



New Zealand's exams start today November 20, 2006

New Zealand's National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) external end of year exams started today. It is expected that "...136,000 people [will be] sitting exams at 405 exam centres..." Bali Haque, deputy chief executive of New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) said.

The exams will finish on December 9.

These exams are also being closely scrutinised because of the past problems with NCEA. "...there will always be some anomalies and unforeseen events, such as the traffic jams and floods of 2005," Mr Haque said, "We are confident that we are prepared for such eventualities." The problems faced in the past include when in 2005 hundreds of english papers were remarked due to a problem with the marking schedule which caused low pass rates. In 2004 a problem with the marking consistency resulted in thousands of students failing scholarships. These problems caused the government to launch an inquiry and this year the education minister, Steve Maharey, said that he is confident nothing will go wrong. Principal of Tawa college, Murray Lucas, said: "I'm quietly confident that it will go reasonably well and that there won't be the problems that were attached to the scholarship exams in 2004, and there will be a great deal

more in consistency."

Over 4,500 supervisors will, of course, supervise the 555 exams.

Principals in recent weeks have criticised the NCEA for allowing students to receive credits if the answers are written in "text (SMS) abbreviations".

New Zealand town subject to window smashers November 20, 2006

Otaki, a small town located in the North Island of New Zealand, has been subject to vandals who have smashed around 70 windows in the local primary school, Otaki Primary School.

The smashed windows resulted in the closure of the primary school today. It is expected that the school will be open tomorrow.

The primary school was not the only property damaged. The police are reporting that the library, memorial hall, law offices, tyre factor, butchery and the citizen's advice bureau were all attacked, with other attacks possible.

The police say that the damage was done on Saturday night. Business owners are still reporting property damage. Sergeant Mark Toms said: "The damage seems to be widespread, and has not been confined to the school. Mr Toms said that they "are following strong leads as to who is responsible for the vandalism."

Book written based on leaked political emails, NZ November 21, 2006

A book has been written based around leaked political emails sourcing from leader of the New Zealand National party, Doctor Don Brash. The book has been titled The Hollow Men: A Study in the Politics of Deception and it's by author, Nicky Hager, an activist for left-wing causes.

The release of the book was supposed to be today, however the release of the book has been prohibited by the High Court because of an injunction, issued last week, banning the publication of the leaked emails. The injunction applies to anyone as the plaintiffs are in the names of "Jane Doe and John Doe".

The topics in the book cover a lot ranging from policies and matters to do with the party. The book also includes Dr Brash's relationship with the exclusive brethren. The books also shows that people within the party, who had denied links with the exclusive brethren, had in fact had links with them. Those people include Dr Brash, John Key the spokesman for finance and Stephen Joyce the campaign manager. The contents page has been revealed, it showed that the book includes political strategies behind the Orewa speech, the input into Nationals campaign from neo-conservatives in America, industry lobby group influences, donors to

National and also the election spending strategy that was thought up by Australian advisers.

He also said it looked at a range of possible breaches of election finance laws and parliamentary spending rules.

Mr Hager confirmed that the book doesn't just use emails but also interviews with people inside the National Party who are unhappy.

Mr Hager said that the book uses emails from Dr Brash that are non-personal and the book does not include anything about Dr Brash's private life. He said that well-placed sources from within National had provided him with the emails. Mr Hager said: "[The emails did not come] from hacking into the parliamentary server or gaining access to Don Brash's computer system or something like that".

In response to the book National has begun to attack Mr Hager's credibility. Gerry Brownlee, deputy leader, has labelled Mr Hager as a well known intriguer. "Helen Clark roundly ditched him over his Corngate allegations a few years ago and it would be interesting to know what she would make of his latest claims."

Dr Brash said that it is not expected that their communications with the public would be made public.

The New Zealand Labour party is claiming that this book will be the "death knell" for National. Michael Cullen, deputy prime minister (PM), said: "The claims about Brash's and John Key's dealings with the Exclusive Brethren are very damaging. The trouble for the National Party is the book may knock out both of them in one go and the party will have to look beyond Key as leader."

Current affairs show which is broadcast on TV3, Campbell Live, has

filed legal proceedings in the high court to allow the publication of the book. Carol Hirshfeld, producer, said: "[Our] lawyers are arguing the court didn't take sufficient account of the public interest and that constitutes an unreasonable restriction on freedom of expression. Another key point in the application is that Brash knew for some time that the emails were in the public domain, but delayed acting until now." On today's show host of Campbell Live, John Campbell, said that he and some of his bosses had read the book.

The injunction stops the publish and broadcast, which includes the internet, of the emails. It is also prohibited to reveal what the emails contain or giving the emails to another person except the High Court where they are supposed to be given.

