

Proposed NCEA changes disconnect NZ teens

New Zealand teens are in danger of becoming significantly disadvantaged in an era of connectivity if the proposed removal of Media Studies at NCEA Level 1 goes ahead.

With the Ministry of Education's release of provisional Level 1 subjects for the NCEA review, Media Studies standards will no longer be offered alongside History, Geography, and Commerce. This decision alarms the National Association of Media Educators who believe that Media Studies is a foundational subject for a 21st Century learner.

Recognising that the media has become one of the most powerful influences on young people today, the decision appears short sighted. With concerns around increased social media use, the need for fair reporting around elections and pandemics, in addition to the rise of hate speech, and the importance of inclusive representation it is vital students are adequately equipped to safely navigate an increasingly media saturated world.

Media Studies ask students to think critically about the world and the way in which people may be represented in the media. It is about allowing students the ability to explore the stories and issues that reflect their identity, language and culture. Taika Waititi highlighted the importance of indigenous youth being able to tell their stories to the world in his Oscar speech.

The media can also be a powerful tool for students to make social change in the 21st century. The student-led climate strikes showed how using social media can empower students. Media Studies enables students to not only understand the issues around them but also gives them a platform and the confidence to take action.

Increasingly, there are clear pathways for students to study Media Studies beyond school. This includes communication courses; film production; and journalism, as well as applying media skills to other disciplines. Media Studies prepares students for an ever-changing environment where many future career paths are still evolving.

This is what Media Studies offers to our students and is fundamental for a modern learner. Removing Level 1 Media Studies undermines the need to prepare learners to be confident, 21st Century citizens.

The Ministry is asking for submissions. We believe it is vital for the community, industry, and past students to give feedback on the importance of retaining Media Studies at Level 1.

Submissions can be made here:

<https://consultation.education.govt.nz/ncea/ras-provisional-subject-list/consultation/intro/>

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