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EDUCATE NEW ZEALANDERS FIRST SAYS PETERS

New Zealand First has called on the government to ensure that young people qualified for university study are not cast aside in favour of fee-paying overseas students.

This follows a report that places at many popular universities will be restricted next year to students who gain top marks at high school - a move which could stop up to 3500 young people studying where they want.

From next year admission rules at Auckland, Massey, Victoria and Otago universities, will become tougher as the institutions raise entry standard levels in all of the courses they offer.

Rt Hon Winston Peters said today that it would be of serious concern if qualified students missed out on tertiary study because they had an "absolute right" to gain qualifications.

"New Zealand desperately needs a well educated and trained workforce. Our whole future depends on the young people of today getting the very best educational opportunities.

"It does not make sense to train and educate overseas students while our own bright young people are condemned to waiting on tables, cleaning motel rooms or making overseas visitors cups of coffee.

"If students do not make the grade, then they should not receive endless educational opportunities but those who are qualified and prepared to work should get every chance."

Mr Peters pointed out that the present Minister of Tertiary Education proved that he could succeed at university, given a chance, and he should look at his own case before condemning bright young people to a life of servitude.

ENDS