New Zealand political party destroys leaked emails November 21, 2006

Leader of New Zealand political party, New Zealand First and foreign minister, Winston Peters has claimed that he was in possession of the emails stolen from the head of the New Zealand National party, Doctor Don Brash. He now claims that his office has destroyed the emails due to mounting legal issues, including an injunction which prohibits the publication of the emails. This happened while Mr. Peters was away.

Dr. Brash said: "Mr. Peters has today admitted being in possession of stolen emails, but now claims that staff destroyed the emails when they found out a police inquiry was underway. And now Mr. Peters is asking the public to accept that he played no part in the decision to destroy this evidence. I find that hard to believe."

However Mr. Peters is claiming the he

nor his party has anything to do with stealing the emails, Mr. Peters said: "...I understand the leaker has distributed the emails quite widely, and I can't be held responsible for anyone else's actions. What I can say is that when the police first became involved, a staff decision was made in my absence to destroy any emails we had."

Dr. Brash said: "This shows a serious lack of respect for the legal process by the office of one of our most senior law makers."

Mr. Peters said: "It is time National came clean. The public wants to know what the fuss is all about. If the emails are just about National Party organisation, then no-one will be interested, and New Zealand First has always been clear it would never use the personal stuff."

"[Mr. Peters is] saying that his staff didn't bother to consult him before destroying material that their leader had bragged about over a number of months. That is just incredible and Mr. Peters needs to come clean," Dr. Brash said.

The police investigation over who hacked into Dr. Brash's computer and stole his personal emails is still continuing. The court should be given the possession of any emails.

New Zealand National party pays back owed GST November 22, 2006

The New Zealand National party has announced that it will pay back the GST (Goods and Services Tax) it owes to five different advertisers, all television stations, by buying advertising time for the several different charities. The advertisements will appear on the owed media outlets. They have decided with the current

path is it would "unlawful" to pay back the GST normally.

The GST amounted to NZ\$112,000.

National's original plan of getting a one time bill passed that it would allow them to pack the owed GST to the media outlets was ditched in favour of this new one. "With the prospect of legislation diminishing, it's time to accept that National cannot go down that path," Judy Kirk, president of the National party, said.

If National was to pay back the GST, they would be breaking the law by going over the electioneering cap set by the Broadcasting Act.

The owed media companies are TVNZ, TV3 and Sky Television. It also includes Sky's free-to-air channel, Prime.

Ms Kirk said: "We want to get some closure on the matter and have taken extensive legal advice on our options... We have secured clear advice that it would be unlawful to pay the five outstanding media creditors, and that it would be unlawful for them to accept payment. We do not wish to break the law, and nor do we wish to place our creditors in the position of breaking the law."

"...we will purchase the media advertising time directly from broadcasters and ask that they allocate it amongst the range of charities currently supported by each," Ms Kirk said.

National said that their error on not paying for the GST did not effect the outcome of the election, unlike the Labour party's overspending.

NZ National party leader wants book based around his emails published **November 22, 2006**

Doctor Don Brash, New Zealand National party leader, is seeking legal advice to see if the injunction he has placed on his emails to stop them from being published will still be valid if he lets a new book based around those emails to be released to the public. Dr Brash, however, wants the people who he sent emails and received emails from not named.

"As I've said earlier, I want to see the book by Nicky Hager published so that the claims can be exposed to daylight," Dr Brash said, "On the strength of the initial discussion with Mr Brown [legal counsel], I am confident that there are ways in which the book can be released, even in the next few days. These are being actively explored.

The book in question is by Nicky Hager and has been given the title: *The Hollow Men: A Study in the Politics of Deception*. It includes emails that were, allegedly, given to him by insiders in the National party, who Mr Hager will not name, it also includes interviews with unhappy people inside the National party. Despite the claims made by Mr Hager, Dr Brash is still adamant that they were stolen from his computer.

The book includes political strategies behind the Orewa speech, the input into Nationals campaign from neo-conservatives in America, industry lobby group influences, donors to National and also the election spending strategy that was thought up by Australian advisers. The accusations that the author, Mr Hager, has made are wild according to Dr Brash.

The injunction that was issued from the High Court stops anyone from broadcasting, publishing or giving the emails to anyone, in any form, which includes the internet.

Michelle Boag, the person who got Dr Brash to enter the National party, said: "Mr Hager has no credibility. The media is giving the author and activist too much attention. He got access to some stolen property, he selectively took bits to try to reinforce it and now people are believing this man who has never in his life published anything that has had any credibility. All the media is doing is help Mr Hager to sell his book in time for Christmas."

