

Media Release



Top University Debaters Face Off in the Business Roundtable's *Big Social Issues Debates* Grand Final

The two top Victoria University debaters will compete against their University of Auckland counterparts, for a prize of \$1000, over the moot *Welfare Incentivises Irresponsible Behaviour* in the grand final of the Business Roundtable's *Big Social Issues Debates*. The debate will be introduced by Minister of Social Development Hon Paula Bennett at the Academy Galleries in Wellington from 5.30pm tonight.

The grand final will be followed by a panel discussion featuring Welfare Working Group members: Sharon Wilson-Davis, CEO, Strive Community Trust; Adrian Roberts, Managing Director, In-Work New Zealand; and Catherine Isaac, Managing Director, Awaroa Partners.

The annual *Big Social Issues Debates* have been running since April 4 with heats held in Auckland and Wellington secondary schools including, for the first time, Tangaroa College in Otara and Onslow College in Wellington.

The first semi-final saw Auckland beat Otago affirming the moot *Marriage Is So Yesterday* in a very close debate at Ernst & Young in Auckland. Victoria beat Canterbury opposing the moot *Our Drinking Age Is a License to Kill* in the second semi-final at Lion Nathan in Wellington. The semi-finals were attended by an audience of young professionals and students.

Business Roundtable chairman Roger Partridge said the tournament was an excellent way of promoting discussion on public policy issues among young people.

"The aim of this initiative is to provide a stimulating forum for young people to get thinking and talking about the important social issues that face New Zealand, and these debates are really achieving that. It's been particularly good to be able to hold the debates in secondary schools and for audiences of students and young professionals."

Mr Partridge said the membership of the Business Roundtable was very supportive of the tournament and was most grateful to the Friedlander Foundation for sponsoring it.

4 May 2011

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