a dangerous precedent and endangers the health of the relationship in the longer term.

“If New Zealand lets Australia get away with this without even the slightest consequence, that sends a clear message to Canberra and the Australian states that they can continue to target New Zealand citizens' rights with impunity,” said Dr Gassin.

“The trans-Tasman relationship, based on the long-standing freedom of citizens to move between the two countries for any purpose, is undermined by these actions. Both countries need to recognise that the relationship is mutually beneficial and entails a series of rights and obligations. Australia should keep its side of the deal and, if it doesn't, New Zealand should call it out.”

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