The book has been published by Craig Potton Publishing.

Injunction fails to stop decision on waterfront stadium in New Zealand **November 23, 2006**

Today an injunction that was filed in the High Court yesterday to stop the Auckland City Council and Auckland Regional Council from telling the Government which stadium they prefer has failed. The decision is over a new stadium located on the waterfront of Auckland, New Zealand or an upgrade of the already existing, Eden Park, Auckland. The stadium is for the final of the Rugby World Cup 2011, which New Zealand is hosting.

The injunction was filed by a group of five Aucklanders who believe that the decision is being rushed. The injunction was filed in the name of a private citizen to represent a group of five Aucklanders. Rodney Hide, leader of the ACT party and Member of Parliament (MP) and MP for the Green party, Keith Locke, are helping the fight for the injunction as they believe the Aucklanders have a strong case.

Justice John Priestley said that the group did not need this injunction because they could fight the stadium decision in the future by different means. A second injunction has already been filed for two days, starting December 11.

Mayor of Auckland, Dick Hubbard, said: "The council's advisors have informed that processes have been proper and appropriate."

Rodney Harrison, Queens Counsel (QC), said: "The group that lodged the injunction were Auckland ratepayers, residents and concerned citizens but none of whom could be called high profile. I have no idea what those decisions might be. Exactly how the defendants (local government) react to central Government requests or pressure is a matter for them."

ARC chairman, Mike Lee attacked his own counsel Brian Latimore for failing to follow instructions at today's High Court injunction hearing. The instruction were "not to oppose any injunction, merely to assist the court by explaining what was going on and leave the argument to the judge and the other parties."

Mr Lee said: "We were there as peacekeepers not combatants and it seems this guy has gone in and opened fire."

Patrick McGuire, one of the five Aucklanders who had sought the injunction, said that Mr Hide had introduced all of them to each other after they each wrote a letter to him with their concerns. Mr McGuire said it requires "public input".

Mr Hide said that he "had acted as a middle-man, arranging for the members of the group to meet with lawyers." Mr Locke and Mr Hide are working together because they are concerned the legal processes of the

decision over which stadium will be chosen and how the decision will be made. Mr Hide said he did not like the waterfront stadium, "I'm not a lawyer but the legal advice we have had is that the injunction has a high chance of succeeding."

The two councils, Auckland City and Auckland Regional, have been consulting the affected groups to see which decision they should go with. The Auckland City Council is currently in a meeting discussing the stadium decision and the Regional Council will do it tomorrow.

If the waterfront stadium was chosen then the stadium will be located on Ports of Auckland land and they want a guarantee that their running of the ports will not be affected. Denis Carlisle, president of the local Maritime union, said: "The Ports of Auckland are asking for guarantees that they will not suffer any financial loss from the stadium project, and likewise the Maritime Union will be seeking compensation for our members for any loss of work. The issue was about safeguarding Port of Auckland's role as a major working port."

"[The Ports of Auckland] is one of the key gateways between New Zealand and the global economy."

Auckland City Council supports waterfront stadium in New Zealand **November 23, 2006**

The Auckland City Council in New Zealand has approved the proposed NZ\$700 million+ waterfront stadium in 13-7 (yes-no) vote in a marathon session lasting nearly 5 hours on Thursday night instead of an upgrade of Eden Park costing around \$400 million. However they have called for the stadium to be location

"substantially east" of the central government's preferred Marsden Wharf/Captain Cook site. The proposed stadium has been dubbed "Stadium New Zealand" by the media.

Two weeks ago Trevor Mallard, sports minister, said that the two councils had two weeks to come up with a decision on whether or not to support a waterfront stadium or Eden Park.

It is now falls on the Auckland Regional Council to approve the stadium plans or propose something else, which is supposed to happen tomorrow, Friday. Based on both these decisions, the central government will then make a decision on whether to construct the new Stadium New Zealand or upgrade the current Eden Park, located also in Auckland, which site will also be chosen. It is intended that this stadium will be used for the 2011 Rugby World Cup final.

Dick Hubbard, Mayor of Auckland, said: "In the past Auckland had missed too many opportunities. We can't get it wrong, we cannot bypass this opportunity. Controversy is a good sign, a healthy sign – all the major projects around the world have had controversy. Today it's not about rugby, it is about boldness and vision against caution."

As long as the waterfront stadium is moved then they have a "strong and absolute preference" towards the stadium. Neil Abel, councillor, had tried to remove the "strong and absolute" remark because he believes that Aucklanders did not get an opportunity to indicate that the decision is absolute.

Christine Caughey, councillor, said that the pressure that was put upon them for their decision by Mr Mallard was like "putting a gun to your head."

Other councillors also said that there

wasn't enough time given for Aucklanders to have their say and to make their decision. They also said that some of their questions about the costs and transport, etc were left unanswered.

Despite those setbacks the majority did agree that the design of the stadium should be "bold, iconic and reflect our first city of the Pacific aspirations".

If the government cant make a deal with the Ports of Auckland, which owns the land the waterfront stadium is to be located, the regional council, other stakeholders, to move the stadium then the ACC will withdraw their support and support their second favoured, an upgrade of Eden Park.



The proposed new stadium on Auckland's waterfront.

New Zealand National Party leader, Don Brash, resigns November 23, 2006

New Zealand National Party leader, Dr. Don Brash has resigned as the leader of opposition. Dr Brash made the announcement at press conference held in parliament, stating that ongoing media speculation about his leadership was damaging the party's reputation. Brash will officially step down on Monday, where the party will vote for a new leader and deputy-leader.

"For some weeks now I've been giving

consideration to the right time and the right way to announce this decision. I've held off because I've been keen to have two untidy matters dealt with before my departure," Dr Brash said.

The decision came after a Goods and Service Tax error in last years election made by the party, "Although this had nothing to do with me personally it was a source of embarrassment and I was very keen indeed to get the matter resolved before my resignation." And recent news of Brash's emails making their way into "outsiders' hands" was also a factor in his decision to leave. The emails were the subject of a book published by Nicky Hager, which is expected to be released to the public tomorrow morning. Dr Brash said: "The announcement of Mr Hager's book almost caused me to defer my resignation as leader. I deeply resent the lies and distortions which seem to have been included in his book and I intend to vigorously contest those allegations." Dr. Brash denied media questioning regarding Nicky Hager's book's influence on his decision to resign from leadership.

It seems that John Key will be the next leader, with a recent Auckland poll showing Key only 1.4 points behind Brash. Nicky Hager has claimed the information in his book may be damaging to John Key as well. Brash's decision came with the Nationals ahead in the poll. Dr. Brash mentioned that he would remain in politics for the National Party if the new leader would provide him with a senior position following the Monday when he steps down from the post. The decision has left the party in crisis, set for their fifth leader in 9 years. Prime Minister Helen Clark said the National Party are having an identity crisis and is unstable.

Dr Brash regrets that he will not be

able to lead National into the next election which will take place in 2008.

Michael Cullen, deputy Prime Minister, said: "Brash's resignation was inevitable. This continued instability in the National Party is a sign of a party still nowhere near ready to govern. Dr Brash's resignation was inevitable. But it solves little. By all accounts Mr Key, the likely successor, was deeply involved in all the events that have eventually led to Dr Brash's downfall."

Auckland Regional Council supports Eden Park upgrade in New Zealand November 24, 2006

The Auckland Regional Council (ARC) has voted to support an upgrade of Eden Park and not the New Zealand government's preferred option of a new stadium built on Auckland's waterfront. The stadium consultation is because to host the Rugby World Cup, which New Zealand is hosting in 2011, the final venue has to be able to seat at least 60,000 people.

Trevor Mallard, minister for sports, would not comment on the decision made by the ARC. Mr Mallard would not speak to the media until Monday when he goes to the cabinet.

Yesterday the Auckland City Council also made their decision on the stadium but they had a different opinion, going with the waterfront stadium.

Mr Mallard said a fortnight ago that the final will go to Christchurch's stadium Jade Stadium if the two councils could not agree on the stadium they wish to pursue.

With coming to its decision the ARC said that it sympathizes with the public as there was no formal public consultation and the two weeks given

to them to make their decision and tell the government their choice was not enough time.

The ARC also said that the Auckland City Councils resolution to move the waterfront stadium around 200 metres to the east is not viable as found by a Technical Working Group working for Trevor Mallard.

"By taking this decision, they may be putting more responsibility on Auckland ratepayers," the mayor of Auckland, Dick Hubbard, said.

The ARC found the waterfront stadium was "inappropriate" because there would be a significant adverse reaction to the council owned Ports of Auckland, special legislation would be required to build it, it would have a "negative impact on the heritage and urban design values of the Britomart precinct and the adjacent waterfront area", and it would be quite expensive to build.

With all the above considered the ARC decided to pursue the Eden Park option as it is also an internationally recognised stadium and was used for the bid to attempt New Zealand to get the 2011 Rugby World Cup.

"Trevor Mallard's stadium is a dead duck," he said. "This afternoon he has no option but to take the waterfront stadium off the table," Keith Locke, Member of Parliament for the Green party.

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